

# EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

REPORT 2/2015



## Evaluation of Norway's support to women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation

### CONTENT

<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	3
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	4
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	5
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	9
1.1 Rationale and purpose of the evaluation .....	9
1.2 Specific objectives and evaluation questions .....	10
1.3 Evaluation scope and context .....	10
1.4 Analytical framework and methodology .....	12
<b>2. THE GLOBAL PICTURE</b> .....	20
2.1 Reviewing the global picture between 2007 and 2013 .....	21
2.2 Gender-marked aid overview .....	27
2.3 Results management and reporting mechanisms .....	38
2.4 Human resources .....	41
<b>3. COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS</b> .....	45
3.1 Systemic-level findings .....	45
3.2 Project-level findings .....	52
3.3 Organisational-level findings .....	63
<b>4. CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	76
4.1 Key strengths .....	76
4.2 Key weaknesses .....	77
<b>5. RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN RESULTS</b> .....	85
<b>ANNEXES</b> .....	91
<b>LIST OF TABLES/FIGURES/BOXES</b> .....	92
<b>ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS</b> .....	93

**Commissioned by**  
the Evaluation Department

**Carried out by**  
Swedish Institute for Public Administration (SIPU) in cooperation with  
Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI)

**Written by**  
Nicola Jones, Inge Tvedten, Angélica Arbulú, Paola Pereznieto,  
Johanna Lindström and Mari Norbakk

APRIL 2015

---

This report is the product of its authors,  
and responsibility for the accuracy of data included  
in this report rests with the authors alone. The findings,  
interpretations, and conclusions presented  
in this report do not necessarily reflect the views  
of the Norad Evaluation Department.

**Norad**  
Norwegian Agency for  
Development Cooperation  
[www.norad.no](http://www.norad.no)  
[post-eval@norad.no](mailto:post-eval@norad.no)

May 2015  
Photo: Nicola Jones (cover),  
Angélica Arbulú (page 3)  
ISBN: 978-82-7548-755-9

## Foreword

The core finding in the evaluation presented in this report is that Norwegian aid to strengthening women and girls' rights and gender equality ranges from visionary and highly effective in some areas to weak in others.

The core finding in the evaluation presented in this report is that Norwegian aid to strengthening women and girls' rights and gender equality ranges from visionary and highly effective in some areas to weak in others. It also documents gaps in skills and capacities to apply gender analysis and implementation monitoring and reporting systems within the Norwegian development administration. One of the surprising findings is that Norway ranks only in the bottom half on "gender-marked" aid among the top 10 OECD-DAC bilateral donors.

The purpose of this evaluation, as with other evaluations initiated by the Evaluation Department, is to give a basis for improving Norwegian aid. We hope the report triggers a debate on what, were and how Norwegian gender aid should improve. We think it is time to make some important choices.

The evaluation was commissioned by the Evaluation Department and carried out by SIPU, Swedish Institute for Public Administration, in collaboration with the London-based Overseas Development Institute and the Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway, together with national experts. The authors of the evaluation report were Nicola Jones, Inge Tvedten, Angélica Arbulú, Paola Pereznieto, Johanna Lindstrom and Mari Norbakk. The project manager in the Evaluation department has been senior adviser Siv Lillestøl.

Oslo, May 2015



Per Øyvind Bastøe  
Director, Evaluation Department

# Acknowledgements

The evaluation team included Team Leader Dr **Nicola Jones**, Senior Research Fellow at ODI in the UK. She was also Country Team Lead for Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, she worked with Senior National Expert **Bekele Tefera**. The team was supported by research assistants **Kiros Berhanu**, **Bethelihem Gebre**, **Kiya Gezagehne** and **Taveeshi Gupta**.

The Country Team Lead for Mozambique is Dr **Inge Tvedten**, Senior Researcher at CMI in Norway. Dr Tvedten worked with Senior National Experts **Carmeliza Rosário** (fieldwork Cabo Delgado and Zambézia) and **Sheila Faquir** (interviews in Maputo), both from Cowi/Mozambique, and National Research Assistant **Fumo Chacuro**.

The Country Team Lead for Nepal was **Angélica Arbulú**, who worked with Senior National Expert **Shailendra Sigdel** and National Research Assistant **Shubheksha Rana**, both from the Foundation for Development Management (FDM) based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The desk study lead was **Paola Perezniето**, Research Associate with ODI, based in Mexico. She was supported by **Mari Norbakk** from CMI in Norway. Dr **Cathy Rozel Farnworth** conducted the Zambia desk study.

The team was supported by **Johanna Lindström** at SIPU, who provided project management and support with data analysis.

The evaluation team would like to thank **Stein-Erik Kruse** for insightful peer review comments, **Roo Griffiths** and **Kathryn O'Neill** for excellent editorial support, **Siv Lillestøl** and **Anita Haslie** from the Norad Evaluation Department for guidance during the evaluation process as well as the wide range of Norad, MFA, Embassy and broader stakeholders for detailed peer review comments. Further, we would like to thank the women, men, girls and boys whom we interviewed in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nepal for their time and insights, which lent the report findings considerable richness.

# Executive summary

**Purpose of evaluation:** This report evaluates Norway's support to strengthening women and girls' rights and gender equality through its development cooperation during the period 2007-2013. It assesses the extent to which results have been achieved and whether they are in line with the Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (the Gender Action Plan) and its four main thematic priorities: political empowerment, economic empowerment, sexual and reproductive health rights and violence against women.

**Approach and methodology:** This evaluation combines two key elements: (1) a broad desk-based approach focusing on the effectiveness of gender-marked aid in Norwegian development cooperation used to promote women's rights and gender equality; and (2) a more in-depth analysis of country case studies in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nepal and, within these countries, of carefully selected projects. Within the evaluation's theory of change, results are identified at three levels:

- Systemic change – contributions to changes in laws/regulations, funding levels, discourse, legitimacy of an issue and content of national-level dialogue processes;
- Project results – contributions to changes in the position/empowerment of women and girls, as well as community and community leaders' attitudes and behaviours related to gender equality;
- Organisational change – contributions to changes to partner capacities to work on women's rights and gender equality, including those of government agencies, non-governmental/civil society organisations, UN agencies, private enterprises and twinning partners.

**Findings:** Our desk-based analysis of the global picture highlighted that, while Norway has been an important advocate of gender-focused aid internationally and vis-à-vis the multilateral system, actual allocation of Norwegian aid to gender in projects and programmes is comparatively low (13-15 percent for gender marker 1 and 5-6 percent for gender marker 2). Norway

ranks in the bottom half on gender-marked aid among the top 10 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development donors of bilateral official development assistance. In terms of promoting results-based reporting on women's rights and gender equality, we confirmed significant bottlenecks. In particular, general guidelines and reporting systems are weak and fragmented and specific reporting requirements for women's rights and gender quality are inadequately detailed and contextualised. These problems are exacerbated by an underinvestment in capacity-strengthening for staff in terms of women's rights and gender equality, monitoring and results reporting skills.

At the country level, our primary research revealed a highly mixed level of results both within countries and sectors and across countries. Given the limited timeframe of the evaluation – 2007-2013 – the evaluation team focused primarily on outcome-level changes, as longer-term impacts are more difficult to assess given the complexities of women's rights and gender equality change processes.

At the **systemic level**, overall we found stronger results in terms of contributing to policy and legal changes, national discursive shifts and strengthening of the evidence base on women's rights and gender equality. Weaker results were found in terms of contributing to changes in the volume of funding invested in women's rights and gender equality initiatives and in the content of national government–donor dialogue processes.

At the **project level**, the case studies showed highly varied results, which were linked less to the type of implementation partner and more to the quality of the project design and the rigour of the monitoring, evaluation and learning systems and checks in place. In terms of changes in beneficiaries' lives, overall we found stronger evidence of improvements in women's participation within the household, community and political spheres and in community and community leaders' levels of awareness of gender-related rights. Evidence of improvements in gender-responsive services, in engaging with men and boys on women's rights and gender equality issues and in enhancing the capacities of local governments was generally weaker.

