Gender equality in development policy

Fact sheets on gender equality in development cooperation
Respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights is the foundation on which the democratic, economic, social and cultural development of every country is built. Women’s rights are human rights. The images from the demonstrations in North Africa and the Middle East show us that more and more women are demanding equality for themselves. Women are getting involved. In order to foster sustainable development in which all the people in our partner countries, women and men alike, have a part, realising gender equality is both a specific goal and a cross-cutting task within all areas of German development policy. We take this task very seriously and will continue to do so in the future! Our efforts are based on international commitments to women’s rights and gender equality.

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has made a commitment to realise gender equality by mainstreaming gender in development policy. Efforts to put this into practice in the past have shown that gender equality can only be achieved through sustained pursuit of this goal over a period of many years. We need patience and persistence, and we also need knowledge management, i.e. well-researched and regularly updated knowledge and information. That is why these fact sheets on “Gender equality in practice” have been put together: to show you how gender equality can be realised even more efficiently. They will show you what opportunities there are for involving women equally in the measures carried out in all the BMZ’s priority areas of development.

This fact sheet folder is a supplement to the BMZ publication “Human rights in practice”. The folder is meant to provide concrete and valuable examples of how, together, we can help realise gender equality globally. I am sure that you will find creative ways to make use of this information!

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Gender equality in development policy

The facts
Gender equality is a human right and thus a central objective of German development policy. Gender equality was made a separate Millennium Development Goal (MDG 3) because there are many areas of life where women do not have the same rights as men. Equality when it comes to political participation is also an essential prerequisite of good governance. However, worldwide only 19 per cent of all the members of national parliaments are women. Women are thus under-represented in political decision-making bodies.

On a positive note, out of the world’s total of 193 countries 136 have gender equality enshrined in their constitutions. Nevertheless, the reality for women is often different, because traditional and religious norms decree that they are subordinate to men and in many countries prevent them from experiencing personal development. Traditional norms and modern legal systems exist in parallel, making it more difficult to enforce rights. Even if women know their rights, they often fail to assert them, either because they fear social sanctions or they lack the money to pay, for example, for a lawyer. Women also still face discrimination under modern laws, for example, inheritance, family and land laws. According to the latest data available, inheritance laws discriminate against women in two thirds of Germany’s partner countries in North Africa and the Middle East, in one third of the partner countries in sub-Saharan Africa and in 37 per cent of Asian partner countries.

International studies and estimates indicate that two thirds of the roughly 860 million people who are unable to read or write are female and therefore girls and women are particularly affected by poverty. Violence directed towards women and girls is one of the most common human rights violations in the world. Many women work in jobs with no economic security. They spend far more time doing unpaid work than men do. Women in developing countries own just a small percentage of agricultural land, yet they produce the bulk of basic food products.

The opportunities
Gender equality is the key to sustainable development and successful poverty reduction because it contributes to the achievement of all the MDGs. Investing more in educating girls and women has a positive effect on national economic growth, so a World Bank study has shown. Improved access to the labour market and economic independence are important prerequisites for ensuring that women can assert their rights and contribute to the development of all areas of society. When women and men participate in economic life on equal terms it boosts economic growth.

Women who are actively engaged in economic life and have their own earnings are more likely to invest that income in food, education and healthcare for their families, which increases the wellbeing of the entire family. This shows that development policy can be more successful if the potentials and needs of women are included more often than has been the case in the past. Since women’s and men’s lives are interwoven, the men must be involved in all of this. Changes in
the relationships between men and women can only be successful if both sexes participate. The long-term result is greater equality of opportunities between men and women.

**International frame of reference**

Under the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) all States Parties to the Convention are expected to put in place suitable measures to ensure that women and men are equal before the law. Apart from that, under CEDAW the States Parties must also take responsibility for violations of the law by non-governmental players. This means that both state institutions and individuals who are responsible for structural discrimination can be called to account.

**Areas of action for measures to promote gender equality**

- Integrating gender equality into the politics and institutions of a state, for example enshrining gender equality in the constitution and elaborating and implementing legislation that supports and protects women and men equally;
- Gender-sensitive judicial reform, training staff in the institutions of the justice system in the application of adapted laws in order to give women access to the law;
- Fostering women’s participation in economic life;
- Examining state and non-governmental institutions and services from a gender perspective, in order to remove inequalities between women and men or specific discrimination and ensure equal access to services and participation in decisions;
- Building up the capacities of civil society women’s organisations and of women politicians in order to strengthen political participation by women;
- Actively involving men in development measures to promote gender equality;
- Strengthening the local level because women are more likely to participate at the local level (for example, urban district, village) than in the national sphere.

**The methods used to achieve this are**

- The dual track approach:
  - specific measures to strengthen the strategic interests of women (empowerment) in order to eliminate discrimination (gender marker 2),
  - gender mainstreaming in development cooperation programmes and in political dialogue so that both women and men benefit from development cooperation measures (gender marker 1);
- Compulsory gender analysis for all development cooperation measures and as a prerequisite for targeted project planning to provide information about the needs and interests of women and men in the respective field of action and about how they can be addressed;
- Gender-sensitive project planning, implementation and monitoring so that the development cooperation measure is optimally tailored to the target group;
- Gender-sensitive selection of team members and consultants, which contributes to the success and sustainability of development cooperation measures.

**Further reading**

- BMZ 2010: Guidelines for Development Policy Goals – Gender equality policy marker
- CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: www.unwomen.org
Gender equality in the priority area of education

The facts

Education and upbringing have a major influence on the way assigned gender roles are learned. Education is a significant factor when it comes to questioning clichéd, discriminatory role patterns and ways of thinking, and breaking down stereotypes. It enables girls and women as well as boys and men to sound out and test possible ways of making changes. Discrimination due to gender-stereotyping can thus be reduced.

The most usual way of achieving this is via school education. Non-formal education also offers opportunities. This is because, traditionally, it is girls in particular who drop out of school early or are not able to even start attending school. Many parents consider school education for their daughters to be less important because they will marry young anyway and they are only responsible for all the household work. This is one reason why two thirds of the roughly 860 million people who are unable to read or write are female.

In many countries the education system places girls at a disadvantage across all social groups. There are few exceptions, one of them being Lesotho. Here many boys leave school early because of the high demand for male workers.

