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THE ROLE OF GENDER UNITS AS CATALYSTS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGIES IN SECTOR PROGRAMS

THE CASE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR PROGRAM IN KITUI DISTRICT, KENYA

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Summary of the study

This study focuses on gender units* as catalysts for gender mainstreaming. The objective of the study is to contribute to the improvement of gender mainstreaming strategies in government sector programs by assessing the constraints and opportunities of the gender divisions in mainstreaming gender perspectives in planning and implementing sector programs. Gender mainstreaming is a relatively recent strategy to bridge gender gaps in diverse aspects of Agricultural Sector Program in Kitui district in Kenya. The intention of this study is therefore to analyze the extent to which gender units can be relied upon to play their role in promotion of gender responsive advisory services. It analyses gender units capacity, in relation to systems, structures, and processes, as well as the varied actors involved in this process. It draws on the experience of focal officers in terms of their strategy, mandate, expertise, organizational culture and networking of the unit to mainstream gender. These parameters set the scope for this study. The research applied qualitative research methods using a combination of case study and desk study.

The study findings show that there is some progress made by gender units but there are still many challenges relating to structural issues, location of the unit, policy formulation, commitment of actors involved, and the whole aspect of attitudinal change both at individual level as well as at institutional levels. The staff interviewed revealed that they find gender mainstreaming as a concept complex and translating gender mainstreaming theory into practice quite difficult under existing institutional circumstances. Positive aspects and the achievements identified during the study include improved reporting on gender disaggregated indicators and increased level of awareness among extension staff implementing the program especially on developing gender responsive technologies. The study findings agree with the critiques, who have argued that the influence of focal points depends on resource allocation, expertise, structure and strategy of the development philosophy held by an organization.

This study further agrees that the role of gender units as vehicles for accelerating gender mainstreaming is, though challenging, important and possible, but only when these units internalize their role as only catalysts. Some of the key recommendations of this study are that district gender officers should be trained on gender mainstreaming so that they can facilitate the development of gender based management development plans such as the case of labour based roads construction and similar infrastructure development activities. The other important recommendation is for the staff to forge networks with the wealth of experience from Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in the district while at the same time the national level authorities address policy issues that aid or hinder mainstreaming.

* For the purpose of this study Gender Divisions, Gender Section, Focal Points and Gender Units will be considered to mean the same and the terms are used interchangeably

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The current strategy for the Government of Kenya emphasizes the strengthening of the role of women and men in the development process, making gender mainstreaming an integral part of development cooperation in an effort to promote gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is the current international approach to advancing gender equality and equity in society. "Gender mainstreaming is the strategy adopted by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to strengthen its impact on the situation of women and on gender equality. The term "gender mainstreaming" came into widespread use with the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. The term serves to highlight a major lesson derived from slow progress in achieving real change in the situation of women despite efforts over two decades – that significant change cannot be achieved by adding marginal programs for women. Rather, changes are required in mainstream policies and resource allocations to reflect the interests and views of women as well as men. A mainstreaming strategy therefore emphasizes systematic attention to gender equality issues in organization practices, policies and programs with the goal of progress toward gender equality *. UN agencies and governments have embraced this concept, which aims to make gender an aspect of all development cooperation and programs to varying degrees and varying success. Since then the Government of Kenya has supported the institutionalization of gender concerns not only within Government supported programs but also in local NGOs, Civil Society organizations and private sector. In every financial year the government through the department of gender provides funds to ensure gender units are established and functioning. In the strategic plan (for the financial year 2006-2007) the department of gender in its output number two, targeted to launch and establish 30 new Gender Divisions.

The Government of Kenya therefore recognizes the importance of gender mainstreaming in policy, planning and programming. It realizes that without a coherent and comprehensive overall framework for guiding gender mainstreaming within the different sectors and line ministries involved in development, enormous resources may continue to be misplaced (GoK 2006). In this respect the government has instituted a number of initiatives on gender mainstreaming that include providing funds through the department of gender to ensure gender units are established and functioning. The government has also made efforts to appoint gender officers in all ministries and state corporations and the ratification of relevant international instruments on gender commitment towards operationalizing and strengthening gender divisions in development programs to aid the gender mainstreaming process (Government of Kenya, 2008).

The coordination and harmonization of the implementation of the National policy on Gender and Development is the responsibility of the department of gender. However, all other Government departments and state corporations are also responsible for taking actions specific to the core function of each ministry to integrate gender issues in their respective areas of mandate. The department of gender therefore works in partnership with other departments, NGOs and other agencies on gender responsive interventions. The department is also responsible for research, documentation on gender disaggregated data and information and in liaison with the Government Ministries responsible for their own programs for gender, and how they exercise general

monitoring over the implementation of gender mainstreaming and through review of operations of gender divisions.

This growing realization of the impact of gender in the development process has informed the project documents of Government of Kenya, Danida funded ASPS program in the form of broad policy statements such as the ASPS gender strategy namely:

"*Align to GoK policies on gender equality and agriculture and use GoK structures where in place to address gender inequalities….*"

"*Address gender inequality from the perspective of agricultural activities being undertaken in a partnership between female and male family members and support GoK extension staff to address the needs of men and women….*"

(The Agriculture Support Program Support, 2005-10 Program Document)

The link between agriculture and gender mainstreaming in this study is informed by the fact that agriculture contributes more than 26% to the Gross Domestic Product in Kenya with women as the major source of labour in the sector; this underlines the linkages between agricultural performance and the output and incomes of other sectors, as well as those between governments' macroeconomic objectives (such as employment generation, poverty alleviation, and food security and human resources development) and their goals and policies for agricultural development. It is in this respect that the Government identified gender mainstreaming as one of the key strategies for promoting gender equality.

The objective of ASPS is increased sustainable income of female and male small holder farmers. This program is being implemented in seven districts in Kenya which include Kitui district. In agricultural development, men and women are recognized as being equally important; however women farmers generally face more socio-cultural and socio-economic barriers than men. They have lower incentives, limited access to production factors and markets and support systems.

In Kitui district the key gender issues include; women provide more than 70% of all labour in agriculture, have less access to land, credit and extension services. On the other hand the majorities of the males have migrated to urban areas and have left women with the responsibility of agricultural production but with no formal rights to make decisions about the same production. The gender divisions under the ministry of agriculture are therefore expected to promote district level gender responsive advisory extension services. This paper will endeavour to analyze the circumstances that may have constrained gender units as catalysts into the program activities.

1.2 Problem Statement

In order for the district advisory services to fulfil their function as vehicles of positive change, it is crucial that gender units are able to ensure that gender considerations are made within the planning of activities and indeed project cycles by the extension services in the district. And one way of monitoring whether this is happening is through frequent and detailed reporting on gender disaggregated indicators in annual reports compiled by field staff.

However, the department of gender is concerned by the general lack of reporting on gender disaggregated indicators in sector program annual reports. This concern is shared by the Danish Mission in their Agricultural Sector Program Support Annual Review Report of February 9, 2007 where the mission notes lack of reporting on gender disaggregated indicators in (2005/6 annual reporting). Also the Ministry of Agriculture notes that its data bank is not disaggregated by gender and this puts to question the capacity of gender units or points to some weaknesses within this institution and maybe to a much wider problem.

In other words, though the intention is stated broadly in all policies of the Government that gender needs to be paid attention to in program activities, the absence of detailed sex disaggregated indicators shows that the reality is different. This may be a clear signal that there exists a gap between what is intended and what is seen as practice.