At the **organisational level**, in terms of promoting the external capacities of partners to engage more effectively on women's rights and gender equality issues at scale and in a sustainable manner, we found positive evidence of Norway's efforts to support the capacities of non-governmental/civil society organisations' work in this area. Evidence of change in the case of the capacities of government, UN agencies and twinning partners was relatively weaker. Overall efforts to strengthen embassy internal capacities were less effective. While the Women and Gender Equality Grant has contributed to stronger awareness among embassy staff (where it is proactively used), it has primarily strengthened relations and partnerships with key NGOs on WRGE.

**Unintended effects:** Norwegian development cooperation's approach has resulted in some significant unintended effects. Its strong emphasis on women's rights and gender equality in relations with development partners favours conditionalities based on universal rights. This comes at the expense of the principle of recipient responsibilities enshrined in the Paris Declaration, to which Norway also is a signatory

(as in, e.g., the issue of gay rights). Similarly, an emphasis on the model of an 'engaged, critical friend' with partners (whether they be the UN or non-governmental organisations) at times means evaluation efforts are not as probing or rigorous as they ought to be. At the country level, a strong emphasis on women in gender relations/the equality equation has in some cases had the effect of marginalising poor men or endorsing men's tendency to 'defend their rights'.

**Conclusions:** Overall, Norwegian development cooperation's efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality have produced mixed results.

Core **strengths** at the global level include important contributions to women's rights and gender equality internationally and in the multilateral system; a dedicated department on gender in the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), which embassies actively draw on as a resource; a targeted funding pot, the WGE Grant, for catalytic work on women's rights and gender equality; and good access to existing data on aid, including on women's rights and gender equality, through Norad's home page and

annual results report. At the country level, Norway's strengths as a women's rights and gender equality donor include its investment in vanguard rights issues (e.g. tackling harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, supporting sexual and reproductive health rights) and in innovative networks, and its commitment to longer-term funding so as to better address complex sociocultural norms and practices. Norway is also a strong supporter of civil society organisations working on women's rights and gender equality issues in a global context where funding pots for civil society are shrinking; and of UN agencies when other donors are increasingly turning to private sector actors.

Significant **weaknesses** in Norway's efforts to promote women's rights and gender equality include limitations in terms of the proportion of gender-marked aid it allocates relative to its donor peers; very limited investments in tailored capacity-strengthening on women's rights and gender equality for embassy staff; an overreliance on individual champions to promote women's rights and gender equality without adequate manage-

ment support; limited detailed engagement with projects/programmes resulting in weak monitoring and evaluation; inconsistent use of the gender marker system and the Women and Gender Equality Grant; a limited legacy of the gender pilot embassy initiative owing to a dearth of follow-up; and lack of consistency in definitions and use of indicators (including an overreliance on quantitative indicators) to undertake result-based management and assess results at outcome and impact levels. Also, results are not sufficiently disseminated in partner countries, particularly at local level; languages used are often accessible.

**Recommendations:** Our overarching recommendation is that Norwegian development cooperation focus first and foremost on undertaking current activities in a more strategic manner. We are sympathetic to the fact that managers and advisors have large portfolios and multiple demands in terms of the results they are asked to deliver. However, we believe the evidence points to multiple areas in which a more strategic approach could do much to overcome the bottlenecks identified in terms of delivering on women's rights and gender equality results.

Additional resourcing would of course be desirable, especially in light of the relatively low levels of funding to gender-marked aid by Norway relative to its peers. Even without this, there is considerable room for improvement. Within this umbrella recommendation, we have identified nine more specific recommendations:

- 1. Continue to focus on areas where Norway has a competitive advantage and can play a catalytic role.** This may be in areas other larger donors have difficulty accessing, such as local civil society or longer-term social norm change processes, or in key strategic sectors such as energy. Given its relatively small size but high reputation, its resources would be more effective when used to leverage larger donors.
- 2. Harness learning from the gender pilot embassy initiative,** especially the importance of developing and implementing country-specific gender action plans; institutionalising more detailed reporting on women's rights and gender equality results that allow for learning; and investing in gender focal points to play a crosscutting embassy coordinating function.



**3. Ensure greater consistency in the use of the gender marker system,** by improving the guidance provided to staff, including specifying the type and number of indicators a project should have in order to be marked 1 or 2 and the reasons for a 0 and ensuring stronger checks and balances on its implementation.

**4. Expand the strategic use of and funding for the Women and Gender Equality Grant,** including by publicising widely its purpose and how management and staff can access it; promoting its use in non-traditional sectors; and earmarking a specific budget line to strengthen monitoring, evaluation and learning capacities so as to promote stronger women's rights and gender equality results reporting.

**5. Invest in more in-depth and strategic capacity-strengthening of staff,** with a focus on supporting applied gender analysis skills development in the context of project design, especially for strategic sectors like energy and climate change.

**6. Develop a clearer division of labour between Norad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,** in order to maximise resources and synergies. We further recommend a specific unit be established, possibly along the lines of the gender helpdesks found in the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the UK Department for International Development, to field requests for support from embassies as well as to provide more detailed annual checks of results reporting from embassy level.

**7. Invest in more rigorous monitoring, evaluation and learning competencies in-house and among partners,** including developing an explicit theory of change to articulate the goals and change pathways assumed to underpin the Gender Action Plan; streamlining results reporting procedures while ensuring a sufficient level of detail and contextualisation for advisors to engage meaningfully with findings; and strengthening internal knowledge management systems.

**8. Refine the definition of results of interventions by including both quantitative and qualitative data** so they better capture the com-

plexities involved in promoting women's rights and gender equality, including changing entrenched gendered social norms and unequal power relations between women and men. Results of Norway's support to WRGE should be better disseminated in partner countries, including through more active and focused use of Norwegian embassy homepages and briefs to inform and engage with stakeholders and target populations.

**9. Capitalise on Norway's core strengths vis-à-vis women's rights and gender equality policy and programming and think BIG,** including focusing on women's potential role to contribute to key economic development/poverty reduction sectors, such as private sector/entrepreneurship and education; and leveraging key pillars of Norway's own success in terms of advancing women's rights and gender equality, ranging from positive discrimination of women in employment to accessible and affordable provision of child care so as to facilitate women's opportunities for economic empowerment.



# 1. Introduction

The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) has commissioned the Swedish Institute for Public Administration (SIPU), with support from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in the UK and the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Norway, to undertake a results-focused evaluation on the effects Norwegian aid is having in terms of enhancing women's rights and gender equality (WRGE) in Southern partner countries. Our starting point has been that gender is more than just one among multiple competing priorities. Indeed, it is critical – both in terms of a rights perspective and with regard to contributing to Norwegian development cooperation's ultimate goal of poverty reduction. The evidence that investing in WRGE makes good economic sense is now overwhelming (World Bank 2012). Norway's prime minister also recently endorsed such a view (Solberg 2015).

The evaluation builds on several earlier evaluations in the mid-2000s (NIBR 2005, 2009; Norad 2011), but brings a particular focus on results, including for the ultimate target groups – women, men, girls and boys in partner countries. Ultimately, it aims to identify lessons

learnt that can inform the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA's) efforts to strengthen its planning, organisation and implementation of future interventions to promote WRGE within Norwegian development cooperation.

The evaluation report is organised as follows. We begin here with an overview of the evaluation purpose, objectives and core questions, a discussion of our theory of change and a description of our approach and methodology. Section 2 turns to a discussion of the global picture in terms of gendered aid allocated by Norwegian development cooperation, including how Norway fares vis-à-vis its global peers. We also examine the strengths and bottlenecks identified through the desk review in terms of delivering on WRGE results. Section 3 discusses our findings in terms of results at systemic, project and organisational levels in our three in-depth case study countries (Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nepal). Section 4 presents our conclusions and Section 5 our nine key recommendations.