On a positive note, since 1999, enrolment in primary education has increased, with enrolment rates for girls going up from 79 to 86 per cent. Not all girls attend lessons regularly or actually finish school. In Central and West Africa, for example, less than 60 per cent of girls of primary school age attend lessons, in Central and Western Asia the figure is less than 85 per cent.

The opportunities

For women and girls, better access to education and better quality education mean that they are more able to participate in the job market. Moreover, education also increases women’s opportunities to participate actively in politics and civil society. Parents, particularly mothers, with a good education feed their children more healthily. The children of educated parents are more likely to attend school and they achieve good results. Girls and young women who go to school for longer have fewer children on average. That brings down the birth rate, which in turn impacts on population growth.

Education enables women to realise their potential, to contribute to the prosperity of their entire family, and to sustainable economic growth and social development. That way Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3 can be achieved more quickly.

International frame of reference

The right to education without discrimination is firmly enshrined in the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Article 10 lists a bunch of measures aimed at achieving gender equality for girls and women in the education sector.
Areas of action for gender equality in the education sector

- Setting up schools in villages so that girls do not have to travel long distances to school and can reconcile spending time doing housework and time at school; providing teaching materials and other, technical equipment;
- Introducing school reforms that remove the gender-specific disadvantages faced by girls;
- Developing the gender competence of school staff through training and workshops; these training courses serve to inform and raise awareness about the different ways the two sexes are seen by society, the different roles they play, how such situations arise and what can be done to change things;
- Making lessons gender-sensitive using different teaching methods – for example, role play, projects and group work; analysing schoolbooks to see whether they contain both men and women as role models, and to see what roles they are assigned;
- Involving parents and encouraging them to continue to invest in the education of their daughters;
- Combining literacy courses for girls who start their education late with other courses in fields such as cooking, healthy eating, motherhood, family planning and health, and with income-generating components;
- Gender analysis before starting any development cooperation measure.

Project example:

Improving basic and further training in Afghanistan

Lessons in tents, no teaching materials, poorly trained teachers – that is the norm in most parts of Afghanistan. The Afghan National Education Strategy therefore has two goals. First, it aims to improve the quality and range offered in primary schools and vocational colleges. Second, children and students, especially girls and young women, should be able to make use of the education on offer. German development cooperation is instrumental in supporting this strategy in a wide variety of ways.

On the one hand help is being provided to develop infrastructure. In addition, development cooperation is helping to improve the equipment available in teacher training institutions, in reference schools and girls schools, and in the technical school in Kabul. German development cooperation is also involved in training teachers so that they will be able to take on important expert and leadership positions in the future. The number of women training to be teachers has risen at an above-average rate throughout the country. In the South, in Nangahar, women actually make up about one quarter of trainee teachers – when the project began there were no women.

Further reading

Gender equality in the priority area of health – sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

The facts
Because of biological differences, the assumptions that can be made about women’s health are usually not the same as for men. Women normally have a longer life expectancy than men. In some countries, however, the exact reverse is true. This is due above all to socio-economic conditions and to the socially weaker position of women which is the norm in many societies. Women are inadequately educated in many societies, earn less and are unable to feed themselves well. These factors impact negatively on their health.

There are between 100 and 140 million girls and women across the world who have suffered genital mutilation. Their social position means that women rarely have any influence on when, how, with whom and how safely sexual contacts take place. Women are also subjected to physical and sexual violence. The risk of catching a sexually transmitted disease, especially HIV, is particularly high for women. Women’s weak social status prevents them from being able to plan pregnancies or from being able to avail themselves of health services without the consent either of their husbands or of some other family member. Girls are particularly at risk. They leave school earlier than boys and are frequently married at a young age. Unmarried girls in particular often experience unwanted pregnancies and lack both the physical and the emotional maturity to cope with the situation. As a direct result of this discrimination due to their weak social status, more than 350,000 women die each year during pregnancy and childbirth. The most frequent causes of poor health and death among women of childbearing age are therefore to be found in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Men and boys also face major health risks that are the result of patterns of behaviour that are associated with masculinity. Their lives are often riskier, they consume more drugs and are often more inclined to violent behaviour. Men and boys who experience discrimination or are criminalised due to their sexual identity or orientation because they do not correspond to the generally accepted male image may find it more difficult to access information about HIV, for example. This limits preventive behaviour on their part.

The opportunities
If women were able to exert more influence over family planning and if pregnant women had better medical care, then maternal mortality would fall by two thirds to 100,000 deaths a year. Health systems must therefore take account of gender-specific roles and needs so that women and men have better access to family planning and medical care. That way both men and women can inform themselves about the risks of infectious diseases. This means that both maternal and infant mortality (MDGs 4 and 5) and also HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases (MDG 6) can be reduced. Providing support for sexual and reproductive health and enforcing corresponding rights, particularly for women, are important steps towards forward-looking family planning and an essential contribution to sustainable development.
International frame of reference

Sexual and reproductive rights are based on universally recognised rights: the rights to health, to physical integrity and to non-discrimination. All this is firmly enshrined in the Right to Health in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and in the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, Articles II and I2). All States Parties to the Convention must put in place suitable healthcare measures in order to guarantee women and men equal access to health services and family planning (Article II, IIf, 2c-d; Article I2). Another frame of reference is the 1994 Programme of Action of the World Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, which combines population and development policy with policy on women’s rights.

Areas of action for gender-sensitive health care

→ Ensuring access to improved medical care for pregnant women and women who experience complications during childbirth;
→ Taking gender-specific aspects into account when reforming health systems and social protection systems, in order to address the rights and needs of both sexes throughout their life cycle;
→ Improving access to family planning services for women and men so that they can make free, informed and joint decisions about family planning;
→ Supporting media and information campaigns about sexual and reproductive rights, for example, integrating access to contraception for young people as well;
→ Supporting target-group-oriented and age-appropriate offerings for girls (girls-only spaces), the purpose of which is sharing among girls, enhancing self-awareness and acquiring knowledge; this can be supplemented by specific support for empowerment;
→ Supporting target-group-oriented offerings for boys and men that create spaces in which boys and men can discuss values and standard ideas of maleness;
→ Gender analysis before starting any development cooperation measure.

