



RAO CONVENTION 2007

ENGENDERING G-RAP: ONE YEAR ON

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Introduction

G-RAP seeks to enhance pro-poor accountability on the part of the government of Ghana as well as development partners. Amongst others, the programme seeks to provide a counter-balance to MDBS through the work of research and advocacy organizations (RAOs) and monitor the impacts of development interventions as well as progress against national commitments and obligations.

Against these intentions, ensuring responsiveness to the needs of all sections of the population and the need for disaggregated and differentiated assessment and analysis is critical. There is considerable evidence now that pursuing gender equity, towards achieving gender equality is critical for achieving pro-poor sustainable development. Without gender-sensitivity and disaggregation of the impacts of poverty-related interventions, the work of RAOs could not be considered complete.

It is in this regard that G-RAP initiated a process to promote gender sensitivity in the programme generally and ensure that the studies, other outputs and advocacy of RAOs were more gender-sensitive. The purpose of this presentation is to update participants on the process and to solicit their commitment to continuing the process.

Events

A year ago, the Apusigah report indicated that strong policy-related efforts were required to articulate institutional commitment to gender equality, women's rights and social equity. It indicated that the design of G-RAP revealed acceptability of pro-poor programming but lacked gender considerations and there was a general absence of gender requirements. Successful RAOs showed minimal gender components. It concluded that the existing initiatives needed to be explored and expanded towards eventual integration of gender issues in overall programme. The study indicated that avenues existed for building, utilizing gender skills and knowledge for enriching research and enhancing advocacy.

Dr. Apusigah's recommendations included improving the design of the programme to include affirmative action and to target more RAOs working on gender equality and women's rights; and strengthening the capacities of contracted RAOs.

RAOs gave their mandate to initiate efforts to engender G-RAP. To this end, a number of mechanisms were put in place as follows:



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- A seven-member gender steering committee (GSC) was established. The GSC identified various products and processes to facilitate engendering including:
 - The development and use of a gender policy
 - Amendment of Grant making toolbox and procedures
 - Gender awareness enhancement – with executive directors, gender link persons from RAOs
 - The gender link persons who would be the focal persons in RAOs and the drivers of change would build their capacities, track their work and share insights in action learning sessions
 - Policy appraisal and capacity development in relation to gender
 - Review of performance on gender in RAO policies and practices.
 - Monitoring indicators and gender best practices.
- A gender specialist was contracted to work with Dr. Apusigah on the above products.
- Dr Apusigah has worked on developing a gender policy and gender checklists for use by RAOs and G-RAP generally.

Other activities that have been undertaken include:

- Establishing what resources are in the G-RAP community that can be shared in relation to gender learning
- Exploring the perspectives and the potential influences of the different stakeholders in the G-RAP community – funders, PMT as well as RAOs
- Reviewing the contract package, assessment and narrative review
- Identifying the perspectives various RAOs have on gender and its place in the whole enterprise
- Assessing the structures RAOs have for mainstreaming gender (focal persons, requirements, target-setting, performance standards, capacity-building provisions etc); and the existing political will to mainstream gender (recognition of national commitments, provision of resources, actual commitments of spending, achievements and efforts to deal with resistance to change).
- Organising two (2) workshops: The first, held in July was to set the agenda with gender link persons and also to share knowledge on gender and implications for research and advocacy and discuss requirements for the gender policy;
- An encounter with RAOs CEOs to update them on the engendering process
- Conducting action learning sets with gender link persons.

What is left on the agenda includes

- One-on-one encounters with RAO CEOs as champions of pro-poor development and to seek some commitments to gender equity
- Continuation of action learning sets to monitor and share the lessons, challenges and best practices in process of engendering within RAOs.



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- Identification of gender indicators to measure and monitor progress in the work of RAOs; and
- Appraisal of policy-related work and capacity development in relation to gender.