Despite popular believe by the government that gender units are key instruments for facilitating gender mainstreaming there has never been an evaluation conducted to really establish whether in reality this is indeed the situation on the ground. By conducting this study the researcher seeks to contribute to improvement of gender mainstreaming by identifying gaps between intention and practice and discuss possible implications.

1.3 Research Objective

To contribute to the improvement of gender mainstreaming strategies in government sector programs by assessing the constraints and opportunities of the gender divisions in mainstreaming gender perspectives in planning and implementing sector programs in Kitui District

1.4 Research questions

To what extent can gender divisions in the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya be used effectively to strengthen mainstreaming strategies in government agriculture sector programs?
1) How was the gender mainstreaming strategy formulated within the sector programme?
2) What is the power base of the gender divisions within the Ministry of Agriculture?
3) How are Gender units supported by the higher authorities?
4) What types of gender mainstreaming programs are designed/ delivered to extension frontline staff in Kitui District and what are the achievements?
5) How do the gender units communicate, network and interact with other stakeholders in their operations in Kitui?

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

The research strategy used in this project was a case study and it involved qualitative research methodologies. A desk study was first done that included reviewing literature by other scholars. Additional secondary information was obtained from policy documents, annual reports, work plans, Donor review mission report, sector policies.

Primary data sources comprised of two clusters, one cluster comprised of field staff in the district and the other was comprised of officials at the headquarters. Information was collected through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. These methods were preferred as they allow using a checklist which allows for flexibility during the interview process. There were seven semi structured interviews conducted with the head quarters officials and two focused group discussion involving 8 field staff in total. Interviews at the district level involved the district agricultural officer and the district home management and gender officer, while focus group discussion involved three frontline extension staff and five home economic and gender divisional based officers. At the ministry headquarters interviews were conducted with the head of the gender section, the monitoring and evaluation officer, the head of ASPS coordinating unit, the program officer at the Danish embassy, the deputy director of gender and the information officer on the national commission gender and development. In total the number of people was 17 officials, 11 of whom were female.

Table 1: Distribution of officers involved in the study

Category of officers	Number met-17	M	F
Ministry of Agriculture senior management	2	2	0
Embassy staff(ASPS Program Officer)	1	0	1
Representative from the National Commission on Gender and Development	1	0	1
Department of Gender	1	0	1
Gender Section Ministry of Agriculture headquarters	2	1	1
District head office staff	2	1	1
Divisional staff (field level)	8	3	5

Kitui was selected for this study because of the commitment of both donor and government of Kenya in supporting gender issues in the sector program. Further Kitui district is one of the few districts that have been implementing the sector program for over three years. In addition gender focal offices have been established to the divisional level. The district represents a rural development program where decentralized district based agricultural advisory extension services are actively engaged in planning and implementation of demand driven agricultural services.

The information collected was mainly descriptive and it was analyzed using elements of the Gender Integrated Organization Model. GIOM is an instrument to assess gender issues by describing, analyzing and diagnosing an organization from a gender perspective showing all the elements of an organization in an interrelated way. This tool provides for an in depth institutional and organizational analysis of gender units in respect of underlying gender strategy, structure, systems, procedures, staff policies management and culture.

The limitations of the research included some of the field officers targeted to provide primary information were on leave as the data collection period coincided with the end of government financial year when there are little activities in the field. The divisions in the district identified to provide information were also understaffed and it took more time to get the required information.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section presents debates and shifts from Women in Development to Gender and Development to Gender mainstreaming and then to Gender focal points as catalysts for promoting gender mainstreaming

3.1 The Women in Development (WID) approach

Up until the 1970s development approaches to women were restricted to improvements of their roles as wives and mothers, with concentration of activities in the areas of reproductive health and nutrition. The forward looking strategies of the Nairobi conference (1985) affirmed the theme of the Decades and recommended various strategies among governments were called upon to establish women's machineries as an avenue for more decision making powers in a political domain. Subsequently, after the Nairobi conference development agencies installed WID advisers in WID units. Unfortunately for Kenya which was at that time under one party system these units were hijacked by politicians and used as appropriate forums for advancing political agenda. Instead of assisting women they lead to more marginalization of women. "Welfare provision for the family was targeted at women who a long with the disabled and the sick were identified as 'vulnerable groups remaining the responsibility of the marginalized ministries of social welfare" (Moser, 1989:1807)

Kenya's participation in the first UN Conference on Women in 1975 in Mexico set in motion the process which led to the establishment of the Women's Bureau in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services in 1976. The Bureau was national machinery mandated with the advancement of women including policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, coordinating of Government initiatives and programs for women. This the time when the idea of establishing gender divisions started gaining momentum in Kenya.

3.2 Gender and Development (GAD) Approach

Towards the late 70s, throughout the 80s a new thinking was beginning to take shape. There was a shift from integrationist to mainstreaming as development practitioners had started to discuss the difference between sex and socially constructed gender. The gender concept based itself on socially constructed relationship between men and women replacing the more simplistic earlier paradigm, which conceptualized women in isolation. Gender and Development questioned existing power relations between men and women. This was clearly an undertaking that could not be done in isolation but needed to happen in the mainstream. As stated in Parpat (2004), argued "…that cultural assumptions and practices defining gender roles and relations often impeded women's development (and)…called for more attention to the voices of poor women, particularly their collective action, and for focus on gender roles and relations, culture and social economic inequalities,,,'

Further, to being social and cultural constructs, there was also the notion that certain structural rules and practices reinforced gender relations thereby keeping women subordinate to men. As Razavi and Miller (1995:14) pointed out "…gender subordination…is constructed by the rules and practices of different institutions-household, market, state and the community."

This prompted development practitioners to focus and analyze the internal working of institutions in order to address structural basis for gender inequality. The perceptions and shifts in approaches coincided with the new development thinking of organizations with policy statements and guidelines being implemented by governments.

3.3 Gender Mainstreaming

Significantly, gender mainstreaming differs from earlier development approaches in that it takes as its starting point a thorough and rigorous analysis of the development situation rather than prior assumptions about women's roles and problems. Gender mainstreaming, as a strategy, was developed out of a major shift in the focus of efforts to promote gender equality and equity in recent years. The gender mainstreaming strategy focuses on the fact that women and men have different life courses and that development policies affect them differently. It addresses these differences by taking gender into account in development planning at all levels and in all sectors.

Several scholars and development agencies have defined gender mainstreaming differently. The United Nations defines it as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated (UNDP, 2001). The United Nations further defines gender mainstreaming as a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

According to Horell, (1999), gender mainstreaming has been referred to as a policy, an approach, a philosophy, a mechanism, a method, and a strategy. Yet to others gender mainstreaming is seen as transformative strategy (EU, 1997; Council of Europe, 1998). Horell, (1999). further defines gender mainstreaming as the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making.

3.4 Gender Mainstreaming Principles

Some of the principles identified by UNDP, (2002) include:

- Forging and strengthening the political will to achieve gender equality and equity, at the local, national, regional and global levels;
- Incorporating a gender perspective into the planning processes of all ministries and departments of government, particularly those concerned with macroeconomic and development planning, personnel policies and management, and legal affairs;
- Integrating a gender perspective into all phases of sectoral planning cycles, including the analysis development, appraisal,

- Implementation, monitoring and evaluation policies, programmes and projects; Using sex-disaggregated data in statistical analysis to reveal how policies impact differently on women and men;
- Increasing the numbers of women in decision-making positions in government and the private and public sectors;
- Providing tools and training in gender awareness, gender analysis and gender planning to decision-makers, senior managers and other key personnel;
- Forging linkages between governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders to ensure a better use of resources.