## **1.1 RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION**

The purpose of the assignment as per the terms of reference is to undertake an evaluation of Norway's support to women and girls' rights and gender equality in development cooperation during the period 2007-2013 and to assess and document the extent to which results (both shorter-term outcomes as well as, where possible, more medium-/longer-term impacts) have been achieved. The evaluation should also assess whether these are in line with the Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (MFA 2007) (the Gender Action Plan) and its four main thematic priorities: political empowerment, economic empowerment, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and violence against women. We further understand from the terms of reference that the evaluation should assess the extent to which the recommendation in the 2005 evaluation report (NIBR 2005) for a stronger focus on equal rights within dialogue with partner countries, as well as for strengthened institutional capacities, especially at embassy level, has been implemented in practice.

## 1.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to assess the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of Norwegian development cooperation support to WRGE. We assess these three evaluation criteria in the context of the identified evaluation questions detailed in the terms of reference.

## 1.3 EVALUATION SCOPE AND CONTEXT

This evaluation covers all Norwegian support to WRGE in development cooperation in the period 2007-2013, whether directly targeted or gender mainstreamed,<sup>1</sup> regardless of the institutions involved. Our understanding of the context of the evaluation is premised on the following five key elements, with hypothesised implications for this evaluation highlighted in italics:

**1. Norway's support to WRGE is two-pronged, combining gender mainstreaming with targeted approaches.** More specifically, gender-marked aid is divided into three main

<sup>1</sup> Indirect support to gender via core budget support to multilateral institutions is not included.

TABLE 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Criteria	Questions
Effectiveness	To what degree has Norwegian support to WRGE led to the intended results? This will include results at three broad levels: (1) contributions to systemic changes (e.g. laws, regulations, funding, discourse, gendered social norms); (2) project results at field level; and (3) organisational change. Contributing factors for the results achievement, or lack thereof, will be discussed.
	To what degree has Norwegian support to WRGE led to unintended consequences, positive or negative?
Relevance	To what degree is Norwegian support to WRGE relevant in view of national priorities, needs and possibilities?
	To what degree is Norwegian support to WRGE in line with the strategic priorities outlined in the Gender Action Plan?
	To what degree has funding through the Women and Gender Equality Grant (WGE Grant) (budget line 168.70) been used in accordance with its intentions?
Sustainability	To what degree has Norwegian support influenced, positively or negatively, national processes to improve WRGE, including influencing national ownership of the issues or the capacity of national institutions and implementing partners?
	To what extent has Norwegian support contributed to the sustainability of project/programme objectives?

portfolios: (1) projects and programmes where gender is a significant objective within Norway's aid portfolio (policy marker gender 1, herein gender marker 1), (2) projects and programmes that have WRGE as a primary objective (policy marker gender 2, herein gender marker 2); and then (3) the specific budget line 168.70, the Women and Gender Equality Grant (with either

gender marker 1 or 2), which funds targeted projects and programmes to implement the Gender Action Plan outside other funding opportunities. More broadly, according to the Grant Management Manual, gender equality is one of three cross-cutting issues (along with corruption, environment and climate change), information about which must be included in all project and

programme reports. In practice, however, gender marker 1 is most commonly associated with ‘mainstreaming’, while gender marker 0 is undefined. *Attributing results related to WRGE is more straightforward with targeted aid than with mainstreaming – where lines of accountability tend to be less clear. We assessed the implications of this distinction for programming and reporting and related implications for aid investments.*

**2. Norwegian development cooperation is institutionally complex.** MFA has since 2004 had overall responsibility for policy formulation and the implementation of programmes and projects through the embassies as its ‘representatives in the field’, with Norad taking on a primarily advisory function – and in the case of gender through a separate Section for Rights and Gender Equality (LIRE). Part of the institutional context entails heavy reliance on Norwegian ‘twinning partners’ in the form of the government institutions, private enterprises and civil society organisations (CSOs) that often are in the ‘front-line’ of policy implementation. *We therefore assessed these institutional dynamics (where relevant)*

*under our country case study component as part of the relationship between Norway and recipient countries, as well as implications for processes, decision-making and, ultimately, results.*

**3. Multiple previous studies and evaluations about the relative efficacy of Norway’s rights and gender equality approach exist, but these have focused predominantly on policies, processes and institutional dynamics (NIBR 2005, 2009; Norad 2011).** There has been less attention to date to direct and indirect outputs/outcomes/impacts. In contrast, in the present evaluation the core added-value is a focus on results – at systemic, project and organisational levels. *We therefore looked at making links between existing understandings of Norwegian development cooperation and how modes of working either facilitate or constrain WRGE results. This included, for example, looking at aid flows over time; capacity development efforts; differential spending trends by sector and implications for results in terms of the Gender Action Plan’s four thematic priorities; and embassy capacities vis-à-vis gender analysis and gender-sensitive programming, among others.*

**4. WRGE enjoys a high profile in Norwegian society and development cooperation, with potentially complex implications for recipient country relations.** The relative importance of gender equality on the Norwegian development cooperation agenda has increased over the past decade, with the Gender Action Plan of 2007 an important turning point. While there are sound ‘rights’-based reasons for this, there is also a risk that certain stakeholders will interpret a focus on WRGE as the imposition of Nordic values and ideology (Selbervik and Østebø 2013; Tvedt 2005) – both in partner institutions and in local communities. *Possible differences in perceptions about what ‘gender equality’ means are likely to have implications for results. This evaluation analyses this, including by ensuring some of the results indicators assessed are those beneficiaries themselves have identified.*

**5. Finally, ‘Norad’s Strategy towards 2015: Results in the Fight against Poverty’ reveals an increasing emphasis on results and results-based management – also for cross-cutting issues like gender.** Related evaluations (e.g. Jerve and Villanger 2008) have long em-

phasised the need for improved methods for assessing the impacts of development aid, including the setting of sound and realistic objectives. The analytical challenges are threefold. First, a commissioning agency may ask for evidence of impact where this is not possible to identify, largely because the role of aid appears to be extremely marginal relative to the processes of societal change at which it is targeted. Second, the distinction between impacts of the aid element and the totality of a development intervention is often blurred. Third, resource constraints mean the methodological approaches used are either poorly developed or superficially applied.<sup>2</sup> *We took these insights into account within the context of gendered aid by being clear about the distinction between attribution and contribution, and between results that can be measured and those that need to be assessed through interpretive analysis (see further discussion below).*

These hypotheses and initial interviews with Norad and MFA guided the articulation of an im-

plicit theory of change behind Norway's support to WRGE (see below).

#### **1.4 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY**

At a general level, we employ a theory-based evaluation approach that maps out the causal chain from inputs to outcomes and impact and tests underlying assumptions (White 2009) – as presented in our theory of change diagram (Figure 1). More specifically, given this evaluation's primary focus on results, we employ a structure-agency conceptual framework, which sees WRGE as the combined outcome of political, economic and sociocultural structural constraints and opportunities and the agency of men and women (Bourdieu 1990; Ortner 2006). We measure these through a combination of quantitative data on programme outputs and outcomes (where available) and qualitative data and interpretive analysis to assess harder-to-measure factors such as social relations and the distribution of power between women and men and perceptions of the status and role of women and men.

Hence, we nest two key analytical frameworks: a political economy approach and an anthropological approach. The first is used to understand the structural and institutional dynamics shaping Norway's relative efficacy in promoting WRGE. More specifically, a gendered political economy approach aims to systematically assess the constraints and entry-points for more gender-responsive aid dialogues and programming, drawing on what Rosendorff (2005) has termed the 3is: institutions, ideas and interests/incentive structures. Political economy approaches can also help in understanding the relative interplay of formal and informal politics in shaping policy and programme outcomes, which is clearly critical in contexts that can be described as neo-patrimonial, including Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of South-East Asia. The gendered political economy approach is based on a combination of existing quantitative data (including aid flows, numbers of staff and partners provided with capacity-building) and interviews with relevant institutions in Norway and in the countries receiving cooperation, as well as an institutional analysis tool (see Annex 5 for research instruments).

<sup>2</sup> See analysis of resource constraints as one of the factors causing weak implementation of methodological approaches in Taylor and Pereznioto (2014).

