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Integrating Gender into
National Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSPs):
The Example of Ghana

Birte Rodenberg

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German Development Institute
Tulpenfeld 4 · 53113 Bonn · Germany
Tel.: +49 (0)228 94927-0
Fax: +49 (0)228 94927-130

DIE@die-gdi.de
www.die-gdi.de

Foreword

In the context of a 15-month contract, the expert was commissioned to conduct a case study evaluating the treatment of gender issues in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Following the joint drafting of the terms of reference by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Development Institute (GDI), and in consultation with the responsible BMZ and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) regional divisions, a case study was prepared and conducted on 1–19 July 2001 in Accra and Kumasi, Ghana. The analysis was initially based on Ghana's draft Full PRSP of July 2001. The second revision also took into consideration the new draft dated September 2001.

Sincere thanks go to Dr. Heuel-Rolf, Director of the GTZ Office in Accra, Ghana, and her colleague Ms. Kwashie for their active and helpful support in preparing and carrying out the study. I would also like to thank Dr. Gabi Waibel, Gender Officer at the German Development Service (DED) in Accra, Ghana, for her substantive and practical support in the field. Thanks are also due to all those interviewees who made themselves available despite the tight schedule, especially Ms. Angela Brown Farhat of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC).

The interviewees generally felt themselves to be addressed as representatives of their institution, organisation or ministry and answered accordingly. Whenever their opinions are taken generally to be an expression of the political line of the relevant institution or country, this is done to highlight and compare political approaches and trends in the context of the questions being posed here. The author takes sole responsibility for any mistakes and unjustified generalisations.

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Note on the translation:

The present translation is a slightly abridged version of the study. In the interest of focusing more strongly on the empirical results, the second chapter which looks particularly at the theoretical framework, has not been translated. The same applies to parts of the appendix. The results have not, however, been modified to take account of the current state of the debate in Ghana or the current version of the Full PRSP (February 2002).

Translated by: Lynne Jagau and Sue Harrison, GTZ, Eschborn.

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Birte Rodenberg

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Abbreviations

AGE	Advocates for Gender Equity
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung)
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CEDEP	Center for the Development of People
CIC	Community Implementation Committee
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIVISOC	Civil Society Council
CMA	Christian Mothers' Association
DED	German Development Service
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DWM	31 st December Women's Movement
ENOWID	Enhancing Opportunities for Women in Development
ERP	Economic Recovery Programme
FIDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers
GAD	Gender and Development
GDI	German Development Institute
GERA	Gender and Economic Reforms in Africa
GLSS	Ghana Living Standard Survey
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (Ghana's PRSP)
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
IDA	International Development Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Centre
JSA	Joint Bank and Fund Staff Assessment
MoWA	Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NCWD	National Council on Women's Development
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIRP	National Institutional Renewal Programme
NPP	New Patriotic Party (party in government since December 2000)
NPRP	National Poverty Reduction Programme

OECD/DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAMSCAD	Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment
PPA	participatory poverty assessment
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
TUC	Trade Union Council
TWN	Third World Network Africa
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WB	World Bank
WID	Women in Development
WILDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa

Executive Summary

The link between gender and poverty is generally referred to as the "feminisation of poverty". This term relies on numerical evidence based on the estimate that the majority of the poor are women, but a definition such as this neglects qualitative characteristics of this gender gap which would provide useful knowledge for overcoming the problem. It is true that women are more frequently affected by poverty than men, and poverty poses a greater risk to them. Due to their much more limited power of disposition and decision-making authority, their chances of escaping poverty once affected by it are considerably worse than men's. However, this should not lead to female-headed households automatically being associated with a higher poverty rate or to the **victimisation** of the female head of the household, for example. Instead, poverty and gender need to be seen in the context of democratisation, co-determination, governance, and market and societal structures.

With the goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015, support for national and international structural reforms vis-à-vis help towards self-help measures has become the declared goal of the UN and of bilateral and multilateral donors. Recent policy papers elaborated by the donor community demonstrate the way this concept has evolved as the two issues of gender and poverty reduction are viewed together. The OECD/DAC Guidelines on Poverty Reduction are pioneering in this context; they consider poverty reduction, gender equality and environmental sustainability to be mutually reinforcing, complementary and cross-cutting facets of socially equitable development. On the basis of a wider definition of poverty that includes not only inadequate income but also the different dimensions of social deprivation, the gender-specific dimension of poverty is attributed to the structural inequality of the sexes. The strategy of gender mainstreaming and support for equal opportunities for women are emphasised in the Guidelines as international development goals in their own right.

HIPC II and PRSPs

The development of national programmes for sustainable poverty reduction constitutes an important component of the goals for the reduction of poor countries' debt service that were agreed as part of the HIPC II debt relief initiative. In the next few years, 60–70 of the poorest developing countries will elaborate national poverty reduction strategies. In order to ensure that the goal of debt rescheduling, i.e. a reduction in extreme poverty, is achieved on a sustainable basis, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) should be drafted with the involvement of a wide range of actors from civil society. The focus must thus be on country ownership and participation, especially in the initial stages of the PRSP. The World Bank's comprehensive manual (PRSP Source Book) for the actors concerned contains a specific chapter that looks at the need to integrate gender into PRSP processes and at the various approaches that can be taken.

However, there seem to be significant transmission losses with regard to the gender approach as international documents and policy papers are translated into national poverty reduction strategies or country strategies. The first comparative analyses of Interim and Full PRSPs

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indicate that the opportunity to bring about a change of paradigm, so that poor women are no longer simply categorised as a "vulnerable group", has not hitherto been exploited. Existing PRSPs ignore or fail to emphasise a rights-based approach focusing on the political empowerment of poor women (poor people) and on mainstreaming this as an independent right in development processes.

Moreover, women's political organisations and their representatives frequently complain of inadequate participation in the national PRSP drafting processes, with the result that only a subordinate role is accorded to social and economic gender perspectives within the scope of policy dialogue, or that these only have any weight in the "classic sectors", namely those relating to basic needs such as health and education.

The present study uses the example of the PRSP in Ghana to examine aspects relating to the incorporation of gender issues and the participation of women's organisations in the drafting of a poverty reduction strategy. The study looked at the following three aspects:

1. Process: participation in the PRSP;
2. Policy: national policy framework for gender;
3. Paper: gender issues in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS).

1 Process

Ghana's PRSP process (GPRS) has not accorded participation the status of a development goal in its own right, but it does see participation as more than just an instrument for efficient poverty reduction. Given the past political system of the country, with its corporatist features, both the establishment of working groups of male and female experts and the numerous consultation and harmonisation workshops constitute qualitative progress towards democratisation of the country and its political culture. It was the semi-public debate on Ghana's joining the HIPC Initiative in spring 2001, if not earlier developments, that increased the transparency of the government's actions. Together with the education campaigns against corruption in the old state apparatus, the PRSP process offers Ghana an almost historic opportunity to dismantle the long-standing structures of autocratic policies.

In the process of developing Ghana's PRSP (Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy – GPRS), participation primarily took the form of consultation and discussion, although data on the poverty status of the population was also gathered using participatory methods. Despite this relatively strong participation, the critical contributions of civil society, including those of independent women's organisations, are not incorporated to a sufficient extent into the strategy paper. At the time of this study, there were no clear indications of further-reaching involvement of civil society forces or of the institutionalisation of participation in the subsequent phases of the PRSP. While the planning commission responsible for Ghana's PRSP complained that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) acted only as critical observers, no structures were planned which would have enabled the NGOs to play a pro-

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active role in the development phase of the GPRS and help shape the macro-economic framework, over and above sporadic inputs to discussions at large-scale harmonisation workshops. Nevertheless, according to the coordinating Task Force, ownership was very much a characteristic of Ghana's PRSP process. In contrast, civil society criticised the permanent influence of the World Bank and the IMF on macro-economic and budgetary issues.

With the support of the GTZ, the introduction of a monitoring and evaluation system (M+E) has now been planned for the Full PRSP. The system will also give NGO representatives the opportunity to examine macro-economic issues, including the financing of the poverty strategy. It remains unclear to what extent the involvement of civil society and women's political organisations will go beyond consultation in this phase.

The participation of women's organisations

The involvement of women during the expert consultation meetings was encouragingly high from the outset, but the presence of a large number of women does not necessarily mean that gender issues are represented. Firstly, the women involved in the GPRS did not "automatically" make women's affairs their own concern in their own particular working groups or continually refer to them, given that they were not invited as gender experts but as experts in specific sectors (employment policy, human development, governance). Secondly, gender issues should not be delegated to women alone. Indeed, the crux of the entire gender approach is not to focus on women as an isolated group, but to look at socially constructed gender relations, so that analyses and political measures spotlight exclusionary mechanisms and unequal social relationships. Gender-specific interests that undermine the existing role models of a society can and should also be presented and represented by men, since in the 21st century the gender question is no longer an expression of identity policy.

From the outset, the involvement of independent women's NGO representatives was planned as part of the PRSP process. Another positive aspect is that political NGOs and networks were invited, i.e. those that focus on strategic gender interests (women's human rights, violence prevention and strengthening opportunities for active participation). The final drafts of the Full PRSP show that these social aspects of poverty have found their way into the paper, even if they have not been translated into long-term strategies.

The relationship between the state/government organisations and NGOs dealing with gender/women's issues appears to be far more reserved and tense than that between mixed NGOs and the state, which can largely be attributed to the history of independent forces being co-opted by the state and the former government. One instance that deserves particular mention is the establishment of the national women's union, 31st December Women's Movement, led by President Rawlings' wife, which dominated and limited political activities on women's issues at all levels well into the 1990s.

Today the full, pro-active participation of women's organisations in the PRSP process is also hindered by the fact that few NGOs and networks exist that focus primarily on legal and political empowerment and aim to promote women's and gender interests through political lobbying at the national or macro level. The majority of NGOs continue to concentrate on the micro level and are less interested in macro-economic topics.

However, the criticisms levelled by independent women's organisations and gender experts at both the PRSP process and the strategy paper itself primarily show that gender issues are not an "exported concern" of western feminists and the donor community, and that thus no references to non-intervention or "country ownership" could keep them out. Instead, they have their roots in an independent Ghanaian/African debate.

Poverty diagnosis and participatory poverty assessments

In the run-up to the first consultations with the actors/stakeholders involved, participatory poverty assessments (PPAs) were carried out in selected districts in different regions of the country. With the support of the GTZ country office, care was taken to ensure a gender-specific perspective during the data collection phase in the communities that had been selected. As a result, the "definition of poverty", "causes of poverty" and also the strategies for "coping with poverty" took account of gender-specific views. This helped generate a broader definition of poverty for Ghana's PRSP which goes beyond the purely quantitative features of economic poverty. On a more critical note, neither the collection nor the analysis of data in the PPA used a consistent gender-specific approach throughout. Neither this quality-related data nor the data from the quantitative *Ghana Living Standard Survey* (GLSS 4, 2000), much of which is disaggregated on a gender basis, has become part of the GPRS.

2 Policy

It is impossible to look at the successful inclusion of, or failure to include, gender aspects in national poverty strategy papers, or at the substance contained in such papers, while ignoring the general framework in which the government's women and gender policy is taking place.

In Ghana, policy related to women – both policies pursued by the state and by international donors – has been determined since the 1970s by the development policy paradigm of "**Women in Development**" (WID). In the 1980s, supported by structural adjustment programmes (SAP), WID activities were mainly geared towards increasing women's productivity. The most important tool was the provision of micro-credits to women working in the informal sector. WID, SAP and the "Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment" (PAMSCAD), for instance, designed to cushion the impact of structural adjustment, did not produce the results that had been hoped for in terms of poverty reduction and enhancing women's status by means of improved incomes.

On taking office, the new Government of Ghana wanted to demonstrate a particular concern with women's issues by creating a Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs, which was also involved in the PRSP. However, by putting the focus once more on the provision of micro-credits, it continues to build on the former integration and "target group approach". The opportunity for transforming the machinery of government on one hand and gender relations on the other have so far been ignored; the Government has again failed to keep up with the evolution of the gender and development policy (GAD), thus also failing to institutionalise gender issues.

Participation and ownership, if these terms are interpreted to apply not only to the national level but also throughout society, offer a chance to use policies laid down in the PRSP processes to move beyond the given national framework of priority topics or sectors. Especially in a setting of very limited gender policies (which would be more accurately described as a WID policy), a PRSP can "be better" than national policies. For this to happen, however, it must draw upon, and take account of, existing gender expertise within the country. It seems that this expertise has been given little attention so far. Only in the revision phase of the first draft of the Full PRSP was a separate gender workshop organised, devoted solely to the comments of women's organisations. While this is undoubtedly an important step towards participatory gender mainstreaming in PRSPs and should be adopted as a method for other phases, this procedure tends to underpin a policy of cosmetic changes and revision regarding social issues, which take a back seat in the macro-economic and political context.