UNDP (2006):

For a strategy of mainstreaming to be successful requires the following components:

Understanding and commitment
Commitment of senior management is one of the critical factors in successful implementation of gender mainstreaming. According to Ssendiwala, gurung and Waithaka (2004) this entails clarity about the goal of equality between women and men among professionals, particularly at the senior decision-making level, and commitment to pursuing this goal at both institutional and individual level. It involves top-level leadership publicly providing support for integration of gender sensitive issues in sector programs by committing staff time and resources, and by instituting needed policies and procedures.

Technical capacity
This entails building individual skills and changing organizational procedures. Individuals can take their skills with them when they leave an organization, but new procedures and systems become basic to how an organization operates. These are the skills needed to identify and respond to issues of gender equality between women and men relevant to the organization's mandate.

Structures and mechanisms
Structures and mechanisms which facilitate by ensuring that the concerns of both women and men and equality issues are raised within planning and decision making, enable important inter-sectoral linkages to be made; and hold staff and managers accountable and participatory mechanisms, This also requires building responsibility for integrating gender sensitive issues into job descriptions, work plans, and performance assessments (Mayoux 1998).

Catalytic presence
This maybe a central gender mainstreaming unit or focal points in various levels of an organisation with policy responsibility, and a mandate to guide the overall gender mainstreaming process. A recognized network of staff responsible for gender equality issues in their respective work units, coordinated as a team by the policy unit (often called a Gender Focal Point Network). Ideally this network takes the form of a community of practice –self-organizing, knowledge-sharing, peer-supporting and an acknowledged channel for the integration of learning on gender equality into the organization's functioning, (Murison ,2004)

According to Kusakabe (2005), different approaches to mainstreaming have been developed and implemented in different countries and organizational settings. These have included appointing gender focal points among staff; conducting training in gender sensitivity and gender analytical skills; developing gender policies and methods of gender-responsive planning; carrying out gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, through identifying gender indicators, collecting gender–disaggregated data and gender budget analysis through the support of a catalyst.

Sweetman and Porter (2005), makes a distinction between institutional and operational gender mainstreaming activities. Institutional activities address the internal dynamics of development organizations; their policies, structures, systems and procedures. The operational activities address the need to change the programs of work in which the organization is engaged. It is said that gender mainstreaming should involve both kinds of activities, however this study looked at the institutional activities and in particular it analyzed the gender focal points also known as gender divisions.

3.5 Gender focal points

The establishment of gender divisions, also known as focal points is one of the strategies used to ensure gender mainstreaming issues are established within and by governments for integrating gender concerns in development policy, planning and implementation. Government ministries and development agencies, in particular, frequently appoint/nominate "gender focal staff" to promote attention to gender in their own sector/department, in pursuance of policy commitments to gender mainstreaming. However debates have been ranging both in favour and against establishment of gender units since the 70s when WID units were introduced.

According to Derbyshire (2002), evaluations of gender mainstreaming repeatedly and consistently conclude that effective gender mainstreaming in any context requires staff, variously referred to as gender focal persons/change agents/gender "entrepreneurs"/gender advocates, to take responsibility for spearheading, supporting and sustaining gender work. The role of these staff is not to take full personal responsibility for gender work, but to act as *catalysts* supporting and promoting gender-related skills and approaches amongst professional colleagues. The evidence is overwhelming that unless there are staffs with designated responsibility, responsibility for gender equality all too easily becomes "mainstreamed" out of existence. Derbyshire further adds that positive focal point experiences, associated with promoting tangible change and sustaining momentum, are strongly related to supportive management, scope and resources for developing and implementing policy and activities, and adequate support.

In contrast Dawson (2005), states that gender mainstreaming should not just be the concern and responsibility of just a few specialists but rather an essential part of the work of all members of staff, as well as an integrated part of all organization systems procedures. It is therefore important that staff have a sense of ownership over the way gender concerns are integrated into their work. Indeed a number of organizations such as the Danish Development Agency (2002) have argued that since gender is 'cross cutting', it should be everyone's responsibility and not a responsibility of one person or unit. At the same time, other development practitioners have countered this argument saying that when this attitude prevails then gender actually ends up being nobody's responsibility and it evaporates. Also this researcher believes gender mainstreaming
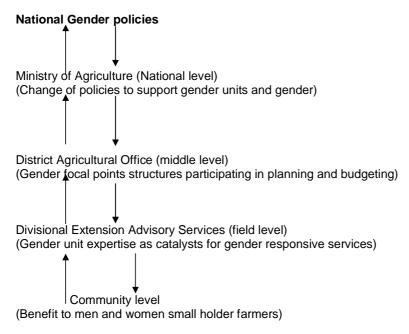
needs a network of professional support and expertise located in strategic position as catalyst otherwise it may take time to become a reality. In Kenya the Department of gender works with a network of gender focal points in the respective government ministries.
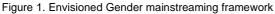
But gender focal points have been found to have challenges too. According to Kusakabe (2005) problems identified that hinder focal points from gender mainstreaming include the weak influencing power commanded by gender focal points, lack of resources, the evaporation of gender policies when it comes to implementation, and the difficulty of gender mainstreaming in the face of gender-biased organizational culture. While others argue that a gender unit at head office can be regarded by field staff as top-down or culturally coercive [Wallace 1998]. That is why development practitioners have said that governments have an important role to play in facilitating the effectiveness of gender focal points both in partner organizations and in project implementation teams, (Saitoti, 2005). Support of gender focal points in Kenya is an issue of major concern to the unit staff.

The rationale of establishing gender divisions in government ministries and NGOs has attracted a lot of attention, especially since 1990s. In the UK for instance, NGOs with gender specialist have made the most progress on gender issues [Wallace 1998]. At the same time it has been argued that when gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all staff, gender issues can be diluted or disappear altogether, through non-committed decision makers and male resistance, while specialized gender focal points can be marginalized from mainstreaming activities [March et al. 1999].

In brief it is noted that despite ranging debates, gender mainstreaming has never done away with the idea of gender focal points but what is clear is that there are no easy solutions to mainstreaming. A catalytic presence with a responsibility for advocating on gender mainstreaming can play a crucial role, providing the mandate is to focus on the strategic issues and act as a catalyst(rather than holding the overall responsibility for implementation of gender mainstreaming) (Ssendiwala,Gurung and Waithaka 2004). The approval of National Gender Policy 2006 entailed a two-pronged strategy: Encouraging institutions to take own gender mainstreaming initiatives and establishing gender divisions for accelerating those initiatives.
For the purpose of this study key themes will be applied to assess gender units from the perspective of institutional impediments that have constrained promotion of gender responsive advisory services in the district. This will be within the context of Gender Integrated Organizational Model (GIOM) institutional analysis tool.