Project example:

An approach for comprehensive health in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is seeking to achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals and improve gender equality. German development cooperation is instrumental in supporting the African country’s efforts in this regard. Better educational opportunities for girls help avoid unwanted pregnancies, as does the development of youth-friendly services that provide information about sexual and reproductive health. German development cooperation is also an active part of efforts to eliminate sexual violence, and forced marriages and child brides. Efforts to strengthen the social standing of women and young people deliver gains in social competence for village communities and the public sector. There is also an increased readiness to accept change. In the priority regions of German development cooperation three times as many people as before are now making use of modern methods of family planning. Incidences of female genital mutilation have fallen from 41 to 14 per cent. School enrolment rates for girls have risen from 73 to 92 per cent.

Further reading

→ BMZ Special 165 (2009): Health and Human Rights
→ World Health Organization (WHO) on Gender, Women and Health: http://www.who.int/gender/en/
Gender equality in the priority area of democracy, civil society and public administration – good governance

The facts
The concept of good governance embraces political participation by the people, respect for human rights, a social welfare state and the rule of law. This definition includes women and marginalised groups. In many of our partner countries, however, the situation is quite different. Traditional customs and norms that discriminate against women exist alongside modern legal systems. As a result there is often a gap between formal rights under the law and how those guaranteed rights are enforced. The rules and regulations covering inheritance, family and land laws also discriminate against women and block their efforts to attain economic autonomy and acquire assets.

In many countries that are “officially” democracies women are in fact excluded from political participation. They have virtually no access to decision-making and implementing processes and find it difficult to gain access to public services, markets and economic resources such as land, capital or information. Worldwide women make up just 19 per cent of all parliamentarians, and just 14 per cent of all business and administrative heads are women.

The term “good financial governance” stands for transparent, effective, fair systems in public finances. Such systems are a basic prerequisite for poverty reduction and sustainable development. How public funds are spent and what they are spent on are aspects that have an enormous impact on the population of a country – including on the lives of girls and women.

In response to the last financial crisis many governments reduced public spending – frequently in areas such as education, health and infrastructure. Because it is mainly women who take up the slack when public health systems fail to provide care and assistance, it is they and their children who are hardest hit by such cuts. Since they are largely excluded from political participation, they have very little chance of directly influencing such political decisions.

The opportunities
Where good governance is practised there is popular participation in politics – which includes women (MDG 3). It is easier for women to gain access to public services, markets and economic resources and to participate in politics. Women can have their say in how public funds are raised and used, and can voice their needs and provide input. Women gain access to land, capital and employment, thereby potentially triggering considerable macro-economic growth and stimulating development. That is a prerequisite for poverty reduction (MDG 1) and for sustainable development. Good governance is one of the cornerstones in strengthening human rights, including women’s rights.

International frame of reference
Articles 7 and 8 of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) guarantee the same civil and political rights for men and women. These articles decree that all States Parties to the Convention shall put suitable
measures in place to remove discrimination against women in political and public life. Furthermore, the States Parties to the Convention undertake to make it possible for women to represent their government at the international level and to participate in the work of international organisations.

Areas of action for gender equality in the field of good governance

➔ Amending existing legal norms, institutions and administrative practices in line with the rights and interests of women and girls, for example enshrining gender equality in the constitution and defining women as independent legal persons;
➔ Creating access for women to legal institutions, raising awareness among legal practitioners for the implementation of international obligations with regard to gender equality;
➔ Informing women and men about their rights; this should be done through target-group-based action;
➔ Strengthening political participation by women, for example through women’s quotas in parliaments, skills-building for female candidates and support for civil society women’s organisations, so that women can play an active role in public life;
➔ Fostering the participation of women in negotiations concerning public budgets and propagating gender-responsive budgeting;
➔ Gender analysis before starting any development cooperation measure.

Project example:

Strengthening women’s rights in northern Nigeria

Traditional and religious value systems determine day-to-day legal reality for the people in Borno State. The reintroduction of sharia law in 2000 altered the court system, with disadvantageous outcomes for women in particular. German development cooperation is instrumental in supporting the work of several regional and local non-governmental organisations so that women and girls can safeguard their rights and improve their legal, political and social situation. For example, a law for children’s rights has been elaborated and implemented with the long-term goal of equality in the way boys and girls are brought up.

Other areas of activity include HIV/AIDS prevention, supporting reproductive health, and advising women and girls on managing their finances and on developing organisations. Discussion panels, meetings with religious leaders and contacts with the media and the judiciary provide opportunities for raising awareness for the rights of women and children and for boosting the active participation of women in political processes. This strengthens social dialogue. In order to enable women to have access to the law the project organises courses on judicial training and establishes alternative adjudicating mechanisms. This helps to speed up judicial decisions and makes legal counsel affordable for women and underprivileged groups.

Further reading

➔ BMZ Topics 173: Strengthening the Participation of Women in Development Cooperation, 2007
➔ BMZ Strategies 178: Promotion of Good Governance in German Development Policy, 2009
Gender equality in the priority area of crisis prevention and peacebuilding

The facts
Violent conflicts dominate the lives of the whole population. Women and men generally feel the effects in different ways, in keeping with their gender roles.

Conflicts frequently alter the usual gender-based allocation of roles within society and thus also the relationships between men and women. Role models which portray men in terms of a militarised masculinity that is fired up by violence whilst women are defined by a stylised femininity that places them firmly in the home are mutually reinforcing stereotypes. At the same time, in other areas, gender roles get overthrown because women take over everyday tasks that were traditionally the preserve of the (now absent) men. When the men return home after the conflict has ended many of them react to this development with aggression and frustration.

In military conflicts women are far more often the victims of gender-based violence than men, for example rape and human trafficking. But women are also combatants. Sexual violence often has the aim of hurting the family and society in addition to hurting the woman. Because of feelings of shame women and girls are often made into outcasts and do not report sex crimes. Men have feelings of inadequacy because they were unable to protect the women and girls.

Because the legal system does not function in many crisis countries the crimes go unpunished. The authorities – police, public prosecutor or even truth commissions – are often too overstretched to deal with these crimes and lack the sensitivity that needs to be shown towards the victims. It is also common for violence against women and rape to increase in the immediate aftermath of conflicts. Domestic and military violence are closely linked.

On the other hand, many women seek to play an active role in times of crises and conflicts. They organise self-help groups and informal peace initiatives, and seek to draw attention to the plight and the needs of children. These activities, together with the changed gender roles, present great potential for change. Women are mostly active at the local level. Their expertise and the political significance of their peace or reconciliation activities are hardly recognised at all at the national and international levels of foreign and security policy. Men continue to dominate in peace negotiations – the proportion of women involved is just four per cent.