This approach is complemented by an anthropological evaluation approach (see, e.g., Tvedten 2011). The anthropological element goes beyond the usual ‘qualitative’ method of semi-structured interviews with institutions and beneficiaries to include participatory exercises with the objective of understanding more fully processes of inclusion and exclusion in project interventions ‘from below’. More specifically, we seek to understand effects on locally embedded institutions (political, economic, communities, households, etc.) as well as on the individual women, men, girls and boys Norway-supported gender policies and programmes are targeting. Given the more macro-level focus of previous evaluations, we believe this approach will provide a critical counterweight to assumed rather than demonstrated effects.

Our goal is to combine and triangulate the two analytical frameworks and related data in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of Norwegian policies and interventions for WRGE.

#### 1.4.1 Theory of change

To guide our evaluation and ensure a clear focus on results, and in the absence of an explicitly articulated theory of change in Norway’s Gender Action Plan, the evaluation team developed a theory of change based on our reading of the Gender Action Plan document and its stated objectives for the four key pillars. The format of this is inspired by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) Theory of Change of Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls. It moves from a problem statement and analysis of the barriers to achieving WRGE through to activities/programme interventions (what some evaluators might term ‘inputs’) and then four levels of what one could generally describe as results: outputs, outcomes, impacts and super-impacts. The right hand column presents data sources at each level of the results chain.

The timeframe for which the evaluation team was asked to assess results (2007-2013) was relatively limited, thus identifying impacts (longer-term effects) and especially super-impacts that entail synergies between WRGE and broader development and poverty reduction

goals was difficult. We thus focus our analysis of results primarily at the output (products and services delivered) and outcome (shorter-term effects on target groups) levels. We assume alignment with and relevance to national-level priorities are preconditions to delivering on results at these levels.

Within each of these levels, we further disaggregate our findings into three inter-connected levels: the systemic level, the project level and the organisational level.

- The **systemic level** aims to capture the contribution Norwegian development cooperation is making to system-level WRGE changes within partner countries – whether this be in terms of policy or legal changes; increases in funding; shifts in gender-related discourses; greater attention to WRGE issues within government–donor dialogue processes; or improvements in the evidence base underpinning WRGE policy and planning – all often explicit objectives in development programmes. Although such changes do not automatically translate into improved lived experiences for project-

level target groups, they are prerequisites for ensuring adequate political commitment and resourcing to tackle gendered inequalities and rights violations at scale at community level and for the sustainability and replicability of development interventions.

- The **project level** is concerned with changes in the gender-friendly services/infrastructure available to target groups (women, men, girls, boys); shifts in gender-discriminatory attitudes and practices towards women and girls; improvements in community leader awareness of WRGE; improvements in local officials' capacities to undertake WRGE programming; improved enforcement of pro-WRGE legislative provisions; and improved learning on WRGE impacts and its integration into ongoing programming.
- The **organisational level** is concerned with two main dimensions: (1) the internal capacities of the Norwegian embassy to deliver on WRGE advances and (2) its support to the capacity-strengthening of partners (government, non-governmental organisations

(NGOs)/civil society organisations (CSOs), multilateral agencies and twinning partners) to undertake more effective WRGE programming. 'Institutional development' is often an explicit objective in development programmes. Again, while improved capacities do not directly lead to changes for target populations, without such investments the likelihood of small-scale pilots or NGO initiatives being replicable and reaching women and girls at scale will remain very limited. This focus on capacity-strengthening is also in line with the Gender Action Plan's overarching objective to 'strengthen the capacity of individual countries and regional and global forums to enable them to meet their gender equality obligations' (MFA 2007: 3).

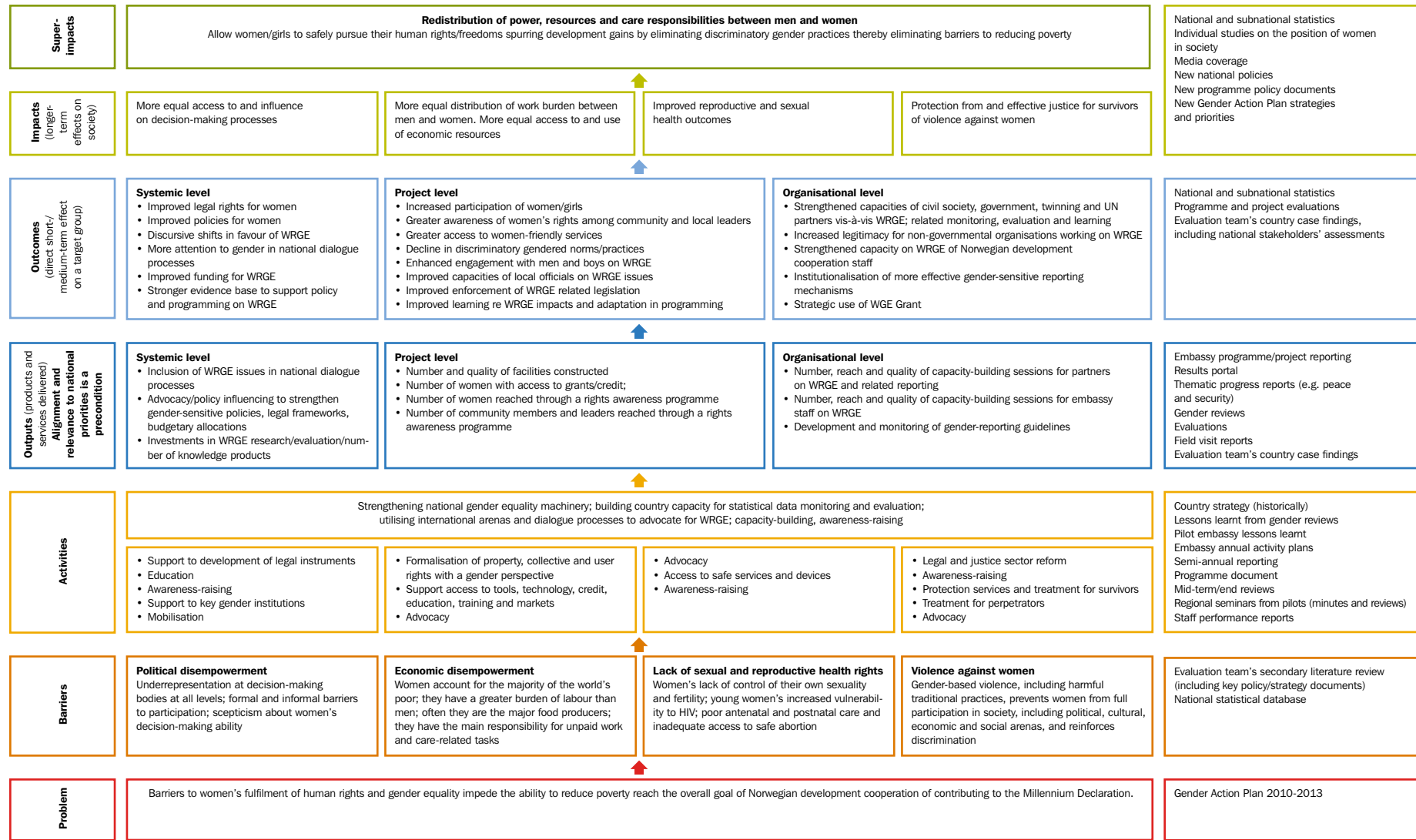
We recognise there are various approaches to conceptualising results, and that the approach we adopt is perhaps broader than some stakeholders would advocate. Nevertheless, in light of the now-extensive evidence base on the role of entrenched gendered social norms, attitudes and practices in shaping gender inequalities and rights violations (e.g. Kabeer 2001; World Bank

2012), we believe it is essential to adopt such an approach if we are to approximate the complexity of gender power relations within our evaluation at country and community levels. In this regard, we include 'capacity-strengthening' as an outcome in and of itself rather than merely a means to an end. This is because we believe that, if capacities are not improved, outcomes are unlikely to be sustainable, and investments risk focusing on project level only, seldom going to the scale necessary to reach 'the people and systems' Norway's own results management practical guide advocates for (Norad 2008: 10).