National Gender policies

Ministry of Agriculture (National level)
(Change of policies to support gender units and gender)

District Agricultural Office (middle level)
(Gender focal points structures participating in planning and budgeting)

Divisional Extension Advisory Services (field level)
(Gender unit expertise as catalysts for gender responsive services)

Community level
(Benefit to men and women small holder farmers)

Figure 1. Envisioned Gender mainstreaming framework

The arrows above show a two way feed back mechanism that is needed for policy issues to be monitored and reviewed regularly from field experience to reflect realities on the ground. This allows for realistic gender mainstreaming activities.

3.6 Gender Mainstreaming Factors that Influence Gender Divisions

Many problems regarding gender mainstreaming have been identified by practitioners and scholars. From the statements above factors that influence the functioning of gender focal units and which were considered in the research include;

- Structure

- Strategy

- Organizational culture

- Staff

- Resources

Structure
According to Boer (2000) the structure of an organization is the formal and informal division and coordination of activities and responsibilities. It includes the tasks and responsibilities, coordination and the information system (Mukhopadhyay et al 2006).

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This pays attention to issues that show an organization has structures that are staffed with specific gender expertise and responsibilities. It describes where in the management structure the responsibility for gender mainstreaming activities is vested. It includes strategic points regarding whether gender desks are in place, centralized or decentralized and gender infrastructure.

Strategy

Strategy refers to the way in which an organization mission is translated into specific objectives and approaches. It is the long term plan of action that specifies how to realize the objectives with the available means (Boer 2000). A strategy is an action plan to put policy commitments into practice. In relation to all policy commitments, it is important to specify the following: Activities, Indicators, Time frame, designated responsibility to men and women; Analysis of difference in allocation of Budgets from the gender perspective. Analysing these elements reveals the extent to which a gender perspective has become a natural and integrated part of key organization core tasks from the context of own policy areas.

Staff

Staff with designated responsibility for mainstreaming gender and building staff capacity will almost always be necessary. The gender focal staffs are the ones with the responsibility for spearheading, supporting and sustaining gender mainstreaming in the organization as a whole. For them to play this role effectively they should have Clear and agreed terms of reference; Training in gender mainstreaming and advocacy; Professional support i.e. back-stopping consultancy, networking. The concerns of women and men need also be taken into account in the human resource management system, to check whether the organization have male and female staff at all levels, and whether they undertake work similar in status and value. It also focuses on recruitment, nomination and selection procedures, performance appraisal and promotion procedures.

Organization culture

This refers to norms and values of an organization. It's about the image of an organization and ownership of guiding principles. It reflects on the work relations between staff, men and women in an organization. It indicates what organization stands for and it wishes to operate (Groverman and Gurung, 2001). Some of the elements are that need to be checked from a gender perspective are: whether gender fits into the image of staff, comments made, ownership of the gender policy is acknowledged by all staff members and reputation of integrity and competence on gender issues.

Resources

A constant theme in effective gender mainstreaming is the importance of both the commitment and leadership of senior management. Only senior management can properly oversee a cross-cutting theme which, by definition, intersects the various management structures of the organization. Senior management provides signals about the relative priority assigned to various issues through making demands on staff for analysis, information and updates on progress. When such demands are not made, and when staffs are not held accountable for action on issues of equality, there is little incentive for action. Equally, senior management support for those spearheading gender equality works is a key to success. Mainstreaming gender equality is a highly sensitive issue and often meets with staff opposition.

The authority and support of senior management is important in enabling gender staff to continue in the face of resistance. Senior management can demonstrate commitment by:

- Allocating sufficient resources, financial and human, for the promotion of gender mainstreaming
- Participating in discussions on gender issues i.e. opening workshops, chairing panels, sponsoring discussions
- Providing moral support
- Supporting policy advocacy and dialogue on gender, e.g. raising it in discussions with politicians and representatives of development
- organizations
- Promoting measures to develop gender equity within organizational structures, procedures and culture.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The following chapter provides the main findings of the study.

The findings of this study show moderate achievements of the gender units in kitui. The findings also show that gender focal points have been put in place but are faced by a number of challenges as described in the subsequent paragraphs and chapters.

4.1 Gender mainstreaming strategy

To answer the sub-question one on formulation of gender mainstreaming strategy, several people were interviewed and several documents were referred. This was geared towards establishing the level of involvement of gender unit in the Agriculture Sector Program (ASPS) gender strategy formulation. The study revealed that gender units were not involved nor consulted during formulation of gender strategy. All 8 field based gender focal officers said they were not even aware of staff who were involved at the different stages of incorporating gender into the program documents. The study found out that the District Agricultural Office was however consulted and there were indeed consultations with other field technical staff and farmers. The senior level management staff who included the Danish Program Officer and the sector program coordinating unit said the consultation team was considering broader issues that were beyond the capacity of gender units. The views for not involving gender units were captured as below:

Focal point field staff reasons for not being involved in formulation of gender strategy as they were captured from the focus group discussions. There were three main reasons that were commonly cited. They are:
- ASPS does not recognise gender unit
- Gender is considered a cross-cutting issue
- Field staff are not well trained in gender

During interviews with senior staff they were also asked to give reasons why gender unit was not part of the gender formulation strategy and again three common reasons were captured as:
- The unit has no capacity to undertake such a task and consultant were preferred because of expertise
- Gender is a cross-cutting issue
- Gender issues are donor driven

The reason given from the two levels are varied as can be noted above, but the two groups are agreed on two things that the unit lacks expertise and that gender is considered a cross cutting issue. The three issues in both cases were captured because of their relevance to this study. These issues form main part of analysis in this study.

According to the inception report, it shows that the agreement between the governments of Kenya and Denmark regarding the (ASPS) was signed on the 24th May 2005 following extensive review of literature, consultations with GoK staff, particularly from MOA, private sector representatives from the agro-business community, the Royal Danish Embassy and the program staff. When asked by this researcher …" *Who were consulted in the district?*" The District Home Management and Gender Officer said. "*Consultants talked only to technical extension staff and the district agricultural officer after whom the*

program document was produced which is gender friendly." The study found that the overall responsibility for formulation of gender strategy rested with the Royal Danish Embassy.

4.2 The power base of gender units and structure

In an attempt to answer research question two the research sought to find out what is the power base of gender units within the structure of the ministry of agriculture. The findings revealed that the gender section at the ministry headquarters operates under the home economic department. At this position, the head of this section said the unit is not given much clout to have significant impact. The study found that there were only two officers at this level, the male officer who is responsible for gender, youth and agriculture and one female officer who is also the head of the gender section.

In Kitui District which was the focus of this study, the researcher established that the situation was more or less the same. The District quarterly staff report (District of Agriculture staff establishment, 2007) showed that the focal point in the District headquarters has only one female officer who is also the District Home Economics, HIV/AIDS, and youth and gender. The office is headed by a relatively very junior officer, newly appointed. The same report indicated posting to the District was her first assignment. During the interview the officer suggested that the coordinating unit should be located strategically, preferably as the deputy to the District Agricultural Officer. The study found that the home economics and gender office is not well recognized within the planning and budgeting structures that steer the activities of the sector program. The steering committee of ASPS program according to the program documents recognizes the position of heads of departments. One Divisional Head stated…"*The gender unit does not have much leeway or authority to influence heads of departments".* The study however found that focal officers have been appointed to divisional level.