State of Affairs

The last action learning set organized on 20th November, 2007 for instance provided an opportunity to review the draft gender policy. Some of the observations of gender link persons on how the tool could be used included

- A framework or guideline for promoting change
- Provides an example of what a gender policy looks like; it still a strange concept in many (mainstream) RAOs; gender link persons can use it to show what a gender policy is;
- RAOs may adapt parts of it for their own documents, elaborating sections of it as may be required; the content could be used to enrich the gender policies being developed/reviewed by RAOs
- The gender policy and checklist can be used in orientation processes for RAOs joining the GRAP Programme;
- More a good practice guide than a binding requirement;
- A call to RAOs to re-examine trends and processes in their own systems
- May require on a guidebook or handbook to demonstrate how each section can be developed by RAOs

The Way Forward

The programme encourages RAOs to demonstrate gender-sensitivity in their work and to “walk their talk”, in their organizational development. It makes various provisions to support gender-related capacity-building. The programme now has a draft gender policy. The now active network of Gender Link Persons meets regularly in Action Learning Sets for purposes of experience-sharing, peer review, problem-solving and capacity-building. Periodically, RAOs may organize a gender dialogue and specific skills building sessions related to gender.

Indeed, it is in the interest of RAOs to demonstrate that they are doing gender-sensitive work or have something to show as their commitment to being responsive to the concerns of different sections of the population.

The interventions have succeeded considerably. Through the Action Learning Sets, it is evident that different RAOS have initiated efforts to engender their work:

- Gender link persons have briefed their organizations’ professional and management staff on gender, their learning at the workshops, the availability of such products RAOs can use such as the gender checklist, and now the gender policy and possibilities for action
- RAOs have taken steps to organizing gender training for their staff as well as implementing gender recommendations that have been made.



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The Action Learning Sets have provided invaluable opportunities for sharing knowledge and strategizing for action in a non-threatening and mutually supporting way.

It would appear that there is increased gender awareness amongst the RAOs especially, the “mainstream” ones. Interesting reports have been received on the gender-related discussions and “spaces” that have been created for these discussions in IEA, ISODEC and CDD. Basics of “what gender is” have been shared amongst staff in these organizations and relevant training events proposed.

CEOs have demonstrated considerable commitment and support of their gender link persons.

The Action Learning Sets have built a system of mutual support amongst members, sharing strategies and experiences that have built confidence amongst them (if this is the way so-and-so did it....). There is a sense of a network amongst members beyond the meetings.

However, the process has not been without its challenges. The process has been slower than expected; getting it established; finding mutually agreed objectives and harmonizing expectations.

Some RAOs are not represented in the Action Learning Sets and therefore, it becomes difficult to learn from their experiences and their inputs into making programme-wide recommendations. Out of a possible 22, the learning sets have attracted an average attendance of 12. It is not clear that engendering processes have started in their organizations; and what they have gained by way of methodology (in research and advocacy) has not been shared.

Key Messages

Some of the recommendations that have emerged from the reflections of Gender Link Persons and interactions with different stakeholders (Funders, RAOs Chief Executives and Gender Link Persons) that must be considered in this meeting are the following.

- RAOs do owe it to the good people of Ghana to demonstrate some gender-sensitivity in their work
- The approach however has to be one of moral suasion rather than compulsion. For the time being, RAOs should self-commit to some actions and showing some results, however, limited.
- RAOs should endeavour to go beyond recruiting females for key positions. While that is useful for their visibility and harnessing their perspectives, this move does not necessarily achieve gender-sensitivity in the work of RAOs.
- Given the importance of gender to achieving pro-poor development, it would be useful for the programme (G-RAP) to have some basic expectations of RAOs in relation to gender; gender should certainly be on the agenda
- Some benchmarks/basic criteria that RAOs must meet must be agreed upon in a process of self-regulation by RAOs;



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Resolving

- The dilemma of the commitment of Funders to engendering the process versus their place in an arrangement that is supposed to be demand/RAO-driven
- The changing role of PMT to more fund-management rather than programme facilitation (and thus support for sustaining the engendering process), what role the PMT can now play in following up on the process;
- Some resistance or backlash where some stakeholders perceive the process as being hijacked by the gender “lobby”.

Thank you.