The opportunities
No peace process, no democratisation can be sustainable if women and therefore half of the population do not take part in it. Reconstruction presents a huge opportunity to modernise previously patriarchal societies. That is because reconstruction only succeeds if state and socio-cultural infrastructure is directed towards gender equality. If women are encouraged to participate at all levels of peacebuilding, this is a major factor in helping to prevent crises before they erupt and to manage conflicts in a sustainable way. Women are involved in shaping the reconstruction and work to bring about democratic structures. In almost all
societies women have special responsibility for the (survival of the) children and other family members. These are all forms of civil conflict resolution.

**International frame of reference**
The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) emphasises that the greatest possible, equal participation of women in all areas is a prerequisite for a country’s complete development and for global wellbeing and peace.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted in 2000 states that the gender perspective must be integrated into conflict and post-conflict processes. It places the UN, all member states and conflict parties under an obligation to involve women in peacebuilding at all levels. Gender issues must be taken into account in peace agreements, peace missions and in other areas that are relevant for security policy. The follow-up Security Council resolution 1820 from 2008 condemns sexual violence as a war crime and as a threat to peace and security.

**Areas of action for gender equality in conflict prevention and peacebuilding**

➔ Integrating the gender perspective into local conflict resolution, reconciliation processes and planning processes for reconstruction, and involving both men and women;
➔ Training representatives (men and women) of local institutions that are involved in conflict resolution in gender skills;
➔ Fostering women’s involvement in peace negotiations;
➔ Including women (ex-combatants) in all demobilisation/reintegration measures, reconciliation activities and material support;
➔ Fostering women’s organisations in order to enable them to present their interests and needs within the framework of peace processes;
➔ Working with men in particular to prevent gender-based violence, in order to recruit them as agents of change;
➔ Gender analysis before starting any development cooperation measure.

**Project example:**

**Strengthening women’s rights in order to prevent violence in Colombia**
The number of internally displaced persons in Colombia is between three and four million – half of whom are women, many of them single parents who never graduated from school and who must earn enough to support their entire family. Many women are subjected to physical and sexual violence both outside and within the family. Women who fight for the rights of internally displaced persons are frequently targeted with threats and violence. German development cooperation is being used to help implement the national programme ‘Strengthening the Political Participation of Displaced Women’ at the local level in Bogotá and Cartagena. The project is providing advice to state institutions on planning, coordinating and implementing the programme on the one hand and is working directly with the networks of displaced women on the other hand, so that they can be involved in shaping the programme and empowered to stand up for their rights.

**Further reading**

➔ UN Women: information about women, war and peace under various headings: http://www.unwomen.org/focus-areas/?show=Peace_and_Security
➔ Secretary-General’s report on Women’s participation in peacebuilding: http://www.untj.org/files/library/Report_of_the_Secretary-General_on_Women’s_Participation_in_Peace-building.pdf
Gender equality in the priority area of rural development and food security

The facts
Three quarters of all poor people in developing countries live in rural areas. Women are very often the ones affected by extreme poverty, for example in Peru, where it touches 70 per cent of women. Poor people mostly depend either directly or indirectly on agriculture for their living. Women have always carried out a wide variety of tasks in this context. Women account for 43 per cent of agricultural labour in developing countries, with the percentage varying from 20 in Latin America to up to 50 in parts of Africa and Asia. When harvests are poor it is often the women’s vegetable gardens that ensure their families’ survival.

Women earn an income by selling what they are able to produce surplus to their families’ needs. Men usually work in commercial agricultural production. They have tenure over the land, take out loans, buy seeds and fertiliser and have access to extension services. Men make most of the decisions regarding purchases and investments. The most important difference between the work done by women and that done by men is that women’s work in the agricultural sector is often unpaid or poorly paid.

Although women produce most of the food, they are prevented from economic participation because they have no rights or title to land or property. This means that they are unable to get loans because they cannot offer land or other property as security. For example, if women in Kenya had equal access to extension services, fertiliser and seeds then – according to the findings of a World Bank study – agricultural productivity would increase by 20 per cent.

Another obstacle to women’s and girls’ development can be cultural values, norms and traditions; for example, girls are often married early and are frequently unable to complete their education. Women are largely excluded from day-to-day decisions about necessary purchases and investments.

Almost every indicator for human development shows that, all over the world, women and girls who live in rural areas have the fewest development opportunities: poverty is highest among these women and school enrolment is lowest. This is where you find the most girls who are unable to read or write, and women-led households are among the very poorest.

The opportunities
Equal access to extension services, land ownership, fertiliser and seeds increases women’s productivity. Increasing women’s productivity in rural areas helps to reduce hunger (MDG 1) and improves women’s social standing (empowerment – MDG 3). Women who earn higher incomes are able to take better care of their families, which has the effect of lowering maternal and infant mortality (MDGs 4 and 5). These women make it possible for their children – particularly the girls – to attend school and complete their schooling (MDG 3). Women’s traditional knowledge is very important when it comes to protecting natural resources, because the domestic gardens and fields cultivated
by women not only make an essential contribution to their families’ food security and their livelihood, they also serve as “storage sites” for biodiversity (MDG 7).

**International frame of reference**

Under the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) all States Parties to the Convention must ensure that the stipulations in the Convention are also applied to women in rural areas (Article 14, paragraphs 1 and 2). What is more, the States Parties to the Convention commit to undertake suitable measures to remove all forms of discrimination against women in rural areas. They must ensure, among other things, that women have equal access to health services, agricultural credit and loans, education and water supplies.

**Areas of action for gender equality in the area of rural development and food security**

- Introducing reforms in land and property laws, and developing land title and registry systems, so that women can access credit;
- Integrating gender-sensitive approaches in poverty reduction strategies and in national and international strategies for rural development;
- Implementing women-specific approaches in rural areas on the topics of access to production resources (know-how, irrigation systems, fertiliser, machines and capital) and marketing;
- Raising awareness for gender issues among those in charge of agricultural businesses in order to improve women’s working conditions;
- Supporting rural women’s organisations so that they can actively participate in decision-making-processes;
- Carrying out media campaigns that encourage men and women to take on new roles and responsibilities;
- Gender analysis before starting any development cooperation measure.