This researcher asked the monitoring officer to comment on Mandate versus Placement of the gender coordinating office in the Ministry's organizational structure, and this is how he put it "*Currently the gender office is only a section with one officer in the Directorate of Extension and Training. Despite Gender equity being one of the core values of the Ministry, the current placement of the Gender Section is not strategic enough to reach out to all the Departments. This makes it difficult to be able to co-ordinate gender mainstreaming within the Ministry.*"

An interview with the head of the gender section further revealed that, gender units have adopted the guidelines as set out by the Ministry of Gender. In the field the study established that none of the 8 officers met in the two divisions had seen a copy of these guidelines. Indeed only the district head of gender and home economics reported to have come across these guidelines while attending a one week seminar on gender. Interview with the Deputy Director on gender on the other hand revealed that only gender focal point staff at the respective ministry headquarters have been provided with copies of the guidelines. On further probing the study found out that contacts between the Department of Gender and focal units are rare: only two meetings have taken place between the department of gender and the gender units since 2002 and none has been held specifically between gender units in the district and national officials to discuss the mandates. It was also found that the units derive their mandate from sessional paper No. 6 of 2006 on Gender Equality and Development. This was confirmed by the deputy

director for gender, Government policy documents and the department of gender draft report on orientation workshop for gender officers in ministries and state corporations held from 18th-19th Sept 2007 at the school of monetary studies.

The Home Economics Officer in Matinyani Division Kitui district expressed the problem as…."*The mandate of gender and home economics is not clearly understood as we handle both gender and home management and in many cases we concentrate on home management duties"*.

The study found out that field officers in the two divisions visited for this study believes that decision making is more centralized than decentralized to the divisions and as such the divisional officers have limited impact in influencing activity plans and budgets. "*Why don't you have copies of the guidelines or mandate of gender unit*" this researcher posed during the discussion…." *It is because decisions are more centralized than decentralized…"* One gender field officer said.

During the FGD there were also different views as to where the coordination activities of gender mainstreaming and roles are best placed or currently placed.

- Some felt that the crops officer should handle the gender mainstreaming coordination since the Ministry aims at achieving food security for all gender groups, while yet others felt that the responsibility could be placed under a neutral office, which does not have a gender bias, other than Home Management Office which has mainly female staff, and which currently makes it appear like a female activist approach
- Still, others felt that as a beginning, the responsibility should be placed where there are many male officers so that the misconception of it being a women's affair could be avoided

These views were coming from female officers in an endeavour to encourage male colleagues to join gender unit to minimise what they consider to be gender bias within the unit. The research established that similar recommendations were contained in an internal gender unit assessment report and in the program review report of the ministry of agriculture, ministry of agriculture gender workshop report, 2007

4.3 Expertise of staff

It was enquired what the relevant qualifications and expertise are. The findings are as shown in the table below:

The table 2 below shows the level of training of gender focal points

Academic background/level of education	No of officers	M	F	Station	Gender training period
Certificate course in Agriculture	2	2	0	Location level	One hour session
Diploma course in Agriculture	3	1	2	Divisional level	2days course
Degree(Bsc. Home economics management	3	0	3	2 Divisional heads and 1 District head	One week and below
Master's level	1	0	1	Ministry headquarters	1 year master's course

This table above shows that staff in the district has received very limited training in gender. The table also shows that majority of the officers have been trained as home economic management officers. In terms of staff distribution the study found that there are more female gender staffs than male in the field. One officer in the division when asked…what is the job requirement for gender officers? responded… "*The gender and Home Management office is perceived as mysterious, a female domain and associated with catering and gender duties are considered as sideway issue and in most cases come last during prioritization of activities".*

The findings show that it is only the head of gender section at the ministry headquarters out of the 9 interviewed who had a master's degree in gender and agriculture. The head of gender unit in the district is a BSc. Agriculture and Home Economics holder and had only attended one week training on gender. According to the interviews none of the other officers in the district had attended a gender training exceeding three days. One officer said *"we have the management functions, but not the required qualifications",* In most cases the study found out that the only job requirement for appointment as gender officer is previous experience as home management officer or training in home management related course. The study further established that gender mainstreaming activities are not part of their job description. All 8 officers in the district informed this researcher that job description only covers home management issues.

4.4 Resource allocation

The study revealed that gender divisions have to lobby for resources. "*There are no funds set aside for gender mainstreaming and funding to the units is based on budget proposals submitted to ministry headquarters by the respective officers*" the District Agricultural officer stated. Similar sentiments were also shared by the field staff in the district where they stated that Gender issues are not considered a priority by the senior ministry officials. Analysis of annual work-plans and budgets showed that there were no specific budget lines for mainstreaming activities. And according to the internal assessment report conducted by the gender section lack of involvement of gender unit officers in the budgeting process is cited as a major concern of the unit. The budgeting process is considered top down approach. In this case it is the prerogative of the District Agricultural office to decide which departments should be given priority in line with the set budget ceilings. A common statement that kept on being repeated in most forums is that "*The budgeting team, though they acknowledge about gender, do not give guidelines on the same to field officers, they only give ceilings.*" This indicates a gap between policy and practice. The head of gender said… "*We have to lobby and push hard to be listened to by bosses to get financial support, although management perceive gender mainstreaming as crucial they hardly allocate enough resources for gender related activities and gender is considered as add-ons to other programs*".

The DHMGO informed the researcher that gender activities have been left out of the budgeting process because of the cross cutting nature of gender issues as perceived by the management. The study established the following levels planning

LEVELS OF PLANNING AND PLANS LINKAGES

National Goals
↓
Sectoral plan
↓
  Strategic Plan
↓
Annual Work Plan
↓
   Departmental Work Plan
↓
     Individual Work Plan

Source ministry of agriculture, 2007

The above flow chart shows the top down nature of the planning process in the ministry which focal officers in the field said limits them from influencing budgetary allocations

4.5 Support provided to gender units by higher authorities

The study established that gender unit is linked to Director/Extension, Research Liaison and Technical Training through home management department. Through this office the study found out that focal point officers were able to access limited funding for mainstreaming activities. Indeed the District home management and gender informed this researcher that recently they received funds for training and for internal assessment

of gender division interventions. The study also established that the head of civil service had issued a circular requiring staff in gender focal points to be appointed in senior positions

The study further revealed that gender unit staff competes for resources and training opportunities alongside other technical officers. Training opportunities are advertised centrally and out of the five officers in the ministry who have been awarded Danish fellowship to attend gender course in Denmark, gender staff in Kitui have not benefited. Interviews with senior staff and analysis of program document showed that the ministry is yet to develop a gender strategy to guide the mainstreaming process.

Further the study revealed that appointment and recruitment follows the government bureaucracy and there is no mechanism put in place for considering the unique requirements of gender unit. However gender unit staff in the field informed this researcher that …"*The Policy and Agriculture Directorate is aware on the importance of considering gender issues in policy formulation*….." The study found that the technical training Division is responsible for gender based training and deployment.

This Division when considering staff for training follows recommendations of district training committees where gender focal points are not represented.

According to the program documents funding to the district is provided through budgetary support that is sent to district treasury where District Agricultural office is the accounting unit. The ASPS sector program however supports synergy between the district gender officer in the ministry of gender and the extension staff and in this case gender and home management officers. At the same time GoK funds are channelled through the district based work-plans and budget proposals from field officers. The study found that where gender officers are able to forward convincing proposals on gender mainstreaming they are considered on merit.