When poverty reduction strategies are being developed, it must be borne in mind that the prospects of the "gender and poverty" approach being further developed are limited by the risk that if the focus is put on direct poverty reduction by means of covering the basic needs of the groups affected, the needs approach might gain dominance over the rights approach and might easily crowd out the latter in the relevant strategic debates. This would be detrimental, particularly for the incorporation and implementation of a gender approach in the sphere of development policy.

3 Paper

The September 2001 draft of Ghana's Full PRSP is a great improvement over previous drafts with respect to social development and the gender issue. Many instances of how women are disadvantaged in Ghanaian society are mentioned. In line with the central GPRS strategy of reducing poverty by promoting growth and market-oriented production, for women too the focus is on improving access to markets across the board by enhancing their chances of obtaining micro-credits. This, in conjunction with capacity-building measures, is to counter the particular disadvantages suffered by women. The specific marginalisation of women should be overcome in combination with capacity-building measures. This combination makes sense, but it cannot replace a holistic policy framework in which the gender issue is fully integrated.

Alongside the quantitative aspect, positive mention must be made of the fact that "gender" appears significantly more often than in previous drafts, spotlighting *gender inequality* to a greater extent. For instance, the paper urgently recommends that relative gender equality be achieved in the fields of "decentralisation" and "enhancing employment opportunities in the public service". The strategic gender interests of women are also given much more consideration. In order to reduce poverty through rural development, land distribution policies should be reviewed in order to improve women's access to land. Improvements in the legal system are also recommended in order to provide better protection for vulnerable groups and to overcome gender-based violence.

It is too early, however, to speak of the establishment of a gender mainstreaming approach, as this is still at the targeting stage. Women continue to be involved primarily as the recipients/beneficiaries of development measures, and not as actors. The concepts of empowerment and "the voice of the poor", which point towards a pro-active role in shaping policies within social processes, are of subordinate importance in the GPRS. The empowerment of women goes no further than their participation at the local level.

The greatest failing of the PRSP, however, is not only that reference is made almost exclusively to the practical needs of women, but that no **analysis** was conducted from a gender perspective and no **strategies** were elaborated to overcome the problem. Thus the first third of the draft, which deals with the macro-economic and macro-political context, is for the most part gender neutral. In the analysis of the dimensions of poverty in Ghana, only one reference is made to gender differences in the field of education. None of the data provided by the Ghanaian census are used in the GPRS, for instance to analyse access to resources such as land or time.

Ghana's PRSP thus runs the risk of establishing a deficit approach, in which the focus is on gender-specific insufficient access to social and natural resources without identifying the causes. Equally, it fails to propose problem-oriented approaches to transform structural inequality.

In addition, women are grouped together with other disadvantaged groups under the broadly defined concept of "vulnerability". This concept largely shapes the GPRS approach to social analysis; (poor) actors are replaced by "vulnerable" groups that require special protective measures. Despite the undeniable relevance of the *vulnerability* concept for an in-depth understanding of poverty and poverty reduction, the "*enabling*" and "*empowering*" poverty strategies put forward by the World Bank and OECD/DAC are totally absent. Alongside this key dimension of poverty, a poverty reduction strategy would be desirable which does not see gender primarily as something tagged on to conventional macro-economic policy but as a social issue that is relevant at all levels of society. A strategy that is as much part of the political democratisation process as a factor in redistribution and poverty-oriented economic growth and that reflects the corresponding strategic analyses would be a significant step towards a sustainable reduction in extreme poverty.

Summary of recommendations:

The closing recommendations are directed primarily at the bilateral donors involved in the PRSP process. They contain suggestions for the better mainstreaming of gender aspects in the subsequent PRSP phases in Ghana and in other countries.

- Existing policy papers of the donor community, especially the OECD/DAC Guidelines and the World Bank's PRSP Source Book, should enjoy greater acceptance and dissemination; for in-country work, it might be a good idea to translate the concept papers into practical manuals. Gender guidelines prepared for recipient countries should also be taken into account by donors within their own organisations. Consequences could be drawn from the World Bank's self-critical admission that the joint staff assessments (JSAs) appraising PRSPs revealed major gender deficits by appointing a competent gender expert to work with the JSAs.
- The collection and evaluation of disaggregated data in the context of a participatory poverty assessment must be repeated before and after future phases of the policy cycle (implementation, monitoring and reformulation). Care should be taken to ensure that the data gathered are evaluated and incorporated into the final findings and do not get lost. The data must be an integral part of a comprehensive gender analysis of the situation in the country in question.
- To achieve overall political coherence, which should (also) promote gender-appropriate poverty reduction, PRSP processes cannot be analysed and implemented in isolation from other parallel development approaches. A comparative analysis of the integration of gender issues in sector-wide approaches (SWAs) has shown that the conception and implementation of SWAs demonstrate very similar structural weaknesses to those identified in PRSPs. A policy of coherence and coordination among donors involved in both approaches (PRSPs and SWAs) should therefore be examined to identify any negative strengthening or duplication of weaknesses relating to gender issues.
- The mainstreaming of gender and gender projects at a higher level of political dialogue and development-policy programme activities ("scaling-up") is urgently required. **Gender budget initiatives** are one example of women's projects at macro level. Experience gained in other African countries should also be taken into account and evaluated.

1 Introduction

Poverty and worsening inequality are two of the basic problems facing the international community in the 21st century. The fight against extreme poverty, which has affected more than a billion people over the last twenty years or more, is imperative in order to reduce global risks and avoid violent conflicts over access to natural and social resources. As globalisation causes all areas of life to become more closely interlinked, the United Nations has set itself the goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015.

Poverty is not only defined quantitatively as insufficient income (the poverty line lies at US \$1 per day), but also as a lack of access to resources, the denial of chances and insufficient opportunities to participate in economic and political life, as well as a loss of human dignity. As a result of this wide concept of poverty, measures to combat poverty should incorporate the dimensions of social justice, economic capacity, political stability and ecological compatibility, and ensure that the poor participate in projects and share the benefits generated.

In order to promote social development and reduce poverty in a sustainable manner, greater importance is accorded to cross-cutting topics in development cooperation. Parallel to the substantive themes of conflict prevention, the environment and HIV/AIDS, greater consideration should be given in particular to gender equality and participation of the poor population in measures and programmes.

Support for the extended HIPC II debt initiative, in which debt relief for highly indebted countries was for the first time linked to comprehensive national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), aims at strengthening new holistic development-policy approaches in German development cooperation. The extent to which the cross-sectoral tasks of participation and gender equality have also been taken into account will be examined in the present study, taking Ghana as an example.

1.1 The Issues to be Examined

The extended HIPC II debt initiative, agreed upon at the 1999 World Economic Summit in Cologne, pursues the goal of reducing the debt of highly indebted countries by two thirds. In order to ensure that the goal of debt relief, namely to combat extreme poverty, is achieved, the political dimensions of good governance, external framework conditions and international development cooperation have been linked. The planned drafting procedure for national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) therefore puts the emphasis on participation and country ownership.

Within the institutionalised policy dialogue, different actors/stakeholders in society should be able to bring their interests and positions to a comprehensive consultation process, especially in the initial stages of PRSPs, and thereby help ensure greater acceptance and effectiveness of the new poverty reduction programmes.

A shocking lack of data on gender issues became evident after the first case reports on civil society participation were published. Apart from the documented complaints made by individual women's organisations (e.g. in Uganda) that they were not sufficiently involved in the consultation process, the international donor community has few assessments to date of whether, to what extent and how gender approaches are taken into account in PRSP processes, and the few that do exist are overwhelmingly negative. A cross-sectoral analysis performed by the World Bank of fifteen Interim and four Full PRSPs has highlighted the fact that social and economic gender issues are accorded only marginal attention in the majority of documents. They feature primarily with respect to the education and health sectors, whereas the gender aspect is largely ignored in the agricultural, environment, transport, energy and urban development sectors.

Poor results in the core aspects of PRSPs, namely the analysis of poverty, political measures and monitoring as well as the consultation process, also point to the fact that until now an important opportunity for a holistic approach to tackling poverty and social development has been passed up.¹

In this context, the present study aims to analyse:

- a) whether and to what extent women and women's organisations were involved in the process (was there equal participation?);
- b) whether and to what extent gender interests were taken into consideration in the PRSP process.

It will thus concentrate on the quality of participation of female stakeholders, taking the specific example of the development of one PRSP to provide a better illustration.

- Were there enough offers and/or resources for women's groups and organisations to become involved in the PRSP process? What participation forums existed?
- Were these used and/or who represented gender interests?

Taking the analysis of Ghana's PRSP as an example, the second stage of the study will consider relevant gender-specific themes in more detail:

- What is the nature of the link established between gender and poverty?

¹ A tabular overview of the results of the cross-sectoral analysis was included in the gender chapter of the World Bank's PRSP Source Book. Cf. Bamberger et al (2001) pp. 7 f. A complete version has been available since August 2001. World Bank (2001c). On the results of the World Bank analysis, see also Sect. 4.

With reference to Rwanda, Elaine Zuckermann (2001) demonstrates positive ways of integrating gender aspects into a PRSP.

- In which sectors is gender a topic of discussion, under which conditions is it discussed, and with what intensity?
- Is the gender imbalance challenged as a reflection of the balance of power within society?

These questions must be seen in terms of social realities and embedded in the social, economic and political context. For a qualitative assessment of the gender dimension in Ghana's PRSP, it is also important to look at the question of the existence and role of a women's movement and institutionalised women's policy in the country.

The study also aims to elaborate starting points for taking better account of gender aspects and recommendations for development cooperation.

- How could the process be more participatory and more open to gender? Which points of reference does the country's political dialogue offer for gender mainstreaming?

1.2 Preliminary Hypothesis and Evaluation Criteria

The questions posed here are based on the well-founded assumption that issues relating to gender inequality have generally had little impact on practices in PRSP processes to date. Instead, gender has only a marginal role to play in political dialogue. Until now, wherever the topic has been taken into account in PRSPs and poverty reduction strategies, the gender issue has not been treated primarily as a form of structural social inequality, but as the *disadvantaging* of a certain *target group*. Although reference is made to the relationship between combating poverty and the necessary empowerment of those concerned, no strategic approach is proposed to overcome the imbalance in power.

In spite of international agreements and UN documents advocating an improvement in the social, legal and economic situation of women as a necessary precondition for combating poverty, and in view of the refining of new development policy approaches and guidelines on poverty reduction and social development, there seem to be significant transmission losses when the gender approach is translated into national poverty reduction strategies or country strategies.

If poverty reduction strategies are to be effective on a sustainable basis, however, by incorporating social issues rather than focusing narrowly on concepts to stabilise the economy and promote growth, if they are not only to be the expression of good governance but are to reflect the real social structures of poor countries, then the gender issue has not been sufficiently addressed so far.

Instead of the widely anchored and internationally established *empowerment* approach, which is considered to be a key dimension of poverty alleviation,² PRSPs primarily pursue the WID approach; in individual measures which are not explained in any detail, the gender policy anchored within PRSPs is aimed first and foremost at the fields of basic education for girls and micro-credit for women. Although securing basic needs is an elementary component of combating extreme poverty, and narrowing the gender gap in basic education is a central goal, emphasising these aspects is unsatisfactory from the gender perspective. Not only does this fail to make the most of the inherent potential of recent poverty reduction strategies with regard to the gender approach, it actually risks taking a step backwards, since there is a danger that the WID approach will be continued uncritically.

1.3 The Gender Case Study and the PRSP in Ghana

The lack of primary, empirical data on the question of how gender is taken into account in PRSPs was to be compensated for by an empirical case study. In addition to a targeted evaluation of the literature and information on the topic as well as discussions with experts in Germany on the subjects of PRSPs and West Africa, choosing a suitable country for a short-term data-gathering mission constituted an important part of the preparation.

In consultation with the relevant BMZ and GTZ country divisions, a case study of Ghana was prepared and, in coordination with procedures and appointments, carried out in Accra and Kumasi on 1–19 July 2001.

The following criteria determined the choice of country:

Relevance: Within the framework of the extended HIPC initiative, 38–40 highly indebted developing countries will qualify for debt relief and formulate poverty reduction strategies in the next few years; only six non-African countries are included. Five countries have presented a Full PRSP, while a further 35 have already drawn up an Interim PRSP. More than half of these are in sub-Saharan Africa. It thus seemed appropriate to select an HIPC country from this region. At the same time, the choice of Ghana, a decision justified below, targets a special country in that Ghana did not initially apply for debt relief. After the change in government in December 2000 and a partly public discussion at the beginning of 2001, this decision was revised and HIPC debt relief was applied for. However, once the decision was made, the process took the same path in Ghana as elsewhere.