In order to be able to facilitate comparisons within and across countries, we discuss the relative achievement of indicators included in the outputs/outcomes level in our findings section, while also assigning these a heuristically useful colour code for easy reference. Green signifies significant achievement, yellow signifies mixed or limited achievement and red signifies low or lack of achievement (see Section 3).



**FIGURE 1: THEORY OF CHANGE**





### **1.4.2 Methodology and research instruments**

Our methodology entailed a desk study plus three in-depth country case studies involving primary research and two remote lighter-touch case studies.

#### **Desk study approach**

The desk study focused on the global dimension of Norwegian development cooperation's support to WRGE, to deepen the team's understanding of Norway's strategy to achieve results in this area. It drew on two key sources, from which we obtained different layers of data for use in triangulation during the analysis:

- 23 interviews (in person or by telephone) with key staff from Norad and MFA to help us situate Norwegian support to WRGE, discussing strategic elements of the Gender Action Plan, how it has been rolled out and how results have been pursued;
- Detailed review of global-level documents, including past evaluations and assessments, gender reviews, country reports, budgetary and

financial data on gender-marked aid and strategy documents, to assess information on the results of Norwegian gender-marked aid and how it has contributed to achieving the Gender Action Plan objectives. See Annex 2 for more details on the documents reviewed.

#### **Country case studies**

As agreed with the Evaluation Department in Norad, the countries selected for in-depth case study were Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nepal, all of which were part of the gender pilot embassy initiative (see Section 3). Annex 4 describes the layered selection criteria approach used.

For each country, we began with a desk review of its gendered profile according to the four Gender Action Plan pillars and reviewed the case study projects. For the primary research component, the case studies followed a similar format in each of the countries to ensure comparability, with some adjustments made to reflect local realities and the relative strengths and skillsets of the international and national experts. Each case study was led by an international expert, supported by a national senior researcher and

one or more junior research assistants. In-country data collection was undertaken during 21 days in the last quarter of 2014. Interview guidelines had a similar structure to allow for some comparability between countries but included open-ended questions to allow for contextually relevant responses.

National-level key informant interviews were held with a range of stakeholders, including Norwegian embassy staff; technical staff from international and national NGOs supported by Norway involved in gender work (with a focus on women's organisations whenever possible) and other key donors that typically contribute to WRGE (with a focus on DFID and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)); staff from key UN agencies (as relevant); and key government counterparts from agencies with a specific gender mandate (such as ministries of women's affairs) but also core ministries (e.g. finance, development, environment, social affairs) that receive Norwegian aid directly or indirectly.

At the subnational level, the fieldwork focused on two projects funded (or co-funded) by Norway

**TABLE 2: BREAKDOWN OF INTERVIEWS BY SITE**

		Community and institutional mappings	Key informant interviews	Focus group discussions	In-depth interviews	Observations	Total
<b>Ethiopia</b>							
NCA-SCI Female genital mutilation prevention	Kembatta	2	8	8	10	-	30
	Wolyta	1	13	6	13	-	33
UNFPA/UNICEF Adolescent development	Adama	1	8	3	8	-	20
	Bahir Dar	4	7	12	2	-	25
National	Addis	-	22	-	-	-	22
<b>Mozambique</b>							
EDM Rural electrification	Cabo Delgado	1	12	7	12	2	34
CLUSA Soy bean/ agriculture	Zambezia	1	7	4	-	2	14
National	Maputo	-	18	-	-	-	18
<b>Nepal</b>							
IPWA Equal representation in policy and decision-making and national	Kathmandu and Sanja	3	6	5	9	3	26
GoN Renewable energy	Surkhet	6	17	7	6	3	39

in one of four priority thematic areas (with a different area selected in each country). The country team aimed to select one project in which gender was mainstreamed (e.g. an energy project where gender was a crosscutting issue) and one where gender or women's rights was a specific target (e.g. one promoting women's political empowerment). The rationale was that this balance would allow the team to gain dis-

tinct perspectives on how Norway works, through diverse government, NGO, multilateral or private sector partners. A final decision on project selection was made in consultation with Norad and embassy staff and included considerations of project length, budget size, range of partnerships, intended coverage and geographical diversity. Focusing on two projects enabled us to go into adequate depth to understand the complex

dynamics around WRGE. The projects selected described in Annex 8.

The fieldwork utilised participatory and qualitative methods to gain insights into how the projects were contributing to women's lives, gender dynamics and gender equality at the beneficiary level, for which the evaluation team interviewed women and men (of different age groups) and

key stakeholders in the community. As noted above, indicators linked to the theory of change and Norway's gender aid priorities informed the research instruments. From the outset, though, through a participatory process with women and men, we also sought to ascertain how the project had performed with respect to indicators beneficiaries themselves had defined.

Annex 5 details the type and purpose of the instruments alongside the research instruments employed. Table 2 gives the breakdown of interviews by the selection project, site and national level.

### **Remote lighter-touch country case studies**

We also undertook two desk-based country case studies, using a 'lighter-touch' analysis. These had the objective of verifying some of our global-level findings on results of aid to WRGE as well as expanding the country analysis to generate more of a global overview. We reviewed key Norad and MFA documents for these countries as well as undertaking remote key informant interviews (by phone, Skype or email). The team contacted embassy personnel directly involved

in planning and implementing projects financed through gender-marked aid and a limited number of partners implementing gender-related projects, as well as government officials who had been partners in these projects. Tanzania and Zambia were chosen based on a process of elimination after the case study countries were selected from the list of the top 10 recipients of Norwegian gender-marked aid. They were also among the top 10 gender-marked aid recipients that were not part of the pilot embassy initiative. We conducted three remote interviews in Tanzania and four in Zambia (see Annex 3 and Annex 10).

### **1.4.3 Methodological caveats**

While we have paid considerable attention to the careful design of this evaluation, it is nevertheless important to point out several methodological caveats.

First, resources for the evaluation were limited and difficult choices had to be made in terms of focus. Our proposed focus was presented in the proposal, then in more detail at a stakeholder meeting in September 2014, as well as through

a detailed inception report, which was widely commented on by stakeholders. Inevitably, some stakeholders would have preferred greater breadth and less depth, and vice versa. In light of Norwegian development cooperation's relatively weak knowledge management and results reporting systems (both of which we discuss at more length in Sections 2 and 3), resource constraints were additionally challenging.

In this regard, we could not therefore carry out an in-depth assessment of results at portfolio level in the country case studies: the project case studies need to be interpreted as examples rather than as being representative of global findings. We did attempt to assess portfolio-level results on the basis of key informant interviews and available results reporting, but the available report formats and documentation of secondary data did not permit a more in-depth analysis than what Section 3 provides. The documentation was frequently of insufficient quality and inconsistent in format across cases. This was often exacerbated by the limited institutional memory of embassy staff given frequent turnover of international staff. Perhaps more importantly,

as this evaluation goes on to conclude, mixed methods evaluation approaches combining both quantitative and qualitative or participatory methodologies that extend to grassroots level are necessary to assess changes in the area of women's rights and gender equality, given the complexity of assessing change in terms of, for example, gender power inequalities, social norms, empowerment, agency and identity (see Taylor and Pereznieto 2014 for a discussion).

Nevertheless, while we covered only a small sample of projects in three countries, we employed a theory of change approach to identify conclusions/results with possible high external validity. Thus, what we present are preliminary findings/conclusions to be explored further in future studies, especially once knowledge management system blockages are addressed and facilitate better access to evidence.

Second, although all three in-depth case studies were part of the pilot embassy initiative, this does not imply that this evaluation is an assessment of this initiative. Rather, the case studies form part of the broader assessment and

facilitate more robust disentangling of the factors contributing to results in terms of enhanced WRGE. Note, however, that in all three cases the period under review includes the period prior to the pilot initiative, which allows for a retrospective quasi-baseline to strengthen the analysis.