According to the in the gender section internal assessment report (2007), the unit has proposed far reaching reforms that include the following; Sensitization of senior staff on gender matters, allocation of funds to continue with the production of gender magazine for promoting mainstreaming programs, elevation of gender unit to a senior position, making gender mainstreaming a core function of all departments within the ministry and incorporation gender into staff appraisal system and finally the delineation of gender from home economic department accompanied by hiring of gender experts

At the time of this study it was established that the issues raised above were under consideration by the management

The study revealed 90% of the 10 staff interviewed and from focus group discussions (including the Director for Gender) was not comfortable with appointment of home management officer as gender focal points preferring a more neutral office like research and policy department. The study found that 5 of the 8 officers in the field considered gender as an extra work. The internal assessment report 2007 of on effectiveness of gender officers states that…" *The assignment of coordination of gender mainstreaming duties to the Home management officers, majority of who are female staffs has enhanced the already skewed perception that gender is only about women's affairs".* This internal report recommends the delineation of coordination from home management, and deployment of both male and female gender responsive staff

emphasizing that by so doing will go along way in correcting this perception and thereby make the gender staff more effective in the field operations. But this researcher found out that 6 of the 8 home economic officers in the field said they would be comfortable if they are given training on gender and two preferred not to continue working as gender officers.

4.6 Mainstreaming programs of gender units

The divisions were asked to provide examples of mainstreaming programs that have been designed and the following was provided:
- Altitude change programs to orient extension staff towards gender responsive extension services
- Local radio programs where men and women farmers are encouraged to share their experiences live(Supported by ASPS)
- Gender planning and budgeting guidelines
- Linking extension staff with private service providers especially those dealing with development of gender responsive technologies
- Developing gender analysis tools for training by extension
- Developing gender disaggregated indicators
- Developing gender responsive programming

The above programs were commonly cited during the focus group discussion in the two divisions with varying degrees of experience**.**

4.7 Notable achievements

With resources made available by the district agricultural office it emerged from the two divisions that gender focal points were able to begin a number of long term activities to ensure integration of gender issues in sector program.

- Promotion of gender sensitive practices and culture within its staff and the wider agricultural stakeholders in line with core values of the agriculture ministry and ASPS sector program
- Spearheading the mainstreaming of gender issues and concerns in agricultural programs, projects and activities.
- Improved reporting on gender disaggregated data by extension staff
- Conducting of gender based surveys and gender needs assessments
- Promotion of gender responsive technologies among the targeted men and women farmers
- Improved training of stakeholders on gender analysis
- Extension officers are now involving men and women in trainings and in agricultural committees

The study also found out that the district gender and home economics officers have applied for funds to support mainstreaming activities. The responses indicated a growing awareness of the importance of gender mainstream in planning and throughout the project cycle funded through the sector program in the district.

4.8 Constraints experienced by gender units

—The following were some of the constraints faced by gender units as mentioned by focal officers during focus group discussions (FGDs).

- Limited coordination between various departments within the ministry.
- Misconception of the role of gender units and the whole concept of gender mainstreaming by other staff
- Limited expertise on gender both at the National office to field level in the district
- Lack of gender specific strategy/policy within the agriculture sector
- Lack harmonization among various donors supporting agriculture among them NALEP SIDA, DANIDA supporting agricultural sector
- Limited support by the higher authorities including the department of gender and the national commission on gender and development.
- Gender is considered a cross-cutting issue and is handled by many departments
- Limited resource especially financial due to non involvement of gender expert in budgeting process of the ministry
- Gender focal points are overburdened as they handle other activities such youth in agriculture, HIV/AIDS in addition to home economic management roles

One divisional officer summarized these constraints with one statement as*… "Gender is not institutionalized within the ministry and not everybody feels responsible and this makes our work difficult"….* When asked by the researcher what she thought about the constraints mentioned.

4.8 Communication and network

In an attempt to answer the fifth sub-question regarding how gender units communicate, network and interact with other stakeholders in their operations in Kitui some the responses by field officers during the FGDs were:

- The stakeholders in agriculture have forums of quarterly meetings Some stakeholders mentioned were: Individual men and women farmers, farmers groups, cooperatives, development partners supporting agriculture sector activities in the district, other government departments such as livestock, water, roads, district advisory extension services, private agricultural service providers and veterinary services department
- The unit has been producing gender mainstreaming promotion magazines
- The sector also uses local vernacular radio stations to air programs targeting men and women

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF GENDER UNIT APPLYING GIOM TOOL

5.1 Formulation of gender strategy

As has been noted in the findings gender units were not involved in the formulation of the sector strategy. The entire process was done by consultants yet it is the gender units which are expected to actualize the process. It has been advanced by many development agents that it is not possible to implement mainstreaming without a clear strategic plan setting out policy objectives but in this case ASPS program instead of developing a clear strategy the consultant simply came up with broad statements such as "*the gender strategy will be aligned to GoK National policies.*" Although the whole process of not involving gender unit is based on limited capacity, making the Ministry of agriculture gender strategy to work within the context of broad National policy makes it much harder for the gender units to work effectively.

It is not easy to achieve a controversial goal, such as gender equality and equity in a more patriarchal society, without a clear strategic plan setting out policy, objectives, action, time frame and resources. Yet in many cases individuals and units within organizations who have been assigned responsibility for gender mainstreaming (the approach that the development community has agreed is the methodology to achieve gender equality – United Nations 1995 and 1997), are attempting to deliver on this responsibility with no clear strategy in place, Murison (2004). This is exactly the case of the gender unit in Kitui District. According to GIOM (2001), a strategy is supposed to show how an organization intends to achieve its objectives.This is an issue that is not clear in the case of ASPS program in the district. Though the program document is quite elaborate on the objectives in as far as addressing the needs of men and women farmers, it does not state exactly how the gender strategy will be institutionalised. This is despite the fact that one of the challenges highlighted in the program document as being a big impediment to development of women and men farmers is … "*ineffective extension services that are not sensitive to men women small holder farmers"…*(Agricultural Sector support Document , 2005-10)

To me I view the program gender strategy as too generalised and not specific. It was not possible to know what exactly do broad statement like aligning program strategy to GoK gender policy mean to field officers. It is assumed in the project document and by senior management that gender units will be able to link these statements to the National gender policy and on this basis apply the principles in the field. But as shown in the findings non of the officers in the field had seen a copy of the gender focal point mandate leave alone the Gender National Policy. This shows lack of follow up by senior management to see how national gender policies are operationalised at field level. These limitations reduce and limit the efficiency in focal points in the district because they lack institutional measures to strengthen gender mainstreaming activities at field level.