Experience: For the purposes of a study it is appropriate to select a country that is not at the beginning of the PRSP process, but has at least completed the Interim PRSP and begun work

2 Cf. OECD/DAC (2001) and the World Bank (2001a).

on the Full PRSP; this means that experience is available both from the state and non-governmental organisations relating to the inclusion of gender-relevant issues. In Ghana, the former government's Ministry of Finance presented the first draft of the PRSP, the Interim PRSP, in June 2000. Under the guidance of the Ministry for Development, the National Development Planning Commission and its Task Force, work has been progressing on the Full PRSP since March 2001.

Dynamism: It is only possible to analyse the (insufficient or exemplary) involvement of women's organisations and gender issues and make recommendations for action where there are relevant actors within civil society who at the least have a dynamic effect on the PRSP consultation process conducted. It is quite possible for forces to be active in women's politics within a country (e.g. gender experts in institutions) without that country having a broad, politically effective civil society. Experience to date in the PRSP process demonstrates, however, that the inclusion of women's organisations takes place through the participation of a wider civil society in the process. An example of good practice concerning civil society involvement in the consultation process was therefore chosen for the case study. Since March 2001, the drafts of the Full PRSP in Ghana have always been discussed semi-publicly with the participation of civil society, which has earned the country good marks for dynamism.

The Intermediary Role of German Technical Cooperation: The GTZ has made a commitment to the process of formulating and implementing PRSPs in 13 African countries. The study was thus to be conducted in a country in which the GTZ is advising and supporting the PRSP process in-country, allowing contacts to be established through the GTZ Office and the results of the study to be taken into account in the future implementation process. The GTZ Office has been active in advising the Ghanaian process, especially since the change in government and in the drafting of the Full PRSP, and agreed to the choice of Ghana for a case study.

2 The PRSP Process in Ghana

The following chapter will explain the PRSP process. After an introduction and a chronological overview how the GPRS was established (Sect. 2.1), the qualitative and quantitative poverty assessment will be analysed (Sect. 2.2). This will be followed by an analysis of the participation process for forces within civil society (Sect. 2.3). A further section concentrates on women's organisations, their political approaches and their relationship to the state (Sect. 2.4).

2.1 Overview of Ghana's PRSP Process

- The Ministry of Finance of the former government presented an Interim PRSP in June 2000.

- Under the guidance of the Task Force created within the National Development and Planning Commission (NDPC), a first draft of the Full PRSP was prepared under the new government. This was discussed with the participation of civil society in several, mostly very large consultation workshops.
- At the end of September 2001 a third, much more extensive draft was completed. Further revisions have been incorporated, some as a result of the criticisms expressed by forces in civil society and women's politics.

The *Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy 2002–2004* (GPRS) is steered by the NDPC. On the basis of the *Comprehensive Policy Framework*, which has existed since the early 1990s, the Task Force set up five *core teams* at the beginning of the consultation process in mid-2000. Their task was to formulate a poverty analysis of one main topic and devise pertinent recommendations. Government, ministry, administration, civil society, business and donor community representatives were invited to work together in the five areas of macro-economics, production and employment, human development and basic services, vulnerability and exclusion, and *governance*. Seminal comments have been incorporated into the current GPRS from the reports presented since the end of 2000.

Against the background of Ghana's experience of the precursor of the PRSP, "Vision 2020", which was drawn up without the participation of civil society, the necessity of involving a wide range of different actors, especially the poor themselves, was made apparent and declared to be a "key component" of *Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy*.³

2.2 The Analysis of Poverty in the GPRS

2.2.1 Participatory Poverty Assessments Undertaken by the GTZ and NDPC

At the first stage of participatory consultations with civil society, workshops and discussions took place at the local level in 2000 in eight districts from four of Ghana's ten administrative regions.⁴ The GTZ Office provided financial, human resources and conceptual support for the qualitative data collection (group discussions, semi-structured interviews, participant observation).

3 "Based on the lesson learnt during the implementation of some of the poverty reduction programmes the need to widely consult stakeholders especially the poor themselves in packaging and revising the strategy became apparent. A key component of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) is the participation of civil society, the private and public sectors", in: GTZ/NDPC (2000), p. 2.

4 Upper West, Brong-Ahafo, Central and Volta regions; cf. GTZ/NDPC (2000).

In order to ensure that *all* "the voices and concerns of the poor are heard in all that is done", the GTZ suggested holding the workshops in the villages and communities, with groups selected by sex and age (focus groups for men, women and young people).⁵

The NDPC Task Force subsequently considered this measure to be a valuable procedure, though it self-critically recognised that the separation into groups should have taken place far earlier, *before* questioning and not during the evaluation.

The final report on the regional poverty assessment principally contains gender-specific statements especially in the first sections on the "definition of poverty", the "causes of poverty" and "coping strategies":

Definition of Poverty: *"While the youth and the men defined poverty as low income and the absence of money for investment in their farming and other economic activities, the women in all the regions also saw poverty more in the context of the plight of their families, especially the children" (ibid., p. 5).*

The Causes of Poverty: *"...the responses of the dialogue partners, especially women, indicate a rising belief that large family sizes affect income levels and standard of living adversely" (ibid., p. 10).*

Coping with Poverty: *"While the women in the Upper West Region extract shea butter, brew pito (a local beer) and prepare bean cakes for sale, their men work for richer farmers as labourers, to earn extra income."* Further examples follow of regional and gender-specific income-generating activities designed to alleviate the poverty of the household. (*ibid.*, p. 12).

This point of view, however, which provides an important insight into the economic and social structures of Ghana's rural society, is not maintained throughout. There is no gender-specific disaggregation in the tabular summary of responses, which are classified only by region. The suggestions for addressing poverty too, very important for poverty reduction measures, are broken down only by region and not according to gender or other social markers (pp. 16 f.). A gender-sensitive translation of the different problem situations into gender-specific needs and interests, for instance concerning questions of financial support,⁶ education and training, access to basic health services and co-determination, would have constituted an important foundation for Ghana's PRSP.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 2 f.

6 However, it is pointed out elsewhere that women work primarily in the informal sector and therefore prefer a more informal and flexible system of banking and loans.

Nevertheless, the participatory research clearly demonstrates that the relationship between gender and poverty (in the same way as that between youth and poverty) is a key issue in the reduction of poverty in Ghana:

"It was realised from the consultations that women and the youth suffer most or are more vulnerable to poverty. (...) It is pertinent that poverty reduction programmes should empower women and the youth especially because of the additional responsibility women play in taking care of the family" (ibid., p. 24).

Gender-disaggregated data are of fundamental importance to the development of a gender-sensitive PRSP. The data can never stand alone, however, and must be explicitly discussed in the context of the socio-economic and cultural structures of a country; they must also be translated into equally gender-differentiated strategies and measures. Participatory research such as PPAs and gender-relevant results, incorporated into the PRSP policy cycle, should be taken into account during all the phases – data gathering, evaluation, policy formulation, implementation and monitoring – and updated as necessary.

The consideration given to gender issues in Ghana's participatory poverty assessment certainly provided gender-sensitive data, thereby leading to a wide definition of poverty, but in the final analysis its trace was lost between the data collection in the field and its anchoring in a political strategy for combating poverty.

2.2.2 The Quantitative Database: the Ghana Living Standard Survey

Participatory approaches and qualitative data-gathering methods are an innovative but only supplementary part of the GPRS data. The most important collection of data used by the poverty strategy can be found in the fourth Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS 4), published in October 2000. In contrast to the qualitative poverty assessment, the statistics in GLSS 4 are consistently not broken down by region, but a significant proportion of the tables do list the data separately according to age and sex.⁷

The tables in the appendix contain lists of gender-disaggregated *time budgets*, which demonstrate the enormous workload of women in terms of reproductive and informal work. This corresponds to a call that has not only repeatedly been made by the international women's movement, but has now also been incorporated into recent policy papers of the

7 "Demography", "education", "health", "work and employment" and "migration" allow conclusions to be drawn as to the schooling of girls (85.6% of girls compared to 95.0% of boys in Accra) and the proportion of men and women in rural areas working as traders and sellers (4.6% of men compared to 17.6% of women), for instance.

donor community. Women suffer to a far greater extent than men from time poverty, and taking account of this gender-specific difference is an important characteristic of an extended concept of poverty, for which the current Ghanaian census provides a good basis. This wealth of data was not, however, incorporated into the Interim GPRS.

A central and recurrent criticism of statistics from the gender perspective is that "the household" is not a suitable basic element for a survey. Inequalities and hierarchies within a household – between young and old, men and women – and an unequal distribution of the revenue and expenditure relating to resources produced in the household are not adequately reflected. Sally Baden and others have criticised this with reference to the third Ghanaian census (GLSS 3).

*"The main limitation of the GLSS in terms of gender analysis is that it uses household level data and fails to disaggregate by gender **within** the households. Qualitative studies of poverty have found that women's and men's perceptions of well being were individually, not household based, confirming that income streams and other sources of livelihood are highly segregated by gender."*⁸

This criticism has evidently been taken up in GLSS 4 through multiple disaggregation of the data. Nevertheless, the household remains the basic element of the survey, and in central areas such as household income, expenditure and disposable resources such as loans, the well-known gender differences are not demonstrated.

In the field of agricultural production too, the household is taken as a single element, which surely obscures the periodical above-average involvement of men in the cultivation and harvesting of seasonal fruits (especially cash crops), for instance. It is remarkable, however, that the strikingly large proportion of women processing agricultural products in the household (90% or four fifths) is demonstrated separately. Yet there is good reason to be sceptical of the proportion of women involved in agricultural activity, also explicitly shown. The average figure of 43% across the country is firstly a reflection of strong regional differences and secondly the result of the fact that cropping and stock farming are bracketed together. It is unclear what role is played by the personal estimates of household members, those of strangers or cultural definitions, according to which women are considered basically as "housewives" and only secondarily as "farmers". In any case, in the GRPS, this lack of clarity has led to a failure to identify or mention the obvious correlation between the particularly pronounced poverty of small farmers as highlighted in GLSS 4, and the clearly high proportion of women among small farmers and the poor. Furthermore, GLSS 4 contains no information at all on HIV/AIDS or domestic violence.

8 Baden et al. (1994), p. 5.

Representatives of civil society organisations have found fault with the qualitative poverty assessment, claiming that it does not reflect any social relations of power or discrimination based on age, gender inequality or ethnic discrimination. This criticism also applies to the quantitative material.

Even with qualitative participatory data collection it is difficult to establish links, for example women remaining in a violent relationship due to financial dependence. With statistics it is quite impossible. A researcher from the University of Leon in Accra points to three factors within the field of education, for instance: (1) length of schooling, (2) results and diplomas and (3) content and quality of the education received. Whilst points one and two can be expressed statistically, the third aspect of unequal education opportunities is generally ignored.

In addition, the coordinator of "family and gender issues" for the Christian Council of Ghana sheds light on the usually obscure link between HIV/AIDS and income poverty; a lack of rights, specifically rights of disposition, leads to economic dependence on the income and property of the partner, which in turn can force people to make risky decisions in relations with their partner ("unprotected sex in return for upkeep").

The GPRS does not reflect such links. Particularly problematic is the fact that it hardly contains any disaggregated data, other than stereotypical references to the lower proportion of girls attending school and the high rate of maternal mortality.⁹

2.3 The PRSP Process: between "Ownership" and "Donorship"

In March 2001, when Ghana decided to take part in the HIPC initiative after all and apply for debt relief, the donor community was also invited to help formulate the GPRS by participating in working groups and coordination workshops. For country ownership to be taken seriously, the donors would have to "be at the negotiating table from the beginning", as the leader of the Task Force stressed, in order to build governance capacity. Yet, she continued, the donors have "taken a back seat throughout and in no way dominated the process". Even though, in contrast, the representative of the Ministry of Finance regards the GPRS process in its entirety as a response to donor demands – "we have to meet the donor community" – the participation of all ministries in the process is seen as a step forward compared to the sole leadership of the Ministry of Finance. The involvement of all Ghana's ministries is indeed an important step in promoting the further development and coherence of sectoral reform policies, and also in the institutionalisation of participation.

⁹ One exception is the mention of the lack of infrastructure and access roads, which means that 90% of all goods and products are transported by women and children on their heads in and around those villages and communities without vehicular access.