Third, because resources to triangulate sources in the lighter-touch reviews in Tanzania and Zambia were limited, we focused our findings section primarily on the three in-depth country case studies. However, we discuss specific examples from the two other case studies to amplify our discussion of particular indicators where appropriate, and findings from these cases also informed our overall conclusions. In the Tanzanian lighter-touch review, limited time and competing priorities on the part of the embassy staff and relevant partners meant the case study was quite limited; findings should be interpreted in this light.

Fourth, although we attempted to carry out an electronic survey of staff perceptions related to WRGE in order to further assess MFA/Norad's implicit theory of change for its work in this area,

the response rate was too low for the data to reveal any interesting patterns. As such, we have not reported on this methodological component in the report. In hindsight, the evaluation team should have considered circulating the survey to a larger sample from the outset.

We now turn to a discussion of Norwegian development cooperation's efforts to promote WRGE at global level in order to set the scene. For the busy reader more interested in the primary research findings, we suggest skipping to Section 3 and referring to Section 2 as needed.

## 2. The global picture

Norway has been among the most gender-equal countries in the world for the past decades, and has seen WRGE as an important part of its international image and development aid policy from the very beginning in the 1960s. Norway launched its first Policy on Women and Aid in 1985, followed by a long-term Gender Strategy in 1997. In international fora, including the UN, Norway has been a strong advocate for gender equality. And the 2008 White Paper explicitly states that ‘our model [for gender equality] and the Norwegian experiences can be transferred’ (MFA 2008). However, the real emphasis and impact in programmes and projects in developing countries have been less consistent, and have shifted with different aid paradigms.

The first change came with the transition from the days of ‘hands-on’ programme and project aid in the 1970s and 1980s, largely based on the use of Norwegian advisors and volunteers on long-term assignments in the field, to a stronger focus on recipient responsibilities and the use of a more detached institutional cooperation model from the early 1990s involving Norwegian ‘twinning partners’. The first period was influenced by

‘solidarity’ and ‘feminist’ champions and thinking at the heights of the feminist movement, with the issue of gender seen as ‘organic’. The second was influenced more by sector-based ‘technocrats’ working primarily at the institutional level – with a more limited and ‘imposed’ focus on gender issues. In 1999, only 16 percent of Norway’s bilateral aid was directed towards women and gender equality (Norad 2013a).

The second shift came in 2004, with the transfer of budget resources and power from Norad to MFA and the embassies. While Norad possessed most of the expertise on gender at the time, the Directorate working on gender issues saw itself as having reduced impact both on policies and in project implementation. To re-establish the focus on what had traditionally been seen as an important Norwegian ‘export article’, MFA’s Gender Action Plan in 2007 lifted gender to become a crosscutting issue and included concrete proposals for gender-focused interventions. However, its implementation came to depend largely on the interests of people in management in MFA and the embassies. At the time of the Gender Action Plan’s mid-term evaluation

in 2009, there were clear signs that WRGE was not receiving the attention in actual programme implementation envisaged.

Ways to enhance the options for reaching the objectives of the Gender Action Plan included establishing gender pilot embassies and a special gender budget line (the Women and Gender Equality Grant) from 2007, with MFA managing two-thirds and Norad one-third, to fund catalytic projects in countries. Being a pilot embassy potentially implied strengthening embassy capacities on gender, options for additional funding and stricter requirements on reporting on results. The main objectives of the Women and Gender Equality Grant were to fund smaller targeted, innovative and catalytic projects in the area of WRGE. Most embassies in Norway’s partner countries were part of one or both of these programmes. Despite all these efforts, however, and as we discuss in more detail below, MFA and Norad have not been particularly strong in investments in gender-related aid compared with other like-minded donor agencies.

## 2.1 REVIEWING THE GLOBAL PICTURE BETWEEN 2007 AND 2013

To understand the performance of Norwegian development cooperation on WRGE in the context of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), it is important to look at two elements.

The first is Norway's level of gender-marked aid vis-à-vis other donors. Although data on gender-marked aid do not measure gender equality results or the impacts and outcomes of programmes and projects, the Gender Action Plan states that, 'The budget will be a tool for measuring results. Chapter 10 of the budget proposal for the Ministry for 2006–2007 quantifies the amounts that can be tracked to expenditure for gender equality as either the principal or a significant objective in bilateral and multilateral development efforts.' As such, the Gender Action Plan considers positive progress on the level of gender-marked aid a positive WRGE result.

We look at the level of Norway's gender-marked aid in comparison with other donors, as these

are the only internationally comparable data regarding gender commitments in official development assistance (ODA). The DAC uses gender-marked data in peer reviews to identify gaps between political commitments and statements and individual donor financing of particular sectors or countries – or even within sectors (O'Neill 2012). There is clear guidance on the use of the gender equality policy marker and DAC assumes donors ensure reporting conforms to directives (*ibid.*). However, our discussions with MFA and Norad staff found some discrepancies with directives and inconsistencies in the way different embassies gender-mark ODA in practice. For example, Norwegian development cooperation does not have a consistent practice of giving gender marker 0 to resources that are screened for gender but found not to be targeted, which means it is difficult to differentiate these from resources that are not screened for gender at all, which also appear as gender marked 0. Other donors do differentiate between those screened and marked 0 and those not screened. This may lead to some degree of under- or over-reporting. Problems with gender marking are likely in other donor countries too. Recognising some of these

constraints, the OECD considers the gender marker not a technically perfect tool but rather a political one that allows for peer pressure (Hedman 2011). In short, it remains a useful way to see how Norway fares in comparison with other countries in terms of progress on the level of gender-marked aid.

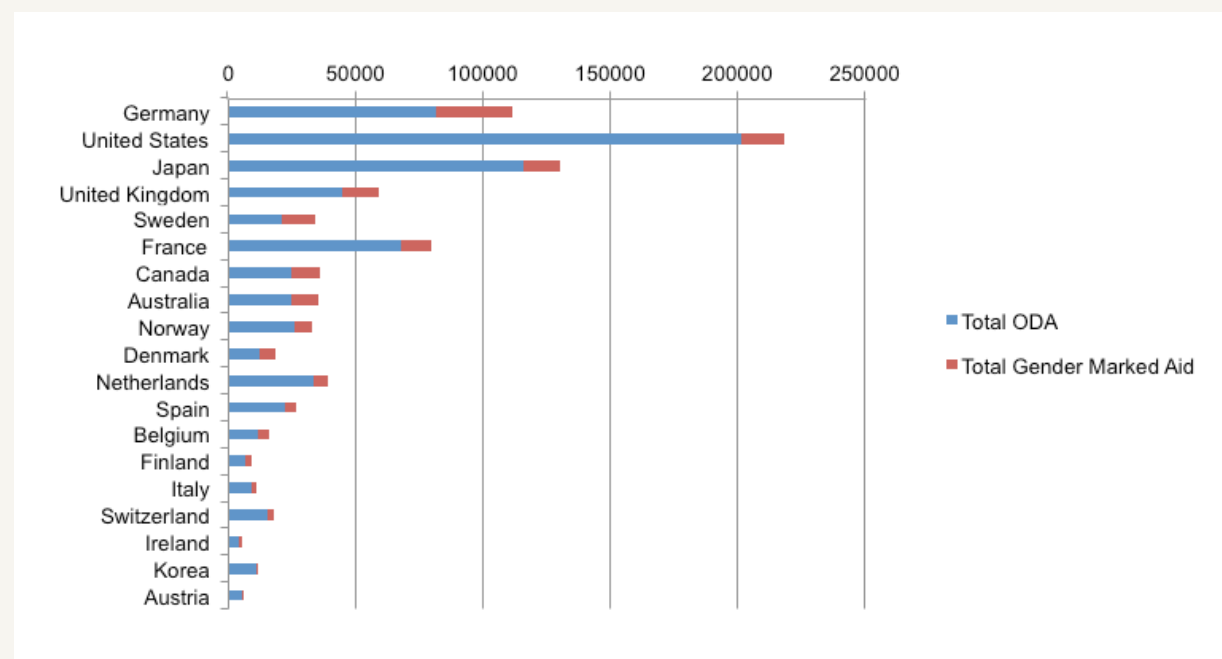
The second element to use to assess Norway's performance in the context of other DAC donors is key findings from DAC reports that explore additional dimensions of donors' development assistance in relation to gender equality. A very important point to understand when looking at the performance of gender-marked aid is that all of Norway's core multilateral aid is gender-marked 0, even when its use by the recipient multilateral agency has a strong gender focus. Section 2.2.4 explains more about the use of Norwegian ODA by multilateral agencies with gender objectives. DAC has been working with multilaterals, particularly the UN system, to help them incorporate a system of gender equality markers to assess the extent to which they use resources for gender objectives, but this is still not in place (O'Neill 2012).