**Project example:**

**Women as protagonists for securing livelihoods in rural Bangladesh**

In the rural districts in northern Bangladesh 80 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. The poorest people must manage on less than 18 euro cents a day. The development organisation MATI focuses its work on these extremely poor families. It uses an integrated development approach, in which it has the support of German development cooperation. The idea behind the approach is that poverty can be tackled more effectively if gender equality is promoted at the same time. The gender approach has a two-fold-effect. On the one hand it safeguards the livelihoods of poor families, on the other hand it empowers women whilst still integrating men into the process. Without the involvement of the men it is virtually impossible to change the power structures within the families. MATI is supporting a learning process for married couples by giving credit to establish livelihoods exclusively to women, regardless of whether the husband or the wife is the one implementing the business idea. Women are MATI’s contract partners and points of contact. This means that they are henceforth seen by their families and their villages as the “doers” in business matters. This strengthens their social status and boosts their self-confidence. The improvements that have been achieved are convincing: men recognise that gender equality has benefits for them as well, because family incomes rose by 95 per cent within the space of two years. 75 per cent of all families eat three meals a day. 78 per cent of the women report that they are more involved in decisions.

**Further reading**

- FAO, IFAD, ILO (2010): Gender dimensions of agriculture and rural employment: Differentiated pathways out of poverty (Status, trends and gaps)
- http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org
- The World Bank (2009): FAO, IFAD: Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook
Gender equality in the priority area of environment and climate change

The facts
Traditionally it is women who bear the burden of supplying their families with water, firewood and staple foods. In sub-Saharan Africa women produce the majority of all staple foods. In rural communities men are mostly responsible for commercial agricultural production.

As a result of climate change, harvests and income are no longer certain and men are losing their work and their identity as the family breadwinner. Migration is becoming more important as a way of dealing with climate change and this phenomenon too has a gender-related impact. Men frequently move to towns or to another country in order to find work. When men migrate the women are left to take over the role of head of the household. Climate change means that their workload is becoming heavier as a result of water shortages and soil degradation. Consequently women have less time available for engaging in paid work, getting an education or participating in politics. The women who are left behind and the households that they head are often among the very poorest.

Natural disasters, the frequency and seriousness of which are growing, often hit women harder. The mortality rate of women is increased due to socio-cultural gender stereotyping which means that, for example, women lack access to information, must shoulder most of the burden from looking after weaker family members and are not allowed to make their own decisions. When a devastating tropical hurricane hit Bangladesh in 1991, 90 per cent of those who died were women because they had only limited access to marketplaces where the storm warnings were announced. After such disasters women are overlooked in compensation processes because they have no title to their land or because their men have migrated. When women migrate they end up in a cycle of vulnerability characterised by an increased risk of having inadequate health care and becoming the victims of human trafficking.

Women are rarely part of international decision-making processes relating to climate change or local projects, and are not able to make their specific demands heard. All the above examples show that the impacts of climate change do not affect men and women in the same way.

The opportunities
Almost all the United Nations Millennium Development Goals have the potential to combat climate change even more effectively if gender-sensitive measures are integrated: climate-adjusted resource use whereby men and women are included on equal terms can reduce risks (MDG 7). For example, basic food supplies can be secured using farming methods that have been developed by women. Support for renewable energies can be combined with the economic empowerment of women. This approach provides women with income, strengthens their role (MDG 3) and means that women, too, can take action against climate change. Increased incomes for women also mean more disposable income available for education.
or medical care within the family. Women are not just the victims of climate change. They are agents of change and can take active steps in their households, as part of their earning activities, and with regard to their use of resources so as to contribute to climate protection and climate change adaptation, thereby reducing poverty.

**International frame of reference**

The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) calls for women to be involved at all levels in elaborating and implementing development plans for rural development (Article 14, paragraph 2a). What is more, there must be decent living conditions for women in rural areas, especially with regard to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, and transport and news links (Article 14, paragraph 2h). Furthermore, women must be guaranteed access to agricultural loans and suitable technologies, and must be assured equal treatment within the framework of land and agricultural reforms and rural resettlement activities (Article 14, paragraph 2g).

**Areas of action for gender equality in the field of environment and climate change**

- Supporting research into gender and climate change, defining gender-specific needs and potential for adapting to climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- Including women in measures to adapt to climate change, such as resource management and developing innovative cultivation methods;
- Making early warning systems gender-sensitive and involving women's organisations in them;
- Making land reforms gender-sensitive;
- Supporting women's initiatives for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) that can simultaneously offer women sustainable sources of income, for example the women's organisation Green Belt Movement in East Africa;
- Adapting local public transport systems (contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions) to the different working hours of men and women;
- Disseminating fuel-saving stoves in order to reduce emissions and also reduce the health hazard and workload for women;
- Providing women with renewable sources of energy for household use and to be used for earning a living, as substitutes for fossil fuels;
- Embedding gender aspects in bilateral and multilateral financing instruments and in pertinent funds to fight climate change;
- Gender analysis before starting any development cooperation measure.

**Project example:**

**Successful adaptation strategies and empowering women in Bolivia**

A project approach in Bolivia has the aim of identifying and supporting adaptation measures in which women play a leading role. At the same time knowledge about climate change and coping strategies is being developed. New field crops are being introduced that, thanks to new irrigation technologies, can also thrive in shorter growth cycles despite reduced rainfall. This has resulted in more varied nutrition and increased earnings. Gender-specific knowledge about climate change is being systematically recorded in order to develop the knowledge base. When workshops are in the process of being conceived and designed, care is taken to ensure that women are able to participate on an equal footing. Thus this measure is successfully combining adaptation to climate change with empowering women.

**Further reading**

Gender equality in the priority areas of sustainable economic development/education – vocational training and employment

The facts
In developing countries the percentage of women in paid employment is significantly lower than the percentage of men (see graph). It is significantly more difficult for women to find employment than it is for men.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2008 Employment</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
<th>Men (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central, Eastern and Southern Europe</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2008 employment figures (for adults over 25 years of age)

Women looking for formal employment often face many barriers. Social norms, discrimination and legal obstacles put them at a disadvantage. For example, women receive lower wages for the same work. Women are far more likely to work part time. The proportion of women in management positions is statistically insignificant.