In the view of the Task Force and various ministries, independence is a characteristic of Ghana's PRSP process. The GTZ too sees the poverty strategy as being largely in Ghanaian hands. Nevertheless, the quality of the paper might suffer from the fact that the advice repeatedly offered by donors concerning strategy development, the implementation process and monitoring was not followed.

A contrary opinion to the otherwise mostly positive appraisals is presented by political non-governmental organisations in civil society. The senior staff of Third World Network (TWN) and the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), who are also members of the NGO network CIVISOC, say that the GPRS does not reflect strong ownership.

According to them, a contradiction is already inherent in the principle itself, since it was introduced by the donors as a condition ("ownership as conditionality"). They also question whether poverty reduction really is the key motivation of the GPRS initiative, since the decision was not voluntarily revised under the new government and president Kufuor; instead, Ghana had to decide whether it wanted to lose the important donor Japan, which denied all HIPC signatories the right to new loans, or, in view of the fact that the country owes about 75% of its debt to the World Bank and IMF, it should gamble its access to International Development Association (IDA) loans.

In the opinion of the directors of both TWN and ISODEC, the economic importance of the GPRS remains unclear in terms of the ongoing implementation of budget reforms and the current revision of the *Medium Term Expenditure Framework*. Even though the Task Force is working on both plans, critics fear that there will be no coherence between the MTEF and the PRSP, since a GPRS that is subordinate to the MTEF will not have the desired impact on poverty reduction goals.¹⁰ In addition, the IMF's signature of the *Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF)* at the beginning of July 2001 signalled the beginning of a severe cost-cutting policy, which showed all intentions of combating poverty to be mere lip service. There was no longer any mention of measures to protect and support the poor – "not even the welfare thing".

The directors believe that the paradigm of the paper itself is evidence of the predominance of macro-economics. It is clear, they claim, that Ghana is "taking a neo-classical course" hand in hand with the donor community. The belief in growth and the myth of the trickle-down effect are apparently essentially attributable to the influence of the IMF.

The critics from civil society agree that the country needs macro-economic stability. The inflation and interest rates are too high, the cedi is too weak and the growth in GDP in 2000 was far too low at 3.7%. But they warn against all-encompassing privatisation and renewed

10 Cf. Abugre and Killick (2001) for an extended discussion.

structural adjustment measures such as those aimed at by the IMF and the World Bank in their calls for an increase in the price of petrol, gas, water and services to cover costs.

Given that social indicators, especially access to basic education and health, have deteriorated dramatically in the last few years despite the "Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment" (PAMSCAD), the director of the Third World Network sees the involvement of the IMF and its policies in the PRSP as a "dance with the devil". Calls from forces within civil society such as ISODEC and the Center for Budget Advocacy to be allowed to examine the budget planning were rejected as "absurd" by the planning commission, not least because they themselves have no access to these hard facts.

2.4 "Effort alone is not enough": Civil Society's Criticism of the Consultation Process

Coordination forums, or "harmonisation workshops" as they are called, are a core element of the participatory consultation process and the second step towards the broad involvement of civil society in Ghana's PRSP process. Several of these workshops have been held in the capital Accra, each time on a different scale and with a different thematic focus. Alongside bilateral and multilateral donor institutions, many representatives of civil society were invited to the first discussion of the results of the working group, taking place over several days; they included the Trade Union Council (TUC), church organisations, professional bodies, associations of critical civil society organisations (CIVISOC) and national women's groups (Netright).¹¹

The participation process will be examined below using selected criteria. The assessment is based firstly on "ten criteria for ideal participation", and secondly on the statements made by representatives of civil society.

Representativeness: Apart from the large number of participants at the harmonisation workshops (91), which, according to reports, made an in-depth substantive discussion difficult, the selection of organisations and institutions present was criticised and felt to be unrepresentative. The large proportion of representatives from mostly state-financed economic and political research institutes stands out in the PRSP, raising the question as to which socially disadvantaged groups in Ghanaian society they represent.¹²

According to a researcher taking part in one of the working groups, the problem of representativeness primarily related to donor expectations of the working group reports.

11 This workshop was carried out with the financial support of the GTZ.

12 An oral comment made by Dr. Yao Graham, director of Third World Network.

Attempts to adopt a poverty-oriented way of thinking and to represent the poor should correlate with academic analyses and cover different perspectives.

In an international comparison, however, the Ghanaian procedure is not alone in this respect, since the criterion of the representativeness of civil society participants has been given little consideration in PRSP processes to date. Even though it is hardly possible, or indeed desirable, to set down standardised and universally valid criteria for the selection of civil society organisations and their representatives, future PRSP phases should accord more attention to the **transparency** of the invitation and participation process.¹³

In Ghana, as in other countries, attempts to create networks have proved successful. This has led to the establishment of an association of several hundred Ghanaian NGOs (CIVISOC), supported by the Canadian agency CIDA. However, the creation of this network not only offered NGOs the opportunity to converge and strengthen their positions, but also engendered extra consultation and coordination workloads. The leading representatives of CIVISOC therefore see the association as a bonus for the World Bank, since it is much simpler for the donor community to deal with civil society when it is thus concentrated on the basis of rapidly reached compromises. According to non-state forces, the particular challenge of the PRSP process lies in the fact that the consultations are planned in the long term, but that the actual process only ever triggers short-term reactions. According to CIVISOC representatives, this also has a negative effect on the substantive quality of the strategy paper.

2.4.1 The PRSP and Democratisation in Ghana

Nevertheless, the criticisms voiced by Ghana's civil society also include an important measure of recognition for the progressive and open process which state institutions are endeavouring to ensure in the PRSP process.

These efforts have to be seen against the backdrop of Ghana's long history of a particularly autocratic political system in particular, within which "a dozen people from a small elite make decisions in the corridors of power," despite the democratisation process introduced since the first free elections held under Rawling's NDC in November 1992.¹⁴ At the beginning of the 1990s, the constitution of the Fourth Republic established a multi-party system, freedom of

13 A major problem in the invitation procedure is that invitations are sent out at short notice. The process takes place under huge time pressure, which was a justified source of criticism in many countries. In Ghana too, this threatens to undermine the quality of participation. The invitations generally arrive at a very late date, practically precluding coordination within the NGOs between the representative and the institution and resulting in an information deficit, a lack of transparency in decision-making and a failure to transmit and mainstream the discussion internally and externally.

14 Oral comment made by an ISODEC representative.

expression and of the press, and the recognition of the UN Convention on Human Rights, which has allowed the formal structures of the rule of law to gradually develop into a participatory democracy and take root in people's consciousness.

There is a long tradition of civil society organisations in Ghana, despite the military dictatorship, but the NDC's restrictive policy of taking them over did much to hinder the development of critical and indeed constructive debates within civil society.¹⁵ Rooted in a structural adjustment policy lasting over twenty years, which required the co-option of all sectors of society, a passive attitude towards the state became widespread and brought interaction between civil society on the one hand and state institutions and actors on the other practically to a standstill.¹⁶ The election of the hitherto strongest opposition party, NPP, to government under president John A. Kufuor in December 2000 raised great hopes both in the country itself and among donor countries that Ghana would move further forward along the path from a presidential to a parliamentary democracy.¹⁷

As has been repeatedly emphasised in studies on the sustainable establishment of participation, the involvement of parliament is of great importance to this aim.¹⁸ When this study was conducted, no information was available concerning the **involvement of parliament** in Ghana's PRSP, but there are sufficient declarations of intent to step up cooperation with parliament in the next stages of the PRSP process. Support for the networking of parliament and civil society in all future phases of the PRSP cycle is now seen as a central starting point not only for the promotion of a dynamic civil society and thus for the democratisation of society, but also for the institutionalisation of broad-based participation.

The relationship between the state and civil society in Ghana is currently tense and distant, however. All organisations interviewed, whether church, political, charitable or women's organisations, repeatedly stressed that they were "non-partisan", not affiliated to any one political party and thus (according to the old definition) non-governmental. In contrast, the NDPC Task Force cast doubt on the legitimacy and representativeness of non-governmental organisations and referred to an "NGO elite" which itself has no experience of poverty. Despite self-criticism concerning the participation process ("it was not performed very well"), the NGO criticism of apparent weaknesses in incorporating civil society forces was harsh, as was the response. The Task Force was especially critical of the fact that NGOs "agitate a great deal in order to be involved, but in the end are not prepared to put in the time and effort which

15 Gyimah-Boadi (1994), p. 143.

16 Amponsem (1995), p. 14.

17 Cf. BMZ (2001b).

18 Eberlei (2001), pp. 32 f.; cf. also Abugre and Killick 2001.

go with participation." It is easy to take refuge in complaining about the procedure and to take on the role of a "watch-dog" rather than being pro-active.¹⁹ This view is shared by the GTZ and other donor institutions.²⁰

The mutual expressions of mistrust by the state and civil society and the reluctance to come into contact documented above spawn further tension and hinder an effective process of participation and development. They have to be put on the agenda for discussion in the continuing PRSP process, and donors and/or German development cooperation must act as an intermediary to support the first steps towards a rapprochement.

Despite the weaknesses described above, the PRSP process has pioneering potential and brings new opportunities to expand the democratic principles of "co-determination" and "co-development" in Ghana's social development. In line with other assessments, and given the political context already outlined, participation in Ghana's PRSP process can definitely be categorised as "relatively strong".²¹

2.4.2 The Participation of Women's Organisations

Women's organisations represented in the process are also confronted with the question of their representativeness and legitimacy. Lobbying organisations based in the capital and active in women's politics such as Netright can hardly claim to hold a mandate from poor, marginalised women. Instead, like other organisations, these Ghanaian NGOs work on the basis of the "self-apportioned task" of being a mouthpiece for "poor women without a

19 Oral comment made by the director of the team of staff.

20 In this context, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation has also complained how difficult it is to find reliable, cooperative, active NGOs, typical partners of political foundations. Most trade unions in Ghana have no relevant political influence, and there are many dubious "one-person businesses" to be found among the glut of NGOs, which have been mushrooming over the last few years. In addition, and this has been confirmed by church donors such as the EED, the counterparts are weak on substance, have a passive attitude, and have high financial and substantive expectations of the donor organisations (oral information).

21 Countries with weak participation; limitation of participation to minimal forms such as information, at the most consultation; involvement of a limited number of actors. Medium-intensity participation; efforts to initiate wide-ranging participation, involving parliament, civil society, private enterprise, different levels and methods. Strong participation; involvement of parliament, wide, inclusive involvement of many actors, public debates, regular participation surveys, collaboration of actors in the PRSP steering committees. Eberlei (2001), p. 6.

voice".²² However, it is important that these organisations take a stand for both strategic and practical gender interests. A positive aspect of the choice of women's organisations for Ghana's PRSP process is that the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) – and also organisations such as Netright and 'Women in Law and Development in Africa' (WILDAF) in later workshops – is an example of *political women's organisations* being invited that also represent strategic gender interests.

However, in pursuit of wide-ranging, inclusive participation and thus the promotion of **gender mainstreaming**, women's organisations should not be the only ones to represent gender interests and contribute gender perspectives. The topic must also be put on the agendas of other organisations, if gender is to be implemented as a cross-sectoral task in (inter-) national efforts to reduce poverty. The participation of organisations that also take gender into account, such as Third World Network, is an initial, if subconscious, step in this direction.

Yet the question as to whether women's organisations have been involved in the PRSP process to an adequate extent cannot be answered exclusively in terms of the openness of national structures and the good will of representatives of these institutions themselves. Indeed, the example of Ghana illustrates the fact that even where opportunities exist, they are not always fully exploited.

The observations made above concerning the problematic relationship between the state and civil society that have shaped the sometimes difficult GPRS participation process also apply to independent Ghanaian women's organisations. In fact, the scepticism of gender experts and women from non-governmental organisations regarding cooperation with state institutions such as the NDPC and ministries seems to be even greater and the distance to be even harder to overcome. For in areas where even critical forces in civil society, such as TWN and ISODEC, see the PRSP consultation process as an opportunity to negotiate with the state, business and donors, some of the women invited "voted with their feet" by neither accepting the offer of participation nor pursuing it further.