### 2.1.1 Levels of gender-marked aid:

#### Norway vis-à-vis its peers

For the period under evaluation – 2007-2013 – Norway had the ninth-largest volume of gender-marked aid among the top 19 DAC donors, with a total allocation of \$26,277.21 million (see Figure 2). Germany had the overall highest level of gender-marked aid and Austria the lowest. Norad (2013a) highlights that Norway’s level of gender-marked ODA scores low compared with the other Nordic countries, and is far below the level of countries such as Sweden and Denmark and like-minded countries such as the UK and the Netherlands.

FIGURE 2: DONORS WITH THE LARGEST VOLUMES OF GENDER-MARKED AID (US\$ MILLIONS)

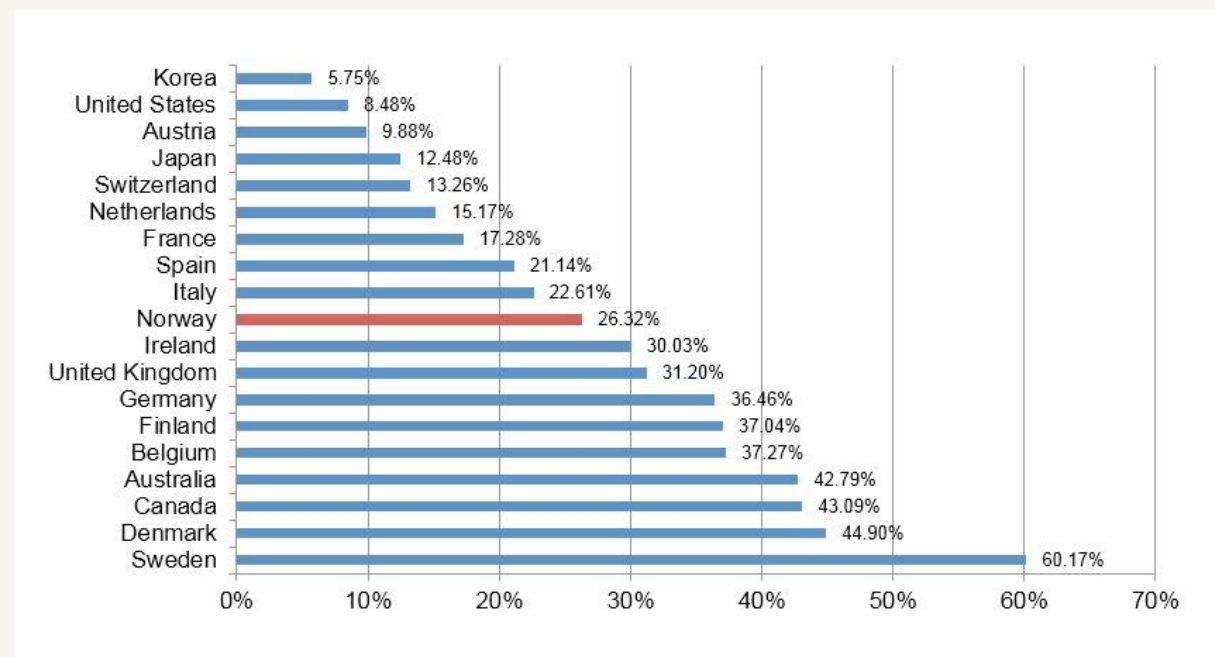


Source: OECD 2015



Norway's share of gender-marked aid in relation to total ODA averaged 26.32 percent over the period (see Figure 3), making it the 10th-largest donor in these terms. Sweden had the largest share of gender-marked ODA during the period (60.17 percent) and Korea the lowest share among DAC donors (5.75 percent).

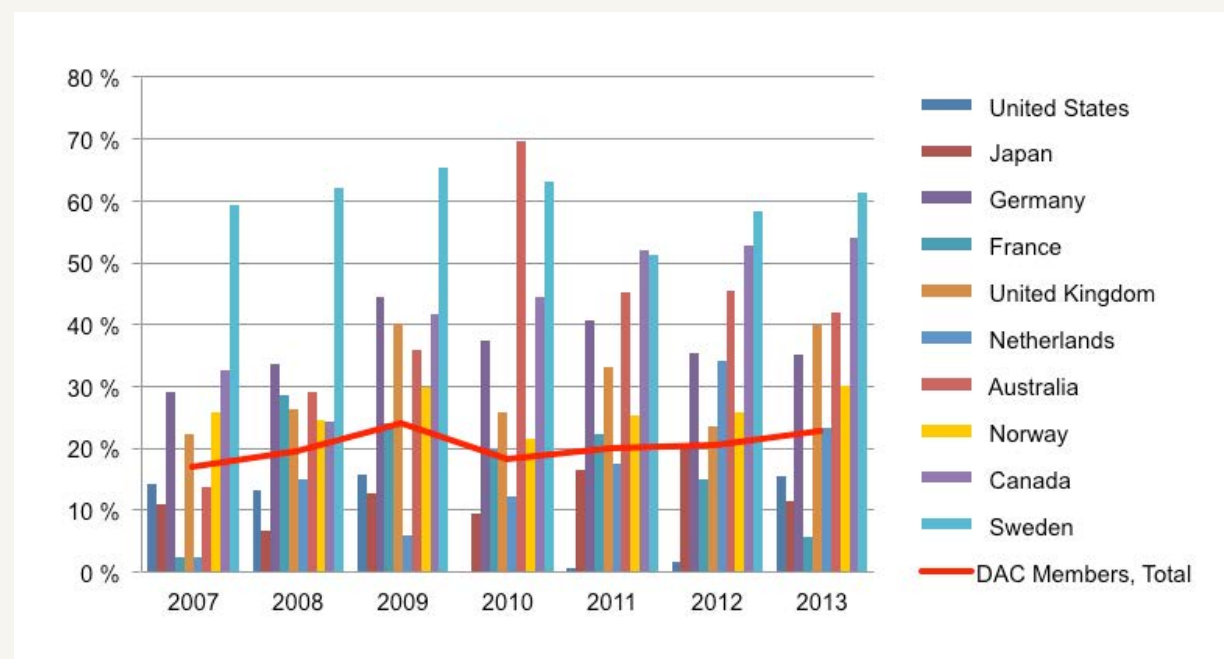
**FIGURE 3: DONORS WITH THE LARGEST SHARE OF GENDER-MARKED AID (%)**



Source: OECD 2015

Looking at each year in the period 2007-2013 (see Figure 4), there were some fluctuations in the share of gender-marked aid by the 20 top donors, with Sweden having the largest share of gendered aid most years except 2010 (Australia), 2012 (Canada) and 2013 (Italy). Norway's position in terms of gender-marked aid has fluctuated between ninth and 11th place among the 20 largest DAC donors. The average share of gender-marked aid for the top 20 DAC donors during the period was 25 percent, which means Norway is just slightly above the average.

**FIGURE 4:** GENDERED AID AS SHARE OF TOTAL AID, TOP 10 BILATERAL DONORS (%)



Source: OECD 2015

### **2.1.2 Norway's development assistance on gender equality compared with other DAC donors**

These budget limitations notwithstanding, according to the latest peer review of Norway's development assistance (OECD 2013: 16), 'Norway is among the more progressive voices in the international development landscape, contributing strategically to global issues that are important for the country and for the international role it plays.' These important global issues include advocating for WRGE internationally as well as following up on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. As such, the review commends Norway for its commitment to leading on these critical and challenging development issues. This suggests that, while Norway's level of funding of WRGE is relatively low compared with other donors, it is achieving quite a lot by combining funding with active engagement on WRGE issues in international fora.