It is in part because of these barriers that, globally, two thirds of all women work in the informal sector – for example as independent self-employed workers or helping out as family members in a family-owned business. Their status means that they have no right to social benefits and neither do they have any legal protection – for example in the case of hazardous working conditions. Moreover, women do almost all the household work, for which they rarely receive any payment. Thus the social and economic potential of women and consequently the development potential of their countries are not fully realised. These are all reasons why many of the 1.3 billion people living in extreme poverty are women.

The opportunities
Where women and men have equal opportunities for employment the economy grows. This is especially true in the non-agricultural and formal sectors. For example, poverty in Ghana and Uganda went down significantly in the 1990s because more women were able to work in the formal sector. The transition from the informal to the formal sector enables women to enjoy economic, social and legal security, to gain vocational qualifications and thus to improve the quality of life for their entire family. If women are included more in productive employment, then they can make an essential contribution to inclusive growth and to social development. A sustainable reduction in poverty is achieved.
International frame of reference
Under the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) all States Parties to the Convention are expected to put in place suitable measures to remove discrimination against women in education and in working life (Articles 10 and 11). Moreover, the States Parties to the Convention also undertake to prevent discrimination against women due to marriage or motherhood, and to ensure that women have an effective right to work (Article 11, paragraph 2).

Areas of action for gender equality in vocational training and employment
➔ Gender-oriented shaping of labour market policy and vocational training policy, i.e. integrating the different needs of men and women into labour market and training strategies;
➔ Carrying out gender audits on the situation of women employees in order to offer women targeted mentoring and coaching, thus improving their working conditions and enabling them to move into positions of leadership;
➔ Designing gender-sensitive financial products and business development services for private companies (e.g. advice on business set-ups and on innovation, market analyses);
➔ Developing formal and non-formal vocational training and education for girls/women, including training in fields of work that are dominated by boys/men;
➔ Recognising job experience gained in the informal sector;
➔ Developing the gender competences of executive and managerial staff through training or guidelines for corporate employees;
➔ Improving the general framework conditions for balancing family life and work;
➔ Fostering entrepreneurial initiatives by women through training programmes and cooperation with women’s business associations, and including men in these measures;
➔ Gender analysis before starting any development cooperation measure.

Project example:
Re-integrating unemployed women into working life in China
In order to strengthen the competitive position of women on the Chinese labour market, advice was provided under German development cooperation for the employment offices and business associations of the cities of Nanjing and Benxi. The objective was to realign these institutions in order to make them into customer-oriented service providers. Ways of providing customer advice and promoting business start-ups were tested in joint pilot projects. At the same time new, labour-market-oriented forms of temping and of training were jointly developed.

German development cooperation efforts also included providing advice on introducing new laws, the aim of which was to have a positive influence on women’s position in the labour market.

Careers counselling programmes were developed to support women job-seekers. In addition, training courses came into being offering women the opportunity to acquire entrepreneurial skills so that they could start their own businesses afterwards.

The introduction of temping was in response to interest expressed by both workers and companies. All these measures specifically improved the income situation of women and their families, thus preventing poverty. During the seven-year project phase the project helped some 13,000 women find employment.

Further reading
Gender equality in the priority area of sustainable economic development – financial systems development

The facts
A necessary step for inclusive growth is equal access to financial services. Poor people find it particularly difficult to get access to financial services. Access is often even more difficult for women than it is for men. Women have less chance of getting an education than men. Yet, without basic knowledge regarding financial matters they are unable to make informed financial decisions, particularly about credit.

In a number of Germany’s partner countries women are at a disadvantage due to legal stipulations – for example, because they cannot apply for a loan and they have no right to inheritance, to land or property without a husband. The result is that they are unable to provide the securities required by the banks for larger loans and are rated not creditworthy.

In Uganda it is estimated that only 9 per cent of bank loans are granted to women, although 40 per cent of registered businesses belong to women. This shows that female owners of small and medium-sized enterprises face greater challenges when it comes to boosting growth than their male colleagues. Because they have no securities to offer they are more likely to rely on informal sources of credit. They take out loans less often – and when they do the size of the loan is smaller. Businesses run by women therefore do not have the same opportunities to increase their competitiveness and productivity, or to generate new employment opportunities and thus contribute to sustainable growth and poverty reduction.

The opportunities
For women, better access to formal financial services means they have the possibility to invest in productive resources and thus increase their income (MDG 3). Women tend to manage money more reliably and sustainably than men, investing it in their families, for example in schooling for their children (MDG 2) or better health care for their families (MDGs 4 and 5). They thus make a contribution towards safeguarding their families against life risks. When financial services are combined with supplementary programmes to provide education and business training then women can derive even greater benefit from them. A stable source of income and basic financial education lead to greater decision-making freedom for women.

One approach towards overcoming these challenges is microfinance services, which can help women to achieve greater economic independence. Responsible microfinance helps poorer segments of the population to borrow money to set up businesses, and to save, make payments, invest or take out micro-insurance policies. The microfinance approach is making a significant contribution to poverty reduction and is frequently the first step towards better economic participation for women.

International frame of reference
Under the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) all States Parties to the Convention are expected to put in place suitable measures to ensure that women have
the same rights as men with regard to taking out bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit (Article 13b).

**Areas of action for gender-sensitive financial systems development**

- Introducing reforms in land and property laws in order to remove the limitations placed on women and enable them to access credit;
- Elaborating laws that allow movable property (such as gold jewellery) to be used as security for loans, since women generally own that kind of property;
- Combining the provision of microfinance services (e.g. micro-loans) with basic financial literacy so that the best possible use is made of the micro-loans; men should also be included as a target group;
- Developing specific financial products for women in order to improve their access to formal financial systems, for example suitable credit lines linked with entrepreneurial training courses;
- Supporting self-help groups and taking gender aspects into account in connection with financial literacy measures;
- Developing the gender competences of the management and staff of financial institutions through training or guidelines for staff;
- Gender analysis before starting any development cooperation measure.

**Project example:**

**Micro-credit in rural areas in India**

Under this programme that the Indian National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is implementing nine out of ten of the micro-bank customers are women. Their repayment rate of 95 per cent proves that women can be trusted to meet their debt obligations. Since 1996, NABARD has been actively engaged in a programme supported by German development cooperation promoting something known as “linkage banking”: villagers without means organise themselves into self-help groups, learn the basic rules for handling money, open a joint account together and pay a previously determined amount into the account each month. After half a year, depending on how reliably payments have been made and the progress that the group has achieved with regard to savings, a decision is taken regarding their creditworthiness. For example, one woman used the group money to buy two cows, insuring one of them for three years. That way, if the animal dies she can buy a new cow – without having to resort to moneylenders, whose extortionate practices NABARD and the self-help groups have meanwhile thwarted.