On the one hand, this reaction represents a wasted chance to participate in the early phase of the consultation process; women's groups and their representatives did not originally recognise the innovative approach and the process-type nature of the poverty reduction strategy paper. Only at a later stage, in the revision phase of the draft Full PRSP, did women's and gender experts comment on the strategy paper and prompt the holding of a one-day

22 Cf. Bell (2001), p. 12. The possible differences between the "voices of the poor" and the voices of their civil society representatives on the one hand and a women's-policy agenda on the other are addressed.

workshop with representatives of bilateral and multilateral donors on "Gender Aspects in GPRS" as a result of their criticism.²³

If one adopts the criticism of the feminist research institute Gender and Economic Reforms in Africa (GERA), a branch of the Third World Network, the original failure of many women's organisations to gauge the nature of the PRSP is a result of their insufficient interest in macro-economic issues and problems. The director of the research and advocacy programme "Gender and Economic Reforms in Africa" accuses many activists and their organisations in Ghana of not sufficiently cushioning the state's official policy of distributing small loans by providing additional economic literacy measures, thus creating for themselves an opportunity for economic activities at the micro level. Macro-economics is not at the top of the women's political agenda, i.e. "the politics of the market is left to men." This reticence in the field of "macro-economics, the PRSP and gender" may well have hindered the networking necessary to the GPRS until now.²⁴

A Relationship on Probation: Women's Organisations and the State

Yet the scepticism and reserve of women's organisations vis-à-vis intensive involvement in the PRSP is understandable and justified when viewed in the context of past relations between the state and women's organisations.

As an integral part of civil society, women's organisations were for many years only able to work within the framework of a fairly restrictive structure. Even more so than associations in other policy fields and social sectors, they were affected by the takeover and domineering policies of the well-resourced institution 31st December Women's Movement (DWM), a national women's association founded in 1982.²⁵

Women's political work in the NGO scene was still very much overshadowed by this "government NGO" until well into the 1990s, so that no cohesive women's *movement* could emerge.

23 "One-Day Workshop on Engendering the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS)", on 5. November 2001. The discussion was principally about the strategy paper and not the process.

24 On GERA, cf. Kerr (2000), pp. 268 f.

25 This association, led by the wife of former president Rawlings and fully supported in financial and logistical terms by the then ruling party, the NDC, operated right down to the level of local women's groups and took over their work. "The discrimination in favour of the DWM by the government has affected women adversely. Most women are afraid to come together without being members of the DWM" (Mensah-Kutin et al. 2000, p. 25).

"The 31st December Women's Movement, which has dominated the NGO scene since 1983, has contributed in no small way to the marginalization and disempowering of other NGOs."²⁶

The national women's association 31st December Women's Movement not only overshadowed the entire spectrum of NGOs, but also the nationally established National Council on Women and Development (NCWD). This institute had an important initiating role in the institutionalisation of "women's issues" in the 1970s, but it failed to pursue this line and institutionalise gender interests.

2.5 Between "Empowerment" and "Mainstreaming": the Approaches of Women's and Non-Governmental Organisations

The policies of the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) focused on the implementation of WID programmes since the mid-1970s and principally financed basic education, practical training and income-generating measures for women.

The many non-governmental organisations founded in the 1980s and 1990s did not counterbalance these policies either, but instead, with the support of international donors, they complemented the WID measures by negotiating and disseminating income-generating projects at the community level. Only in the last few years has a political approach to promotion, namely the **empowerment approach** become established within NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) working with groups at grassroots level.

The empowerment approach, together with awareness-raising measures, aims to enable women to identify, formulate and defend their interests (at least) in their immediate social environment.²⁷ When the survival-oriented goals of women are incorporated into projects, while also supporting the formulation of strategic interests through awareness-raising, empowerment processes can be initiated and women's existing scope for action extended. Parallel training measures are necessary, but are not in themselves enough to ensure any radical reform of structural gender inequality.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 45. As another national gender expert pointed out, "We have no lively women's movement." For a detailed presentation of the relationship between the state and women's groups, cf. Mensah-Kutin et al. (2000); Baden et al. (1994), pp. 3 f.; Ofei-Aboagye (1998), pp. 39 f.

27 The empowerment concept can be traced back to the international network DAWN (Sen & Grown 1987) and signifies a process of collective power-building by women, but also by other marginalised groups, in the course of which the ability to negotiate rights and decision-making authority are attained. "Power" is understood as the "power to shape" rather than the "power to implement". The goal is the transformation of hierarchical social structures.

In the case of Ghana, it can be observed that an approach linking "economic empowerment" to the strengthening of political rights has only recently become accepted. Alongside conventional training programmes, some NGOs, many of them newly-founded, now offer awareness-raising and social and legal policy advice. Many NGOs work with a combination of social and economic empowerment. Women learn about their rights through awareness-raising and about their capabilities through training. Both lead to greater self-confidence, but the practical vocational training also gives them economic strength and independence: "*You cannot talk about political empowerment without economic empowerment.*"²⁸

Few NGOs and networks exist, however, which focus primarily or exclusively on legal and political empowerment and aim to help establish micro-level and meso-level women's and gender policy measures through political advocacy and lobbying at the national macro level. Organisations such as ABANTU for Development, WILDAF, Netright and the Gender Center work with a rights-based approach and have put topics such as violence against women, land and property rights, the rights of widows and girls, and political co-determination and governance on Ghana's political agenda.²⁹

Alongside these NGOs there are many others for whom the formula "economic empowerment" represents not only the most important point of access to the target group of "poor but productive women", but also the only key to improving their standard of living. Although this does reflect a priority set by women for measures to secure survival and combat poverty, it ignores the relationship between the means and the end.

In contrast, the representatives of the lobbying organisations mentioned and of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recognise the value of small-scale loans for securing survival, but emphasise the fact that **it is not an end in itself** or a strategic response to the needs of women and poor people. Far more important are comprehensive awareness-raising and training measures, which not only teach trainees how to manage financial resources effectively, but also strengthen their political awareness of their own rights and how to assert them.³⁰

28 Oral comment made by E. Bofo, project manager of the Christian Mothers' Association (CMA). The CMA's communal "Empowerment Programme" strengthens the ability of the most committed amongst them to speak at district meetings and stand for election, for instance. Their power to shape future action and make decisions is thereby also strengthened.

29 The development of a new GTZ social and legal policy advisory programme is also an important measure in the field of non-economic empowerment. Cf. Dogbe (2001).

30 In a poverty survey carried out in rural communities by the NGO Center for the Development of People (CEDEP), the inhabitants were firmly against the provision of supplementary financial resources for the community and individuals, and called instead for training programmes on how to manage the existing resources (land, seeds and money) more efficiently (oral comment made by the director of CEDEP).

3 State Policy on Women in Ghana

The following chapter will analyse development-policy approaches to promoting women which are predominant in Ghana's current policy and therefore also influence gender policies in Ghana's PRSP. Section 3.1 sums up the gender-specific programmes and the impacts of Ghana's structural adjustment policies in the 1980s. The next section then highlights the approaches to integration and development of the newly founded Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs.

3.1 Structural Adjustment for Women: from the World Market to Household Economies

The gender-specific impacts of structural adjustment measures during the "lost decade" in Africa in general and Ghana's Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in particular are documented in wide-ranging "impacts analyses". The evaluations highlight the fact that women were particularly badly affected through loss of income and of access to the formal sector, as well as an increased workload.³¹ Although the "feminisation of poverty" cannot be seen across the board, impoverishment trends can be identified in those economic sectors in which disproportionately many women work (small-scale farming, food production and processing, small-scale trading and public services), whereas export-oriented cocoa farming has been strengthened in economic terms.

After the drastic fall in the world market price for cocoa, the worsening economic crisis of a country dependent on cocoa exports was to have been turned around by a comprehensive economic recovery programme (ERP, 1983–1986). Based on the two classic pillars of promoting foreign direct investment by devaluing the national currency on the one hand, and cutting costs, limiting public-sector spending and eliminating subsidies on foodstuffs and important raw materials on the other, a twin-track policy was pursued of strengthening the section of the economy geared to the world market, whilst weakening household economies.³²

The second phase of structural adjustment (1986–1988) focused more strongly on liberalisation and privatisation and was accompanied by an "experiment with a social

31 "There have been two major approaches to analysing gender issues in adjustment. These can be loosely categorized into those which see women as a "vulnerable group" suffering disproportionately to men from the impact of adjustment, emphasise women's *reproductive* roles and the increased time burdens placed on women by adjustment policies; and those which focus mainly on gender based constraints to the sectoral reallocation of women's labour from contracting (non-tradeables) to expanding (tradeables) sectors"; Baden et al. (1994), p. 24.

32 Amponsem (1995), pp. 13 f.

dimension".³³ However, the "Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment" (PAMSCAD), which made Ghana the privileged experimental zone and "model country" for economic promotion programmes of the IMF and the World Bank, did nothing to change the actual framework of structural adjustment or bring any real reduction in poverty for those groups particularly badly affected, namely women and the rural population.

With regard to current state policy on women in Ghana, special mention should be made of the specifically women-oriented programme ENOWID (Enhancing Opportunities for Women in Development), which was carried out within the PAMSCAD framework.

Implemented in three of Ghana's ten administrative regions, it consisted primarily of the allocation of credits and loans, disbursed to women on "soft" terms by a specially founded group, to promote small businesses and income-generating measures. Experience showed the rate of repayment to be very high, but the programme is nevertheless not considered to have been a success. Most projects developed within the framework of the programme were in the fields of production and subsistence and concentrated on the traditional areas of food processing and preparation. Little or no attention was apparently paid to improving marketability through the diversification of products or the further development of processing techniques using new technologies, although the market for the resulting products was already saturated in many communities.

This classical method of promoting women, widespread in Ghana and elsewhere, which is obviously oriented to a limited range of products and ignores the economic laws of supply and demand, was linked by ENOWID to an additional, awareness-raising component for the promotion of families. These "training measures" encouraged participants to invest their new income principally in the education and well-being of their children, thereby leaving them with no further resources to invest. However, the founding of many groups and the mobilisation of existing women's groups is estimated to have been effective beyond the duration of the programme and to have supported the independence of women.³⁴

3.2 Micro-credits as a Panacea?

The countless church or independent groups at grassroots level founded by international donors and NGOs, and the women's savings groups arising from the structural adjustment programme ENOWID, are now a core target group of development measures at the micro level in Ghana. Linked to the development policy concepts of a) self-help and b) economic

33 Amponsem (1995).

34 Baden et al. (1994), p. 28.

empowerment, these groups appear to be the interface of a policy pursuing the WID approach which continues to this day.

In an analysis of the mainstreaming of gender approaches and the implementation of activities in Ghana before the change in government, the authors argue that the move from a WID to a GAD approach in Ghana's institutions and programmes has been only marginal. They criticise in particular a lack of ideas, of appropriate specialists and of resources to design new gender programmes:

*"Although there are shifts from WID to GAD in interventions, such shifts are only marginal. Programmes/projects are highly skewed in favour of interventions addressing practical and basic needs of women. Advocacy and other empowerment programmes that initiate change are few. (...) Most institutions especially government agencies lacked the requisite capacity and were therefore not ready to mainstream gender in a sustainable manner. In the majority of cases institutions had no clear vision, commitment of leadership and the necessary resources to integrate gender in a more meaningful way."*³⁵

The new government was apparently keen to set the tone for improved institutional policies regarding women and gender issues, and created a Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs (MoWA) for the first time in the cabinet reshuffle. The PRSP coordinating committee regards MoWA as an expression of the special importance attached by the government to women's and gender issues.

In contrast, NGOs and gender experts are rather anxious that an institution has been created which concentrates primarily on women as the target group, while the most important challenge for a poverty-oriented policy that aims to eliminate social inequality on a sustainable basis would be a) a shift from the WID to the GAD approach and b) a move away from focusing on one target group to the integration of the gender perspective across the board in all policy areas – from "targeting" to "mainstreaming".

Aside from the frequent use of the term "gender" in official documents, there is a danger that the establishment and the political direction of the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs are a manifestation of the WID approach and with it a return to the 1980s. For one thing, the supporters of gender mainstreaming fear that in future all important, gender-relevant topics in each sectoral department (agriculture, health, finances) will be delegated to the "ministry with the unfortunate name". They already see the signs in the transformation process of state institutions, as the units for the promotion of women previously created

35 AGE (2000), p. vi.

through the establishment of the WID approach (e.g. the "Women's Department" in the NPDC) are to a large extent being abolished.³⁶

On the other hand, according to NGO representatives, MoWA has so far failed to develop a basic, reformed political framework plan for gender issues. How can gender be treated as a cross-sectoral topic? Which links to other ministries can be created and how? How can political commitment to the topic be strengthened? How can the active political involvement of women be achieved and established sustainably and at all levels of decision-making processes within society?

The concerns of gender experts and representatives of women's NGOs in Ghana focus on the latter question: without political participation there can be no empowerment and without equal political and social rights and a share in decision-making powers within society, there can be no lasting improvement of the economic situation of women. The demands of civil society that social inequality be remedied through political participation and a shift in the balance of power also apply to poverty reduction. NGO representatives thereby give priority to a rights-based approach, which puts improved access and co-determination of the poor (especially of poor women) at the centre of poverty-oriented policy.