5.2 The power base of gender unit/ structure

Again as pointed out in the conceptual framework, an effective structure is the one that is able to plan monitor and evaluate the process of mainstreaming gender in all aspects of an organizational work. According to Grovernman and Gurung, (2001), an organisational structure is concerned with tasks responsibilities and authorities within the organisation; ways of working and the way people are grouped and coordinated to

accomplish the tasks, flow of information, communication and learning within the organisation and between the organisation and external networks.The gender unit in the ministry of agriculture in Kitui has not been fully established. The structure is not strategically placed in the district and it is mainly as an added responsibility to the home economic department. In the absence or lack of sector specific policies the gender units depends on the mandates established by national gender policy. The structure of gender units follows a decentralized gender desks from the ministry headquarters to field level where most offices have one officer per station. The locations of these offices though decentralized are without much authority. This makes it difficult to co-ordinate gender mainstreaming in the field. The units have no gender infrastructure such as offices facilities and equipments to enhance communication and coordination. It is therefore difficult to see any gender structure in the district in a functional sense. According to UNDP report, (2000), "*gender focal points have fared worse when it comes to organisation status especially when the structure lacks support from management",* The gender focal officers in Kitui feel unappreciated and opinion among senior staff is divided with some thinking gender is a cross-cutting issue that should be the responsibility of all staff while others think the unit is important as a catalyst for mainstreaming. Mainly the senior management has not shown commitment to strengthen this structure but this can be said to be the same tokenism approach to the whole issues of gender by the ministry. This is because while little is done to build capacity of gender units not much seems to be done to make other staff of the ministry to integrate gender in their core functions. Indeed it is the same gender unit which is not given much clout that is spearheading reforms that will see staff appraisal systems include gender as can be noted in the findings of this study. In kitui district extension advisory services are male staff dominated and in the absence of a well established gender structure the stated program strategy for gender equality in program activities may not be achieved. This is because male staff approach tends to favour men farmers who are in most cases not present. Small scale farming in the district is done mostly by women.

In case of kitui the structure seems to exist in reports, maybe for the purpose of showing donors but in reality this researcher was not able to see much in terms of structure but there was evidence of individual initiative. In the conceptual framework a structure is defined according to GIOM as a framework with capacity to coordinate programs, responsibilities and authorities within an organisation and also communication in the organisation and between the organisation and external network.

Therefore most of the achievement as per this finding is as a result of individual commitment and initiative because as can be noted from the findings of this study funding depends on individual proposals from officers. There was little evidence of a coordinated unit. The district administration deals with individual work-plans as opposed to section work-plans. This is according to ASPS work plan and budget, 2006. So in my opinion in an organisation's structure, staff and tasks must 'fit' each other and each element must be compatible with the others. A structure that fits with both the unit's tasks and its staff will lead towards efficient and effective task accomplishment and satisfied gender unit officials and ultimately improved gender responsive advisory services in the district.

5.3 Staff

The inputs for an organization according to GIOM include all the resources available for generating the outputs and services of an organization. In Kitui the gender unit operates with very thin staff. Indeed at the district level there was only one gender focal point officer who also handles other programs like home management and HIV/AIDs in addition to advising on gender. The same applies to the divisions which are at the lower administrative levels of the district all the way to the locations. Recruitment of staff to the units in this context follows laid down government bureaucratic procedures which might ignore specific aptitudes needed for gender mainstreaming policies and programmes.

The concern among staff that balance of female and male staff in gender units coordinating gender mainstreaming activities be balanced to demystify the perception that gender is a women's affair with an intention of encouraging more male staff to support gender activities seems varied. From the findings it is noted that there were only 3 men staff out of 8 officers working as focal officers in the district and considering the entire staff capacity in the district establishment this number is quite insignificant. It does not make sense to appoint only a few available staff in the district as focal point officers on the basis of sex in a district where 90% of extension services are male. The intention to appoint female staff may be good as they have proved to be more effective when it comes to gender matters but in a scenario where the expressed objective is to promote gender responsive extension services it would be necessary to review this position. The stated objective of the ministry is geared towards promotion of gender responsive district advisory services but this objective cannot be achieved with the appointment of home economic staff only as gender focal officers. This tends to reemphasize the misconception that gender is only a women's issue and could potentially serve to further marginalize work on gender mainstreaming in the ASPS program in the district. According to conceptual frame work gender focal points are supposed to be senior staff in core and sectoral ministries, who co-ordinate gender activities (e.g. training), promote gender mainstreaming in all activities in their respective sectors and sit in senior management meetings.

The fact that gender mainstreaming is not specified within a focal point's job description certainly shows gaps and this is complicated by limited access to relevant training opportunities as indicated in the findings .This subverts the concept of mainstreaming which should translate into all players considering how to deploy a gender lens in their work. (UNDP,2001). This study found that gender unit is also concerned about this issue and have written proposal to include gender issues in the staff performance appraisal systems. Indeed a clear sign that despite challenges and setbacks, there is optimism and willingness to undertake gender mainstreaming seriously throughout the programs. This is clear from the achievements noted under the findings. The gender focal point is not a full-time position; persons appointed as gender focal points normally have other areas of responsibility. The work of a gender focal point is to support gender mainstreaming by advocating, advising and supporting professional staff and monitoring and reporting on progress - if necessary through the use of / support from consultants or external specialists. Dissemination of information and competence development, through training and seminars, is also part of the work of the gender focal points. Therefore the initiative by gender unit to propose to include gender in appraisal systems shows the understanding of their role as focal point officers

5.4 Organizational Culture

According to Groverman and Gurung (2001) organizational culture refers to various key norms and values indicating what the organization stands for and how it wishes to operate. GIOM framework shows that organisational norms are standards or ground rules that influence or control organisational, group or team behaviour. They are beliefs or desires held or accepted by the majority of people in the organisation about what behaviours should or should not take place in the organisation, in a work team or a group. "*The culture of an organisation depends on both formal and implicit norms: Formal norms in the sense that they are written out as rules, regulations, procedures or policies while implicit norms are frequently those that are adhered to in contrast to the formal or explicit stated norms and are often not discovered until someone breaks one.*", (Inge,2005)

In the case of gender unit, the organizational structure like all other government institutions is hierarchical with the lines of command from the headquarters through provincial head and to the lowest level in the district. This is why the officers indicated in the findings that they have to lobby hard to receive attention from those high up in the hierarchal. Traditionally, there has been little exchange and coordination between departments both at central and local levels.

However, unit staffs shares the same professional background and as noted in the finding one implicit norm that is applied within gender unit is that home economics department is best placed to handle gender issues. It is important to note that traditionally this home management professional is associated with catering and is not preferred by male extensions staff. Usually many government departments in Kenya are male dominated but because of long held perception that home management is about women, it has not attracted male officers but also because senior staff think gender and home management means women, so they appoint women officers to gender units. Gender commitments are not rigorously pursued (Wallace 1998). All other extension services and senior positions in the district and the national level are 90%male dominated. Indeed the overall National Director for Extension, Research Liaison and Development Department under which home management falls which also houses gender unit is a man.

Again focal officers recognize and acknowledge that gender is important, but ownership of the process and enthusiasm for its implementation is still lukewarm among some officers. According to Mukhopadhyay et al, (2006) organizational culture looks at ownership of policy issues. In this study, findings show that gender is yet to fit into the organization image of gender unit in the district, they consider gender as an add on. They maybe right to think this way because it is not embedded in the service charter of the gender focal officials. The staff sees themselves first, as Home and Management officers, then second as coordinators of other cross-cutting issues that have been added to them like gender, HIV/AIDS and youth agriculture programs…

But on the contrary officers like head of gender section possibly because of strong training background in gender have been working hard for change to emerge. Generally the unit is gender friendly in provision of services. Work relations among staff is open and cordial even among the few male staff and female staff in the district as witnessed by free expression during the focus group discussion. Things only change when it involves the district level, province and ministry headquarters. This can be noted by the small office given to the head of gender unit which is at the margins of the core business of the ministry of agriculture.