Impact studies carried out by the National Council of Applied Economic Research and the GIZ (Microfinance and MDGs – Impact Assessment, GTZ, 2009) show that, for households participating in the linkage programme, the share living below the poverty line has fallen from 58 per cent (when the programme began in 1994) to 33 per cent in 2006. The women in the self-help groups report that they are experiencing less domestic violence because the men fear that it will be talked about in the group. For women and their families linkage banking has improved their lives.

**Further reading**

Gender equality in the priority area of water and sanitation

The facts
Because of the gender-based division of labour, adequate water supplies are far more important for women than for men: in many countries women grow most of the food and are responsible for looking after the household and the children, yet they have only limited access to water. The high demand for water coupled with the lack of availability means that women spend up to 15 hours of their working time each week fetching water. This division of labour also has a negative impact on girls because the extra workload means that they are less likely to attend school. The burden of carrying heavy loads of water is just as harmful for women's health as the constant use of unclean water. When family members get sick because of drinking unclean water it is girls and women who look after them. In addition the time spent doing all this is time that they do not have for income-generating activities.

Going beyond the domestic sphere, women also use water for agriculture and animal husbandry and to produce marketable goods. Yet here too there is discrimination: women who have no rights to acquire or own land – a reality in many countries – are also excluded from using irrigation systems. This means that women cannot access these water resources in their own right.

In addition there is the issue of inadequate sanitation facilities, which is degrading and also a safety risk for millions of women and girls. Where there are no toilets in the houses and they are obliged to relieve themselves in remote places, they are often the victims of violence.

The opportunities
If women and men are able to have equal access to water resources that helps with the realisation of all the MDGs. Involving women means opportunities to increase the sustainability of investments in the water sector. If the routes to water sources are shortened and the time spent looking after the sick is reduced thanks to the provision of clean water, then women and girls have more free time. That creates the prerequisites for women to take on other responsibilities and to pursue productive activities that impact on income. For girls, “more time” means a better chance of being able to go to school. Shorter routes to water sources can also lower the danger of injury from transporting the water (e.g. back problems from carrying heavy loads and bending down). The result is that the health of women and girls is not compromised as much as before. When latrines/toilets are built the risk of being exposed to sexual attacks while defecating in the open is reduced. This helps preserve the physical integrity of girls and women. Women are empowered by being included in the planning and operation of facilities and in managing water resources.
International frame of reference
The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) calls for decent living conditions for rural women, particularly with regard to living accommodation, sanitation and water supply (Article 14, paragraph 2h). In July 2010, the UN General Assembly declared that access to water and sanitation is a human right.

Areas of action for gender equality in the field of water and sanitation
➔ Reforming ownership rights, rewriting regulations for irrigation and other water user associations in order to give women the same user rights;
➔ Participatory planning in separate groups for women and men, and gender-oriented design of the tariff system contribute to making projects more successful and more sustainable;
➔ Actively involving women in decision-making with regard to projects concerned with rural or urban water supply, because operating the facilities can be a source of income women too, for example as maintenance workers for the standpipes;
➔ Women’s quotas in water committees, bodies or campaigns so that women get more chances to have a say and can influence public investment and budget spending accordingly;
➔ Gender analysis before starting any development cooperation measure.

Project example:

Water kiosks operated by women in Zambia
In the urban outskirts of Lusaka water kiosks have been introduced through German development cooperation with Zambian partners. The utility company lays the water pipes and connects a network of water kiosks. The costs involved are quite low, the return is huge. This is because each of the 300 water kiosks supplies between 1,000 and 1,500 people with clean drinking water. The kiosks are in public squares and provide people with a water supply. Moreover, the water kiosks offer an important platform for informing customers about health, hygiene and using water.

More than half of these kiosks are run by women. They received some initial training in sales and management. The water kiosks provide the women operators with a secure income. It is enough to cover the school fees for their children, to pay doctors’ bills and to buy food. In addition, the women can set some money aside to be used in case of sickness or death.

Further reading
➔ KfW, 2008: Promotion of Developing Countries. Water Supply, Sanitation and Gender
Gender equality in the priority area of energy

The facts

If people want to develop and free themselves from poverty, they need affordable, clean energy. Yet 1.5 billion people still have no access to electricity. This is an issue that affects women and men equally. However, there are differences in the energy needs of men and women because of their gender-specific roles. Accordingly, men and women derive different benefits from better energy supplies, whether in the private or in the productive sphere. Access to energy affects the following areas of gender equality in particular: income, political participation, health, time savings, safety and physical integrity.

Women are responsible for procuring and using the energy needed for the household. Particularly in regions where people do not have any recourse to modern forms of energy, the main source of energy is biomass. Women collect biomass in order to heat with it, to cook and to provide light.

In 2030, it is predicted that 2.7 billion people will be dependent on biomass. In many sub-Saharan African countries biomass use already accounts for more than 90 per cent of total energy consumption. More than 2.5 billion people cook their meals over open fires and on inefficient stoves. The toxic smoke harms their respiratory tracts and eyes. Women and girls in particular suffer from the negative side-effects of using this source of energy:

➔ Each year up to 1.5 million people – most of them women and children – die from cooking-related causes. Cooking thus kills more children and women than malaria.

➔ The daily chore of looking for firewood costs girls and women more and more time because the amount of wood available is getting smaller and smaller.

➔ The search for firewood is a risky business for women and girls, particularly in crisis regions, because they keep getting threatened, raped or even murdered.

When major energy infrastructure projects are planned women are frequently not adequately included. They also rarely play a part in decisions about how much energy is used and what it is used for.

The opportunities

Decentralised energy supplies and modern technology in particular have the potential to help women and children in a variety of ways. Clean, efficient stoves especially relieve the burden on women. For example, modern stoves need up to 60 per cent less fuel. For women this means that a great deal of time can be saved because they need to collect less wood. More free time does not automatically mean more equality, but it is a prerequisite for women to be able to do training and further training, to engage in productive work and to earn more. More free time means that women are also able to take care of their children and their own needs.
In addition, modern cooking stoves not only reduce pollution, they also lower the risk that children and women will burn themselves on open fires (MDG 4). Energy can be used, for example, to light health facilities, schools and households, and to operate machines. That reduces the risk of women dying in childbirth (MDG 5), makes it easier for children to study (MDG 2) and allows vaccines to be stored in refrigerators so that they remain effective for longer (MDG 4).