Nevertheless, MoWA is once again focusing its work on the distribution of small loans to women. Based on the recognition that "two social groups, namely women and children, particularly [need] support", the minister announced the creation of a women's development fund to support small businesswomen and female producers and traders in the informal sector.³⁷ Without heed to the experience available regarding projects of this type, the programme's declaration states;

"Women are highly enterprising in Ghana and raising their productivity is very critical to reducing poverty and achieving sustainable growth in the country. Development of women-owned enterprise enables women to meet their needs, augment their earnings from business activities and acquire resources for future investments. Women are known to be the very effective supporters of their family incomes and help in a large way to augment their family income budgets in Ghana" (MoWA, 2001).

36 The Ministry of Agriculture still has a "Women's Desk" although it is geared mainly to domestic concerns. This shows that women are not primarily considered to be agricultural producers but housewives (oral comment, GTZ).

37 No statistics are available about this body. The Minister of Women's and Children's Affairs, representatives of the Ministry of Finance, the Bank of Ghana and donors are on the directing committee of the fund. Loans are to be disbursed through savings and loan institutions, communal and rural banks and NGOs.

As if this method of "promoting women" had not been applied with little success over the past twenty-five years, as if it had not been repeatedly observed that income does not rise significantly and poverty does not decrease, the minister confidently forecast, "We will change the country with this money." The focus is once more on the self-help potential of women, who are to form groups in order to offset market inequalities through their own initiatives. If too few enterprises exist to employ women in the long term, then women must employ themselves. The empowerment of women should be achieved through the promotion of girls' education accompanied by health and HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, especially directed at vulnerable groups.³⁸ Despite the declared aim of increasing the political decision-making powers of women by improving opportunities for participation,³⁹ the gender concept remains fragmentary and limited to labelling; the link between combating poverty and gender is based on classic WID components and goes no further than the conventional "target group approach".

In sum, it can be observed that both the widespread frustration of the independent gender experts and women's organisations regarding the insufficient incorporation of gender issues into the PRSP process, and their reticence vis-à-vis the process is directly linked to the political dialogue between civil society and state institutions responsible for women's and gender policy, which has been stagnating or non-existent for years. Even before the change in government, Ghanaian gender experts, financed by foreign donors, had presented policy papers and recommendations for a gender mainstreaming approach, but these were ignored. Even after the change in government, available expertise was not sufficiently consulted or used for the process of developing the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Instead, the granting of micro-loans to women has been declared the blueprint for all-round empowerment. There is a danger that Ghana might miss the boat as far as modern gender policy is concerned.

A further reason for the unhappiness of those representing independent women's organisations with the GPRS and their reticence vis-à-vis Ghana's poverty reduction programme is that inherently contradictory policies collide in the national poverty reduction strategy.

A growing number of independent experts on gender issues are focusing their work in Ghana on the realisation of "strategic gender interests". Lasting empowerment, access to political decision-making powers and/or to a comprehensive power to shape society, the applicability of and access to equal rights, as well as physical and mental integrity as basic preconditions

38 One positive aspect that should be highlighted is that Ghana's Ministry of Women's Affairs not only aims to secure basic education for girls, but also wishes to promote further school education.

39 The proportion of women representatives in local government is only 7%. US\$ 64,000 was therefore made available for the promotion of female political representatives in the context of preparations for local government elections in 2002.

for exercising this empowerment form the core elements of their political aims and the thrust of their lobbying. This focus is based on a human rights approach, the implementation of which is not only a goal in itself for development and equality policy, but will also lead to more effective poverty alleviation. By contrast, a policy of direct poverty reduction, which would focus – not only in Ghana – on the needs approach, would limit opportunities to further develop gender and poverty concepts. For direct poverty reduction measures per se, such as the extension of basic social services (e.g. free, comprehensive access to ante-natal care), have no automatic impact on the social status or the legal situation of disadvantaged groups.

Objections have also been voiced by representatives of Ghana's civil society organisations with regards to gender issues in the GPRS: What qualitative legal and social benefits do women reap from the paper, and what potential does it have to change gender relations?

4 Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is the focus of the following chapter. The analysis is based on the draft Full PRSP dating from September 2001. The principal propositions will be approached from the perspective of gender analysis and assessed in the context of the criteria examined in Sects. 1.1 and 1.2. Essential questions here are: What understanding of "gender" does the paper reflect? On which approach to women's and development politics are the measures apparently based? On which sectors and social fields do the proposed measures focus? Where are gender aspects lacking? Are strategies proposed to change hierarchical gender relations? Are measures suggested to monitor this relationship?

The analysis is contextualised through a comparative examination of the results of the World Bank study of fifteen Interim and four Full PRSPs. Certain framework conditions for the integration of the gender approach in the GPRS will then be explained.

Firstly, however, we shall look at the participation of experts in thematic working groups, which served to give a preliminary structure to the GPRS and its gender aspects.

4.1 Women's Participation in Working Groups

It has already been pointed out that the coordination committee for Ghana's PRSP made a serious effort to involve women's organisations in the participation process. It also approached representatives of lobbying organisations, whose goals are to bring about social and political change in terms of gender inequality, as opposed to charity organisations, which aim to improve the degree of basic needs satisfaction.

A glance at the list of consulting participants in the PRSP working groups shows that a considerable number of women were represented, rather than the usual few "token females".

The chairwoman of the Task Force pointed out that a large number of the working groups were chaired by women and/or represented by female speakers.⁴⁰

Repeated references to the relatively high number of female experts in the PRSP process and their high-ranking positions must be qualified somewhat by the observation that equating women with representatives of gender interests is a) based on a fallacy and b) supports that fallacy in its delegation of gender interests to women. The very core of the gender approach is no longer to consider "only" women as an isolated group, but to look at gender relationships within a society instead, so that analyses and political measures focus on exclusionary mechanisms and unequal social relations. Gender(-specific) interests which undermine the existing role models of a society can and should from now on also be presented and represented by men.

It became obvious from conversations with the women involved in formulating the GPRS that they did not "automatically" make women's policy concerns their own or address them continually in their respective working groups. One reason for this is because they were invited not as gender experts, but as specialists in specific areas such as macro-economics, employment policy, human development, etc.

Secondly, one major reason for the lack of gender interest representation was a conceptual weakness in the GPRS, namely a fundamentally close and in some instances exclusive linkage of the theme "vulnerability and exclusion" to gender and "women's issues". In other words, gender and women's issues were dealt with primarily only by the working group on "vulnerable groups."⁴¹

Substantive overlaps were planned between the working groups in order to facilitate a "cross-pollination of ideas", but certain problems were then transferred from one working group to another in order to avoid duplication. In its report, the Macro-economics Working Group dealt with gender issues only in the section on vulnerability. Likewise, according to a member of the Social Development and Basic Services Working Group, no gender perspective was taken as the basis for deliberations in that group. The paper demonstrates that this disaggregation took place solely with reference to these aspects. The close association between gender and women as a "vulnerable group" is a central, if not always explicitly voiced aspect of feminist criticism and has triggered great frustration among women's groups

40 However, the representative of the Ministry of Finance qualifies this with the observation that participation in one of the most important areas, the "macroeconomic working group", was not gender balanced.

41 This comprises women and other disadvantaged groups in society, such as children (orphans, street children), young people, old people and the disabled; these are termed "marginal groups" in society and deemed to be in need of special protective measures.

and gender experts. Where the lack of a conceptual framework for the process is reflected in the incomplete and unsystematic involvement of women's organisations, the paper's scaled-down, WID-type approach runs through the paper, despite the major revisions which took place.

4.2 The Integration of Gender in Ghana's Full PRSP

4.2.1 From the Interim to the Full PRSP: the First Drafts

It is hardly surprising that the Interim PRSP was criticised by practically all those who were later involved in drafting the Full PRSP. The propositions made, rapidly assembled under the guidance of the former Ministry of Finance, are essentially based on the Ghana Vision 2020 and only announce the formulation of a poverty strategy. The results are also very meagre when viewed from a gender perspective.⁴²

The term "gender" appears twice – though the first instance is at least on the first page in the presentation of the political framework strategy ("reduced gender and geographical and socio-economic disparities"). "Women" are mentioned about four times, once in connection with a reference to women as the largest group amongst poor small farmers, and in a further instance with reference to the need to enable women to participate fully in local governance. However, the Interim PRSP's approach reflects neither the qualitative nor quantitative consideration of gender as a cross-sectoral task.

Qualitative improvements could be discerned regarding the gender aspect in the first officially presented draft of the Full PRSP in July 2001. The involvement of the above-mentioned women's organisations and later of gender experts too obviously led to the incorporation of extensive revisions.

Nevertheless, the references to gender issues can be counted on the fingers of one hand, and indeed references to women and children as a target group of poverty reduction measures in this draft are limited:

42 Cf. Ministry of Finance of Ghana (2000).

- Gender: 3 (1x *gender disparities in education*; 1x *violence*, 1x *local governance*)
- Women: 6 (1x *credits*, 2x *pregnancy/health*, 1x *literacy*, 1x *protection*, 1x *+children*)
2x (*maternal mortality*)
- Girls: 5x (*enrolment/education*, *early marriage*⁴³)

On the basis of the first official draft dated July 2001, the question as to the incorporation of gender can be summarised in the following comparison of positive aspects and elementary weaknesses:

Positive aspects	Weaknesses
Women mentioned several times as a social group	No gender analysis in the dimensions of poverty
Women's specific needs reflected in several sectors (health, education, small traders)	Targeting, not gender mainstreaming approach
Identification of starting points for better access to resources (loans)	No link made to macro-economics
Strategic interests (freedom from violence) mentioned (twice)	Focus on practical needs
	No long-term strategies developed

*"Cross-sectoral issues such as the environment and gender will be considered and reflected in the GPRS."*⁴⁴

The coordination team's intention to integrate gender as a cross-sectoral task in the GPRS was not realised in the first draft of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, even though efforts were made in this direction.

Pertinent results are reflected in a cross-sectoral analysis conducted by the World Bank of the consideration given to gender in the HIPC and PRSP processes in 15 Interim PRSPs and four Full PRSPs. Most of the documents primarily examined gender issues *in detail* in the areas of

43 Uncoordinated measures to combat the early marriage of girls are cited as examples of the lack of synergy and the existing problems in administration and management at the local level (GPRS July 2001: 2.7).

44 Ministry of Economic Planning and Regional Cooperation, Invitation to a "Harmonisation Workshop on Core Teams Outputs", 23 February 2001.

health and education, while little attention was paid to gender with respect to agriculture, environment, water provision and violence in the vast majority of PRSPs. Gender considerations played no part whatsoever in the transport, energy and urban development sectors. The poor results in core areas of the PRSPs – poverty analysis, public measures, monitoring and the consultation process – make it evident that until now an important opportunity for comprehensive poverty alleviation has been missed:

*"In general, the incorporation of Gender into the PRSP process has thus far been minimal. Although a few I-PRSPs and PRSPs have treated gender issues in specific areas with reasonable depth, the overall coverage is weak and suggests many missed opportunities for enhanced poverty reduction."*⁴⁵

4.2.2 On the Road to Improvement: the Final Draft of the Full PRSP

The draft of the Full PRSP published in September 2001 is an improvement over its predecessors in both qualitative and quantitative terms. The draft's structure no longer follows the working group themes alone ("macro-economics", "production and work", "human development and basic services", "vulnerability and exclusion" and "governance"). Instead, the first third of the GPRS includes a wide-ranging framework chapter, examining the country's fundamental economic problems (external debt, low economic growth and market economic trade restrictions) and strategies for reducing poverty in important economic and social sectors (agriculture, social development, industry, services, co-determination, tax and budget issues, environment etc.).

The second third divides economic and social sub-sectors (production, the informal sector, health, education, infrastructure, decentralisation and participation etc.) into policy areas, to which poverty-reducing measures are allocated. The final third of the GPRS looks at monitoring and evaluation measures, previously neglected in the GPRS, as well as immediate measures to reduce extreme poverty among vulnerable groups.

Viewed from a gender perspective, the most recent draft of the GPRS shows progress in that more references are made to the disadvantages suffered by women in Ghanaian society. For those employed in the informal sector, for instance, further education measures are to be offered; women are thereby seen to be particularly disadvantaged.