5. 5 Commitment/ Support by higher authority

It has been noted from the conceptual framework that performance of gender units depends very much on the support from higher management. Indeed gender focal points officers have been appointed and have been deployed to location level in the district. But owing to limited resources made available officers are involved in a daily struggle to convince district administration to commit resources for mainstreaming. The district human resource department is not very supportive in looking at the gender focal point situation. Planning and budgeting in the ministry is done in a top-down manner. Planners and policy-makers are dependent on the information at their disposal to make decisions and therefore since gender officers are not consulted during budgeting the resultant plans and budgets do not provide for gender unit mainstreaming activities. Little consultation on constraints, opportunities, incentives and needs between gender unit and district planning team take place during planning and budgeting. Considering this environment gender unit can be said to have achieved a lot. It is the conviction of this researcher that if the senior management was to be a little bit supportive in terms of providing resources, rewarding hard work and initiative shown by some field officers the gender unit situation could be different.

One important aspect of managerial work involves organising human resources to ensure that the right people focus on the right tasks; they have proper information, tools incentives and control to perform these tasks effectively and efficiently and that their efforts are coordinated to achieve the organisation's overall objectives. Things like training of staff appear not to have been given attention as this study established.

The organisation exists in a context, i.e. the reality in which the organisation functions. Contextual factors are usually not under the organisation's influence, but are influenced by the world around it. The senior management has not done much to understand and monitor the context under which gender unit operate. The units appear to have been left to find their own way and as a result whatever achievement that have been made are easily linked to individuals. These individuals have been able to lobby for funding of gender responsive technologies, production of gender mainstreaming magazine and at the time of this study they were still fighting to be involved in the budgeting process and for better gender infrastructure among other things.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part summarizes this paper and draws conclusion based on the reflections of conceptual framework, the findings and analysis of the gender unit. This is in an attempt to answer the research question on what extent can the sector program depend on gender unit as catalyst for gender mainstreaming.

There is a general agreement that the concept of gender mainstreaming is rather new within various levels in the district which tend to hinder effective operations of gender units. There is some level of management support for the process considering the notable achievements of the unit but in light of the analysis a number of obstacles for successful operations of gender units as catalyst for gender mainstreaming in ASPS program have been identified, including:

- Currently there is little or varied understanding of the gender mainstreaming strategy both by gender unit and among various levels engaged in the implementation of ASPS program in the district.
- There seems to be lack of clear gender strategy and lack of capacity and structure at the district,
- Focal point staff indifference and resistance to consider gender issues as core responsibility and competing priorities because of handling many programs like HIV/AIDS and youth
- There has been little consultation between gender units and senior management especially on detailed implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies
- There has been insufficient attention paid to the human resource allocation and the wider budgetary requirements of mainstreaming activities in the field
- There has been inadequate guidance (largely for the above reasons mentioned above) of the content of gender training for gender unit staff sufficient to undertake mainstreaming activities and the way these should be monitored and directed and
- There has been insufficient analysis of the required staffing requirements and skills of gender focal points

It is therefore evident that the organization's structure within the ministry and the district administration procedures and human resource distribution determine the kinds of programs that are implemented and the nature of services it is capable of producing.

Under these circumstances it is logically unrealistic to expect the unit in Kitui in its current form to make significant impact in as far as mainstreaming gender in a sector wide program approach such as Kitui ASPS is concerned.

—Therefore based on the above conclusions and considering the need to overcome these obstacles before a more robust framework can be established to support gender units by the national office the following recommendations can be made.

- As a matter of priority gender unit staff should be trained in gender mainstreaming especially on development of gender based management plans for the district and how to forge networks with district based NGOs. Gender mainstreaming issues are complex and require considerable time, and resources, the ASPS management in the district should identify experts to train a

few selected staff in gender mainstreaming preferably for minimum of three weeks accompanied by short intervals of refresher courses based on real gaps identified in the course of field implementation through training needs assessments. These should be competence development programme, if not already carried out, and initiate on-going activities to increase the professional capacity of all staff in gender mainstreaming.

- Stakeholder consultation on gender mainstreaming including: Consultations with other technical staff in the district to familiarize with the intentions of mainstreaming activities by gender units and encourage ideas on implementation and how to reform gender unit to provide proper support to district advisory services

- The District head of gender section should ensure that the structure of gender units is developed and legitimized to put it in a position to participate in planning and budgeting process. While doing this, measures should be taken such that this responsibility is not interpreted to mean that focal point are taking on all responsibility for gender mainstreaming, meaning that others may perceive no need to consider gender in their work plans and implementation.

- Appointment of focal point officers should be based on expertise, interest or motivation to serve as gender officer not on the basis of gender orientation of the officers or bias towards home management.

- Terms of reference for gender officers should include the district and sector specific while the National Guidelines should only be used as reference points and not blue prints, in order to allow the gender officers contribute to policy and program planning with insights from those levels.

- The District Agricultural office should possibly try to apply affirmative action to improve the balance between female and male staff in gender unit. It is vital that gender training and recruitment to ensure gender balances be located and institutionalized in the personnel, training or human resource units or divisions in the district. These units/divisions should develop a cluster of core gender competencies and skills that should be acquired by staff at various levels, including gender focal points and senior managers. Staff induction should include gender-mainstreaming knowledge and promote peer support and team building.

- National head of gender section to lobby the development of a short policy statement, to be endorsed by senior management, which provides a framework - the mandate, rationales and goals - for the work of the unit on gender mainstreaming, using consultants or other resources as necessary

- Develop, on the basis of the policy statement, and an inventory of the roles and work methods of the unit, a strategy, to be endorsed by senior management, to be included in the medium-term plan. This strategy should outline the overall approach to gender mainstreaming to be taken in the headquarters (and in the field) and designating responsibility and accountability throughout the unit, using consultants or other resources as necessary.

- The many positive contributions of gender focal points to the realization of gender mainstreaming should be recognized**.**
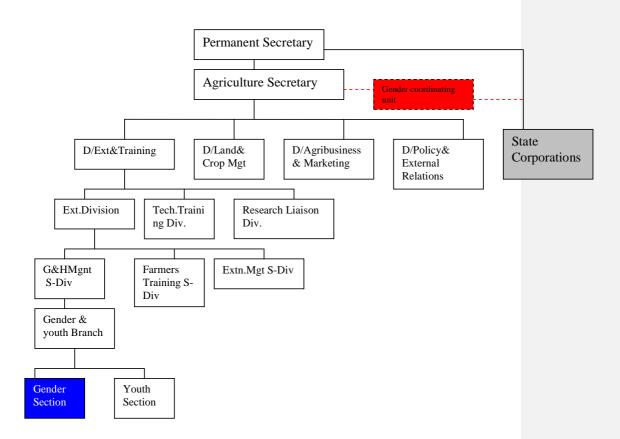
Finally and not least the gender unit in Kitui requires considerable internal scrutiny, and strong alliances between those organizational divisions responsible for policy, program and human resource management of the Ministry of Agriculture to make this unit to play its catalytic role effectively and efficiently to improve access of advisory services to men and women farmers . Further more, the strategy of ASPS is to work through existing district structures and promote collaborative between the district systems with National level. So potential for high-level commitment needed to implement these recommendations is not in doubt. Above all the new Government in Kenya is also engaging in a turn-around from a centralized to a decentralized public sector development for agriculture.

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ANNEX 1

Proposed new structure of the Ministry of Agriculture showing where gender unit should be located. The box (blue) at the bottom shows where the office is located and above (Red box)show the proposed location

Source: Ministry of Agriculture Internal assessment report, 2007