International frame of reference

The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) addresses the provision of decent living conditions for rural women, particularly with regard to living accommodation, electricity and water supply (Article 14, paragraph 2h).

Areas of action for gender equality in the energy sector

➔ Enabling women to have access to clean, efficient technology for cooking and heating, for example energy-saving stoves;
➔ Establishing sliding scales for energy tariffs so that electricity is affordable for poor people, particularly for women;
➔ Involving women as consumers and entrepreneurs in planning processes for community-based energy projects in order to empower them;
➔ Teaching women in training programmes so that in the medium term they are able to do maintenance on decentralised energy systems and can also get involved in decisions about energy policy;
➔ Gender analysis before starting any development cooperation measure.

Project example:

Energy supply in rural Afghanistan

Households in rural Afghanistan are not connected to the energy network. Solar Home Systems (SHS) are therefore an alternative. The electricity they supply is enough to light rooms and to run a television, computer and refrigerator. German development cooperation has been instrumental in supporting the establishment of the German-French-Afghan Energy Initiative. This Initiative involves disseminating know-how and training women in particular.

Afghan women thus learn in the workshop “Solar Home Systems – A Women’s Workshop” how to construct solar lamps and small SHS themselves. In these courses the women also learn management methods, English and how to use computer software. The women can sell the solar systems that they made in the course at the information centre for renewable energy in the provincial capital of Faisabad. The training courses have a major impact: the newly trained businesswomen do good, efficient work. Thanks to the courses their self-confidence increases. They use what they have learned to plan, install and operate small solar systems and are thus a source of technical know-how for their neighbourhood.

Further reading

➔ ENERGIA: Fact Sheet on Energy, Gender and Sustainable Development: www.energia.org
Gender equality in the priority area of transport

The facts
Investments in the transport sector in order to build roads and develop public transport systems benefit men and women equally. At least that is what is generally believed. But because men and women have different roles and responsibilities within the family and in working life, the ways they use these services are also different. Men and women have different transport needs.

Women often work in the informal sector, for example as domestic workers, or they do work that supports their families. To do this work they must often travel to remote places. The bus networks and timetables of public transport systems mostly follow the main economic routes. The result is that the women whose work in the informal sector or looking after their families takes them to places not directly on these routes must change buses frequently. They must cope with long stretches on foot and long waits and their total transport costs are higher. In addition, women are often laden down with goods and have small children with them. If the family has a car or a motorbike it is usually the husband who uses it.

A World Bank study has shown that in rural parts of Africa the burdens women carry are on average three times as heavy as those carried by men. They have to procure wood, water and food for large families or carry the produce they have grown that is surplus to their needs to market to sell it there. They need routes that can be used on foot or in vehicles all the year round. The degree to which women are involved in the construction of rural roads, which requires workers to carry out fairly simple tasks, varies depending on the country and the culture.

New roads are often built to enable major economic products and workers from the formal sector, for example major companies, to be transported. It is mainly men who work in the formal sector. It is mainly men who plan road and transport projects and make the decisions. Because women’s legal status is weak in many developing countries and because of the impact of gender roles, the needs of women are scarcely taken into account in these decision-making processes.

The opportunities
Improvements in the transport sector lead to increased mobility for women and girls. Routes that can be used on foot or by vehicles all the year round mean that women are better able to market their products and thus achieve higher incomes. Moreover, their chances of being healthier and getting a better education are also increased. Projects in the transport sector have an impact on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

For example, in rural areas in particular, if roads are planned accordingly and the transport situation improved, it can be easier to reach health facilities and birth centres, thus reducing infant and maternal mortality (MDGs 4 and 5). The construction of rural...
tracks in Sudan, linking 45 villages in the Darfur region with one another, has made it significantly easier to reach basic health stations. Now more children in the region are being vaccinated.

Lights in public places and bus stations mean that women and children can get about in greater safety. Improved and affordable public transport also has a positive impact on school enrolment for both girls and boys. A study carried out in Morocco showed that an improved road network almost tripled the school enrolment rate among girls. One way to help women have access to income opportunities is to increase significantly the percentage of women involved in the work of building rural roads in some countries.

**International frame of reference**

There are no explicit statements about the transport sector in the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, in Article 3 it says that the States Parties to the Convention must instigate suitable measures to secure the full development and support of women in all areas, particularly in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres. Women will thus be enabled to enjoy and practise their rights and basic freedoms on an equal footing with men.

**Areas of action for gender equality in the transport sector**

- Transport must be organised so that women are able to market their own products and have better access to employment in the formal sector, and so that they can carry out their multitude of tasks in connection with caring for family members;
- Developing or improving transport systems traditionally used by women – for example footpaths; this supports women’s efforts to fulfil their productive, social and family roles, reducing time spent and costs;
- Implementing training measures to increase the proportion of women working on building rural roads and paths;
- Information campaigns that encourage girls and women to use non-motorised forms of transport such as animal carts, hand carts and bicycles; that way they can reduce the amount of work involved in collecting wood and water and save time;
- Adequate lighting for bus stops and footpaths, because this leads to better safety and mobility for girls and women;
- Gender analysis before starting any development cooperation measure.

**Project example:**

**The path to the future in Bangladesh**

Getting around in rural parts of Bangladesh is not easy. Often there are only paths or roads that are in a poor condition. During the rainy season the routes are often flooded and impassable. This is a huge handicap for the people living in these areas since there are times when it is not possible for them to transport goods or to get to schools and hospitals. Building roads that can be used all year round is one way that German development cooperation is being used to help improve people’s living conditions. At the same time women are being actively involved in the German project – at all levels. Employers are being encouraged in workshops to employ women to help build roads and to pay them the same wages as the men. In some areas women already make up 25 per cent of the workforce in this sector. In addition to the actual road maintenance, women are involved in planting trees along the side of roads and monitoring the state of the vegetation. They are also able to learn more about hygiene, health or business management, and how to read and write. They save part of their earnings to use as start-up capital for their own small businesses. Thus the new road does not just lead to the next school, it also leads them to a better life.

**Further reading**