45 Bamberger et al. (2001), p. 9.

Women are to be given special consideration in the promotion of newer, non-traditional export products.⁴⁶ Apart from the quantitative increase, another positive aspect is that far more mention is made of gender in this draft.⁴⁷ Thus gender inequality comes more strongly to the fore. For instance, it is urgently recommended that "relative gender equality be brought about in recruitment policy"⁴⁸, both in the domain of "decentralisation" and in the "boosting of work and employment opportunities in the public sector".

Women's strategic gender interests are given much more emphasis than before. In the section looking at poverty reduction through rural development, it is suggested that land legislation and land distribution policy be re-examined in order to improve women's (and young people's) access to land. In order to provide better protection for vulnerable groups and to eliminate gender-based violence, revisions of the legal system are also recommended. Furthermore, cooperation with NGOs should be strengthened, in order to raise awareness of gender issues among those institutions involved in passing legislation and judging cases.⁴⁹

Another positive aspect is that in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention, men now constitute a target group in their own right (as they do in the field of population policy), which can be regarded as a gender approach in the GPRS, since both men and women are included in areas concerning practical basic needs. However, the declared aims are limited to increasing the proportion of men and women taking preventive measures; it is obviously not about narrowing the gender gap. In the area of basic education too, the aim is merely to achieve a percentage increase in the rate of enrolment of girls *and* boys, but not to try to close the *gap between the two*.

It would therefore be premature to speak of *gender mainstreaming*, since in the last instance a target group approach is retained. Women continue to be involved first and foremost as the recipients of development policy measures and not as actors. The concepts of empowerment and "the voices of the poor", which point to an active political role in shaping social processes, play a limited part in the GPRS as a whole. The empowerment of women is reduced to participation at the local level.

46 GPRS (2001), pp. 55, 75. There are altogether about twenty mentions of "women" and "girls" (including the categories "female" and "mothers").

47 The concept of gender is mentioned about ten times ("gender inequality", "gender equality", "gender-specific discrimination", "gender-based violence" etc.).

48 *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 108 f., 137.

49 *Ibid.*, pp. 95 f.

If we apply the analytical criteria of the World Bank study to an evaluation of the GPRS, it is also evident that, despite the obvious improvements in the field of gender, Ghana's PRSP merit critical judgement.

In the World Bank study, gender issues are deemed to have been "addressed" if "something more than the mere mention of 'gender' and 'gender issues' is integrated into each respective section."⁵⁰ Gender issues are not "addressed" if a paper merely mentions the fact that women are disadvantaged in education, on the labour market or in democratic participation, or if reference is only made to the need to incorporate gender into strategy development.

Gender issues now certainly appear in the different sectors relevant to poverty, and women are regularly pointed to as an especially disadvantaged group, but proportionally far too often these references are taken no further. Whether it be the reference to the special promotion of small businesswomen through better access to micro-financing and training programmes, or the link between poverty reduction and improving rural infrastructure by building access roads, which especially benefit women who have to carry heavy loads, or again the reference to women's lack of independent access to land – gender issues are referred to time and again and the inequalities are recognised, but no further analysis is made.

The PRSP's greatest failing is no longer that merely women's practical needs are discussed, but that no **analysis** of gender issues was conducted or incorporated into the PRSP, and that no **strategies** were developed to overcome the problem. The macro-economic and macro-political framework examined in the first third of the draft is presented almost gender neutrally. In the analysis of the dimensions of poverty in Ghana, only one reference is made to gender differences in education. None of the data made available by Ghana's census are used in the GPRS, for instance in an analysis of access to resources (land or time).

In line with the central GPRS **strategy** of reducing poverty by promoting growth and market-oriented production, the focus for women in all sectors is the "promotion of access to markets" through improved access to micro-credit. Small businesswomen and women in the informal sector in particular should help increase production through the improved financing of their work and employment opportunities. The GPRS aims to combine these measures with basic education, training and upgrading courses designed to help eliminate women's specific disadvantages. These measures are an important complement to the promotion of micro-finance, although they cannot take the place of a holistic policy framework which integrates gender issues. All in all, the GPRS measures for eliminating gender inequality appear to be very sporadic and their probable impacts on poverty over-estimated.

50 The World Bank (2001c), pp. 7 f.

Above and beyond this, the poverty reduction strategies repeat themselves in different policy areas without going beyond a declaration of intent ("improve women's access to training and education", "reduce gender inequality in society", "develop a system that strengthens the rights of vulnerable groups in particular").

Some of the proposals are taken both as a *strategy* and as a *goal* and at the same time represent a *result*. A clear differentiation between instruments and aims is necessary here; for one thing, strategy development must be preceded by a comprehensive gender-specific analysis of society and its problems, such as poverty. In addition, the **indicators must be developed** to review strategies and their progress, i.e. for successful monitoring. The GPRS cites only one indicator relative to gender; the Ghana Health Survey should in future also include an index of women's status (p. 134). Further indicators must urgently be developed, or a link established to existing ones ("gender empowerment measure", "gender development index").

Despite the important elements in the GPRS aimed at strengthening the legal position of women and other disadvantaged groups, the poverty reduction strategy paper is not based on any explicit rights-based approach. The elimination of disadvantages and discrimination is regarded as a necessary prerequisite for reducing poverty, as they hinder the social and, more importantly, economic development of the country. But, over and above this, the concept of gender mainstreaming and the independent development goal to which it is linked are missing.

4.2.3 The GPRS as a Framework Condition for the "Integration of Gender"

The potential for integrating the gender perspective into a poverty reduction strategy is essentially dependent on the political framework in which a PRSP develops. Whether the framework conditions for an "engendering of the PRSP" are favourable or unfavourable depends in turn on the coherence of national and sectoral policies. The macro-economic premises and approaches of a PRSP are equally important. These should be examined briefly at the end of the gender analysis.

The concept of poverty in the GPRS is not only defined in terms of income. Important indicators in the wider definition include access to basic education, health care and other basic social services. Nevertheless, it is difficult to speak of a "comprehensive definition of poverty", since the social indicators principally describe a deficit without combining this with an analysis of structural, social inequality (also between different ethnic groups, for instance). Emphasis is put on the regional gap between the northern and southern regions. Extreme poverty stands at between 70 and 90% in the districts of the Upper East and Upper West regions, making regional strategies for combating poverty imperative. However, it remains problematic that all social inequalities a) disappear in the end behind regional differences and b) are subsumed under the concept of vulnerability (see above). The GPRS adopts the

vulnerability approach for many groups within society. This also limits the integration of a gender analysis.

The most important paradigm in a PRSP is the definition of growth:

*"The goal of the GPRS is to achieve **equitable economic growth and accelerated poverty reduction within a sustained democracy**. The emphasis will be on stabilising the economy, laying a sustainable foundation for accelerated and equitable economic growth, reducing regional disparities in poverty, enhancing access to social services and ameliorating conditions of extreme poverty."*⁵¹

Stabilising the macro-economy to ensure rapid growth, creating jobs through an increase in agricultural and industrial production (again by means of capital investment and the provision of modern technology) and private sector promotion are essential elements of this strategy. Without engaging in a discussion on the necessary economic and social measures for Ghana's development at this point, the poverty reduction strategy seems instead to be following the paradigm of development and industrialisation "to catch up", without presenting alternatives. The contradictions inherent in an export-oriented economic model, for agriculture in particular, have often been pointed out. At a workshop on the integration of gender in the GPRS, representatives of women's non-governmental organisations especially criticised basic assumptions of a free market economy and efficient business thinking stated in the GPRS as contradicting the intentions, also expressed in the document, to eliminate social inequalities and extreme poverty.⁵²

In addition, one striking aspect of the drafts for Ghana's Full PRSP is that a central criterion of recent macro-economic strategies for reducing poverty – pro-poor growth – is not mentioned once. Those involved have only a limited perception of what this idea means; Ghana's Ministry of Finance, for instance, defines pro-poor measures as the damage limitation measures with which the poor must be "helped" when the state's spending cuts needed to stabilise the national economy and promote economic growth have negative impacts on the situation of the poor.

What is actually required is the further development of strategies for pro-poor growth and further elaboration of the qualities of this economic approach as compared to others. In order to create framework conditions that actually promote socially equitable growth and sustainable poverty reduction, the continuous involvement of civil society stakeholders should be guaranteed, particularly in debates on the macro-economic framework as well as in finance and budget policy. Herein lies the greatest challenge of the PRSP process for the women's

51 GPRS (2001), p. 14.

52 Netright (2001), pp. 2 f.

organisations in Ghana and in other HIPC countries. They are called on to discuss and help shape the macro-economic framework, financial and public spending policy to ensure that the PRSP is more than a revamped, apparently gender-neutral "structural adjustment with a human face", in which the WID measures criticised above are seamlessly incorporated as "integration in development". A gender budget initiative provides a starting point here.

5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are directed primarily at state actors involved in the PRSP process, especially bilateral donors. They suggest ways of better mainstreaming gender aspects in Ghana's PRSP and in subsequent phases. They can also strengthen the incorporation of gender as a cross-sectoral task into other PRSP processes that have not yet reached the final phase.

- The project, supported by the GTZ Office in Ghana, involving the presentation of the GPRS to a committee of independent gender experts, female consultants and representatives of non-governmental organisations for critical appraisal, should be followed up by similar activities; the donor community could organise or initiate round tables or smaller consultation meetings for the different stakeholders (state, NGOs, private sector) on the subject of "gender and poverty", in order to integrate national organisations and their analyses which have as yet not been taken into consideration in the political debate; this would also keep the topic on the agenda of state and non-governmental actors.
- In the interests of greater efficiency and a reduced workload, procedures for strenuous political processes, such as ensuring co-determination within the PRSP or the laborious task of integrating gender into it, should not always be developed from point zero again. Instead, existing expertise, including experience from other African countries such as Uganda and Tanzania, should be identified and systematically incorporated. Available material resources such as analyses conducted by other bilateral and multilateral donors should also be used.⁵³
- Policy papers of the donor community, especially the OECD/DAC guidelines and the World Bank's PRSP Source Book, should enjoy greater acceptance and dissemination. Gender-sensitive guidelines prepared for recipient countries should, however, also be

53 Cf. "Recommendations for integrating gender into the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) and related processes", by the Ministry of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children, Tanzania; an analysis of the Tanzanian PRSP from the gender perspective (2001). The virtual network put in place by the World Bank's social development department should also be pointed out at this point.

applied within donor organisations. Consequences should be drawn from the World Bank's self-critical admission that the joint staff assessments (JSAs) appraising PRSPs have major deficits in terms to gender criteria; a competent gender expert could be appointed to work with the JSAs, for example.⁵⁴

- Strengthening parliamentary democracy will in future surely be one of the central areas for development intervention by bilateral donors in general, and German development cooperation in particular. This could take the form of greater cooperation with the party-political foundations and their partner structures. From the gender perspective, this immediately poses the question of increasing the formal participation of women, in other words the proportion of women in parliament. If gender issues are to go beyond the level of "anti-discrimination practices" at the micro and meso levels, then the promotion of political empowerment at the macro level is a central and integral element in the promotion of the democratisation process.
- Even in the process of formulating a strategy paper, care must be taken to ensure that a) women as a "vulnerable group" are not subsumed in a "catch-all"-category, but that specific differentiation takes place (e.g. "single mother", "widow") and that b) women as a target group for measures are mentioned not only as "vulnerable", but also in other areas and chapters, especially macro-economic stability, production and employment, and governance.
- The collection and evaluation of disaggregated data in the context of a participatory poverty assessment must be repeated before and after future phases of the policy cycle (implementation, monitoring and reformulation). Care should be taken to ensure that the data gathered are evaluated and incorporated into the final findings and do not get lost. The data must be embedded in a comprehensive gender analysis of the situation in the country in question. Core criteria of an analysis such as this, which should be reflected in the PRSPs, are the division of labour according to a gender hierarchy, unpaid work in the home, on the fields and in reproduction, the gender-specific impacts of social- and economic-policy measures for reducing poverty, and issues concerning the opportunities of men and women for co-determination and for actively shaping their society.
- A catalogue of gender-specific indicators should be developed for the process of monitoring poverty strategy implementation planned in many HIPC countries. These indicators must make it possible to examine the impacts of poverty reduction programmes on women and/or on changes in the relationship between men and women.
- It is important to make those involved in the PRSP aware that to date little more than deficit analyses of gender issues have been conducted, with subsequent re-touching. If there is to be a pro-active gender policy within the framework of the PRSP, "gender rep-

54 World Bank (2001b), p. 9.

representatives" (women and men) must participate in a permanent and institutionalised way in all phases of the GPRS cycle and on all committees. It is the responsibility of donors to insist upon this, since international standards are at stake here rather than "donors' issues".

- One of the most important addresses for Ghanaian women and gender policy at the moment is the Ministry and the Minister for Women's Affairs, which could give crucial impetus to policy guidelines in the fields of gender and poverty. Efforts to discuss the Ministry's unsatisfactory WID approach constructively and to help develop it further would be more than just a complementary measure to support the institutional and conceptual framework for a successful gender policy in the PRSP. In this respect, an exchange of ideas and experience with the Rwandan Ministry for Women's Affairs, which has been very active in the PRSP process, could be helpful.
- The debate, rooted in the history of ideas, concerning the reform of international and African women's and gender policy in its Ghanaian form would be a suitable common project for several bilateral donors. Prior to the consultation process and debates, it would make sense to systematically collate the donors' policy papers and evaluate them for similarities and differences. These could, if necessary, be complemented by cross-sectoral evaluations of project appraisals.
- Improved donor coordination is also necessary in order to promote gender projects. Far too many donors still offer only or principally small loans and micro-financing. There are still very few donors and NGOs offering training measures for awareness-raising in the fields of legal, social and political empowerment. It is not clear, however, how these positive approaches can be placed within a further conceptual framework for combating poverty and how these donor projects can be used as examples of good practice in the GPRS process.
- In the interests of a political coherence which goes beyond the measures taken and which should (also) promote a gender-appropriate reduction in poverty, PRSP processes cannot be analysed and implemented separately from other parallel development approaches. A comparative analysis of the integration of gender issues in sector-wide approaches (SWAp) has shown that the conception and implementation of SWAps give rise to structural weaknesses very similar to those identified in PRSPs. A policy of coherence and coordination of the donors involved in both approaches (PRSPs and SWAps) should therefore be examined to identify possible negative strengthening or duplication of weaknesses relating to gender issues.⁵⁵
- The gender issue and gender projects urgently need to be mainstreamed at a higher level of political dialogue and development programme measures (scaling-up). A **gender**

55 Cf. DAC Working Party on Gender Equality: Reference Guide on Sector-Wide Approaches and Gender Equality, 2001.

budget initiative is one example of a core proposal, inextricably linked to the PRSP at the macro level. There is important potential here for a macro-economic gender policy, as experience in other African countries has shown, in tandem perhaps with the Center for Budget Advocacy in Ghana or GERA/TWN. The UNDP, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and other UN organisations would be potential partners for an initiative of this sort.

- Last but not least, it should not be forgotten that awareness-raising and sensitisation measures are part of both comprehensive advocacy for gender issues and for new directions in "learning organisations" and similar institutions. Bilateral donors could provide financial and organisational support to help state institutions and other organisations involved in the PRSP take advantage of gender training and upgrading on gender issues.

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Appendix

1. Terms of Reference

In the context of a fifteen-month DIE contract on "Gender Issues and Poverty Reduction", the consultant was commissioned to analyse the consideration given to gender aspects in PRSP processes. According to the contract, the assignment "HIPC Initiatives and Developing Country Strategies for Combating Poverty (PRSP): Considering Gender" was to evaluate selected drafts of individual countries' actual PRSPs as examples, review the mainstreaming of gender issues and make recommendations as to how gender could be better incorporated into PRSP processes.

Guiding Themes

A social policy perspective and a focus on the interaction of social actors should be at the forefront of the analysis.

- How is the gender issue tackled in the World Bank Source Book and other political guidelines, and is gender mainstreamed as a cross-cutting issue in the HIPC process as a whole?
- Are proposals made in existing PRSPs regarding the participation of women (and/or other disadvantaged groups)?
- What quantities and qualities are necessary for the successful consideration of gender in PRSP processes? Where are structural inadequacies to be found?
- Which opportunities does German development cooperation have for promoting and strengthening the integration of gender aspects and the participation of women's groups in the future pursuit of an effective implementation of PRS? (Recommendations)

The case study should first and foremost analyse the **interaction of stakeholders**, their strategic interests and interest coalitions as well as their roots in society. In other words:

- Is the PRSP process conducted in a participatory manner open to gender issues?
- Who are or could be the (strategic) partners in an open, integrative consultation process such as this?
- What are the starting points for German development cooperation to support the implementation of an integrative process of this sort to reduce poverty?
- Does an active, broad, formal civil society exist in the country? (What are the framework conditions for political participation, freedom of expression, political education, rural/urban gap etc.?)
- Is there an active women's movement in the country? Is there a state policy on women? What direction has it taken? What relationship do they have to one another?
- What priorities do the women's organisations and/or institutions set? Are poverty or economics on their political agenda?

- Are the experiences of other African women's or general civil society organisations taken into consideration?
- Does a gender budget initiative or an initiative for participatory budgets involving women's groups exist?

Contextualising the question:

- What degree of debt, poverty and social segregation characterises the situation in the country?
- How should the political situation be evaluated, and what was the impact of the recent change in government on the PRSP process?

"Gender" or the sufficient consideration of representatives of women's interests should also play an important role in these questions:

- Which sectors are relevant to poverty in the country, e.g. health, agriculture, manufacturing industry and modern services? Is there a policy of reform open to gender issues in these sectors?

If the participation of important civil society actors is found to be unsatisfactory, a **problem-oriented perspective** analysing possible reasons for a lack of due consideration is important to the investigation:

- Is "participation" a criterion that has been overly determined by outsiders? Are the time pressures of the PRSP process, often criticised by civil society, the reason why "soft" but difficult cross-sectoral themes fall by the wayside during negotiations?
- Could there be a contradiction between the desire to strengthen national ownership through the PRSP processes on the one hand and the fact that mainstreaming and implementing gender as a cross-sectoral task does not correspond to the genuine interests (or priorities) of the indebted partner country on the other?
- Were there sufficient offers and/or resources for women's groups/organisations to participate in the PRSP process? Were these taken advantage of?
- Why did they not quickly complain about any unsatisfactory involvement?

2. Supplementary Recommendations Regarding Gender-Oriented PPAs

Supplementary recommendations for PPAs follow for bilateral and multilateral donors, but also for national governments and NGOs involved in participatory methods:⁵⁶

- The integration and application of feminist participatory research and the analysis of the local situation in order to identify focal points for action;
- Support for the development of the advocacy capabilities of local groups promoting gender equality, with a view to their effective use in the PRSP;
- Capacity-building in support of the government's political will to adopt participatory approaches in the PRSP process and to respond effectively to gender issues;
- Development and mainstreaming of criteria for quality assurance and impact monitoring of participation and participatory gender analysis;
- Feedback on the results given to the local organisations involved in the participatory review.

3. Good Practice: The UNDP National Poverty Reduction Programme in Ghana

Further participatory communal and regional analyses have been incorporated into the Full GPRS. Together with the UNDP, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) carried out pilot projects in the context of a National Poverty Reduction Programme. Because of its components explicitly geared to the empowerment of women, the programme will be briefly presented here.

The National Poverty Reduction Programme (NPRP, 1997–2001) aims to improve the living conditions and the standard of living of the population in five selected, very poor districts of Ghana, both rural and urban. The most important strategies for the first phase of the pilot project are: improving income-generating opportunities through practical vocational and further training courses and the distribution of micro-credit to communities for building up a social and economic infrastructure enabling self-help, but primarily the "education and training of leaders from local civil society in order to improve monitoring of poverty reduction strategies" as well as the promotion of legal and political awareness amongst disadvantaged groups.

Close cooperation between the UNDP and the Social Investment Fund (SIF) and with intermediary organisations on site, CBOs and NGOs, are decisive for mainstreaming a

⁵⁶ The recommendations are based on Emma Bell's analysis (2001, p. 12).

demand-driven participatory approach geared to the needs of the poor.⁵⁷ Meetings and larger-scale gatherings in mixed and separated groups are regularly organised in order to discuss the difficulties of comprehensive participation: Who or what stopped women from coming (lack of time, cultural barriers to speaking in public in front of men)?

According to the UNDP programme director a gender perspective was initially adopted in the programme and in the executing committee, until it was realised that a special effort was required in order to make women active participants. At the local level, women's groups were set up and promoted in specific projects, and the proportion of women in the Community Implementation Committees (CICs) established by the UNDP for the implementation and dissemination of the programme is therefore at least 30%. Attempts are made through these committees and through the NGOs involved to sensitise the district administration to gender issues. Women are thoroughly under-represented here and, despite the Gender Working Groups also set up by the UNDP, establishing gender interests is "inexpressibly difficult. Gender is always equated with women and at the best put on the agenda as an afterthought" (UNDP Deputy Programme Director).

Gender Working Groups, which are now composed of men *and* women, try to have an impact at the national level too through lobbying and advocacy work. But here too, the Programme Director's evaluation is critical: gender issues were indeed incorporated into the PRSP, wherever there were corresponding sectoral programmes. But establishing gender issues at a higher political level was almost impossible "because there is no national policy in Ghana promoting gender mainstreaming."

It is evident that gender-sensitive, participatory poverty reduction programmes with an empowerment approach established at the local level only have a limited effect if they find no counterpart in national policy guidelines.

57 Cf. NPRP (2000a), (2000b). One of these independent intermediary organisations is the Center for the Development of People (CEDEP), one of the few NGOs not based in Accra but in Kumasi. Gender analysis and the gender perspective are central to the activities of the organisation, which works at grassroots level in many sectors and on several social issues (health, social and economic rights, violence, rural development etc.).

4. Overview of Interviewees and Organisations

In Ghana (Accra, Kumasi, Tema):

State Institutions (involved in the GPRS):

- Ms. Angela Brown Farhat, Head of the Poverty Reduction Unit, National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)
- Prof. B.A.W. Trevallion, Lead Consultant und Staff Member of the Task Force for the "Ghanaian Poverty Reduction Strategy" (GPRS)
- Government Minister Gladys Asmah, Ministry for Women's Affairs
- Dr. Alhassan, Director of Policy, Ministry of Finance
- Mr. E. Aggrey-Finn, Statistics, Research and Information Directorate, Ministry of Food and Agriculture
- Ms. Hannah G. Woanyah, Director Industrial Development and Investments, Ministry for Trade and Industry
- Mr. Opoku-Agyemang, Executive Director Ghana Social Investment Fund (SIF), Poverty Reduction Project
- Ms. Leonora Kyerematen, Programme Manager, National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP)

United Nations Organisations

- Mr. Kofi Asante-Frimpong, Programme Manager, National Poverty Reduction Programme (NPRP)/UNDP
- Ms. Laurencia Tettey, Deputy Programme Manager, NPRP/UNDP

Church NGOs

- Ms. Comfort A. Ofori, Executive Secretary, Christian Mothers' Association, and Mr. Edward Boafo, Project Manager
- Ms. Julia Ekong, Project Consultant, Church Development Service – An Association of the Protestant Churches in Germany (EED), Bonn
- Ms. Lydia A. Adajawah, Coordinator Family Life/Gender Issues, Christian Council
- Women's Group Bleasant Clementine, Tema near Accra

Non-governmental Organisations/Networks

- Dr. Yao Graham, Co-ordinator, Third World Network Africa (TWN)

- Ms. Zo Randriamaro, Programme Manager, Gender and Economic Reforms in Africa (GERA)/TWN
- Dr. Charles Abugre, Director ISODEC (also: CIVISOC/SAPRI)
- Ms. Yaa Peprah Agyeman Amekudzi, Executive Director, Center for the Development of People (CEDEP), Kumasi
- Ms. Vida Amaadi Yeboah, Coordinator, The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)
- Ms. Dorcas Coker-Appiah, Executive Director, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) (also: Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Center)
- Ms. Kathy Cusack, Project Coordinator, Anti-Violence Project at the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Center
- Ms. Stephanie Adgei, ABANTU for Development
- Ms. Esther Agbodo Nyamador, Executive Director, Youth Aid Ghana, Tema (also: President, Tema Lions Club)
- Executive Director, Women's World Bank, Kumasi

Research Institutes, Universities, Experts

- Prof. Dr. Takyiwaa Manuh, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana
- Prof. Dr. Ernest Kunfaa, Director, Department of Planning/Kumasi National University, (KNUST)
- Ms. Elizabeth Q. Akpalu, Executive Director, Advocates for Gender Equality (AGE)/Gender Training Consultant
- Ms. Charlotte Wrigley Asante, Programme Officer, Gender Development Institute
- Ms. Abena Oduro, University of Ghana, currently Center for Policy Analysis (CEPA)

Representatives of German Development Cooperation

- Dr. Brigitte Heuel-Rolf, Country Representative, GTZ Office Ghana
- Dr. Gabi Waibel, DED Gender Representative Ghana
- Mr. Peter Schellschmidt, Director of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Ghana
- Mr. Peter Primus, Deputy Director of the German Embassy in Accra, Ghana