The 2014 OECD report 'Delivering on Gender Equality in Donor Institutions' further notes an unprecedented political and policy commitment

from DAC donors in recent years to accelerate progress towards gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights. It explains that some DAC members have gone to great lengths to strengthen institution-wide accountability mechanisms for gender equality. The report identifies Norway's gender equality reviews – which it has been conducting in over 13 embassies – as an example of how to strengthen embassy capacity to address WRGE at all levels of the development cooperation portfolio, although it acknowledges this effort has not had formal requirements regarding embassies' follow-up and implementation of the recommendations, which can be seen as a weakness. The OECD report also notes that DAC members have become more active and strategic in their efforts to influence multilateral institutions' performance on gender equality and have stepped up their engagement in global processes to protect and advance women's rights. Here, again, it singles out Norway as a particularly vocal actor in the international arena for WRGE.

The report notes, however, that an important remaining challenge for all DAC donors is build-

ing institutional capacity to deliver on ambitious policy commitments to gender equality. Some of the areas identified as needing strengthening include investing in specialist staff, especially at the field level; closing financing gaps; and strengthening partnerships beyond DAC donors. Moreover, the review of the performance of DAC countries with respect to WRGE indicates the gap between policy and implementation is often most pronounced at the country level. In the case of Norway, the 2009 mid-term review (NIBR 2009) highlighted weaknesses in implementation of the Gender Action Plan and in its management and reporting systems. The OECD report highlights the three-year gender pilot embassy initiative as a mechanism put in place to strengthen accountability for WRGE results in its embassies. Section 3 of this report analyse this effort in more detail.

### **2.1.3 Global leadership on women and girls' health**

Women and children's health was among the important global issues in the area of WRGE on which Norway demonstrated effective leadership during 2007-2013 by launching the Global Cam-

campaign for the Health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with strong support from Prime Minister Stoltenberg and UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, through the International Health Partnership (GCHMDG 2007). Norway invested in four pilot countries to contribute to reach MDGs 4 and 5 (India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania). During this period, Norway increased its funding for global health, with MDG 5 and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) the main purpose. Investments to reduce maternal mortality (MDG 5) were directed towards improving the SRHR of girls and women of reproductive age. Over the years, investments also expanded into Ethiopia and Malawi (information provided by the Health Section).

Programme and project investments in SRHR at case study country level were made in the context of Norwegian international efforts to advocate for women and girls' SRHR and human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons, as well as the implementation of the Gender Action Plan. Thus, a general result of Norway's focus on WRGE has been its global leadership to advocate for and finance innovative

**TABLE 3: ODA TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES (NOK '000S)**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	1,868,910	2,106,868	2,276,559	1,724,215	1,803,675	1,814,062	2,581,878
Gender as significant objective	631,787	842,753	988,392	582,738	712,976	785,120	123,6102
Gender as principal objective	128,677	164,345	240,033	244,728	198,980	142,366	348,606
Share of gender-marked aid to health and social services	40.7%	47.8%	54.0%	48.0%	50.6%	51.1%	61.4%

Source: Norad/MFA 2015

investments that can lead to progress in terms of achieving the MDGs on maternal and child health.

Table 3 shows the increase in ODA funding to the 'health and social services' target area during 2007-2013, a total increase over the period of 38.1 percent, indicating that budgetary allocations were aligned to political commitments. Of these funds, the share of gender-marked resources – that is, those for projects and programmes with gender as a principal or significant objective – also grew, from 40.7 percent to 61.4 percent of the total.

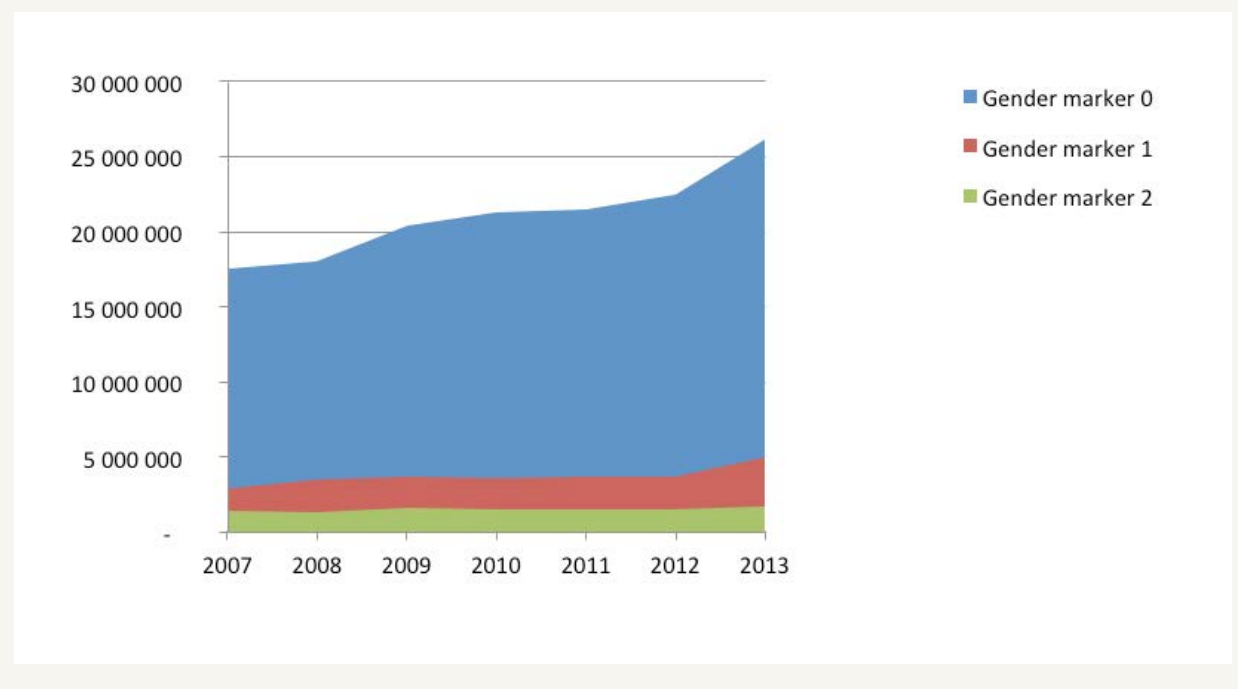
However, the Global Campaign's annual reporting is not specific on results, focusing more on objectives and a general description of achievements. The contributions of different donors are not identified. As such, although Norway's contribution is positive in the area of women and children's health at a global level, and this is aligned with the Gender Action Plan, an assessment of results achieved in relation to aid investments is not feasible. More specific results reporting by the Global Campaign would be useful for this purpose.

In 2012, parliament adopted a government White Paper on Global Health. This outlined the priorities and investment opportunities of the Norwegian government on maternal health and SRHR. Norway doubled its investments to family planning in 2012, following the London Family Planning Summit in July 2012. The aim was to contribute to reaching 220 million women and girls in need of family planning services. Then-Development Minister Holmås took the international lead in global advocacy to increase investments to family planning/SRHR. The Stoltenberg-led UN Commission on Lifesaving Medicines has also led to major results in terms of access to family planning and maternal health commodities. These are important results in terms of global leadership on WRGE.

## 2.2 GENDER-MARKED AID OVERVIEW

According to the Gender Action Plan, the budget is a tool for measuring results. The budget for gender equality can be classified as either the principal or a significant objective in bilateral and multilateral development efforts. The aim would be to see a steady increase during the period covered by the Gender Action Plan (2007-2013).

**FIGURE 5:** TOTAL GENDER-MARKED BILATERAL AND MULTI-BILATERAL ODA (NOK '000S)



Source: Norad/MFA 2015

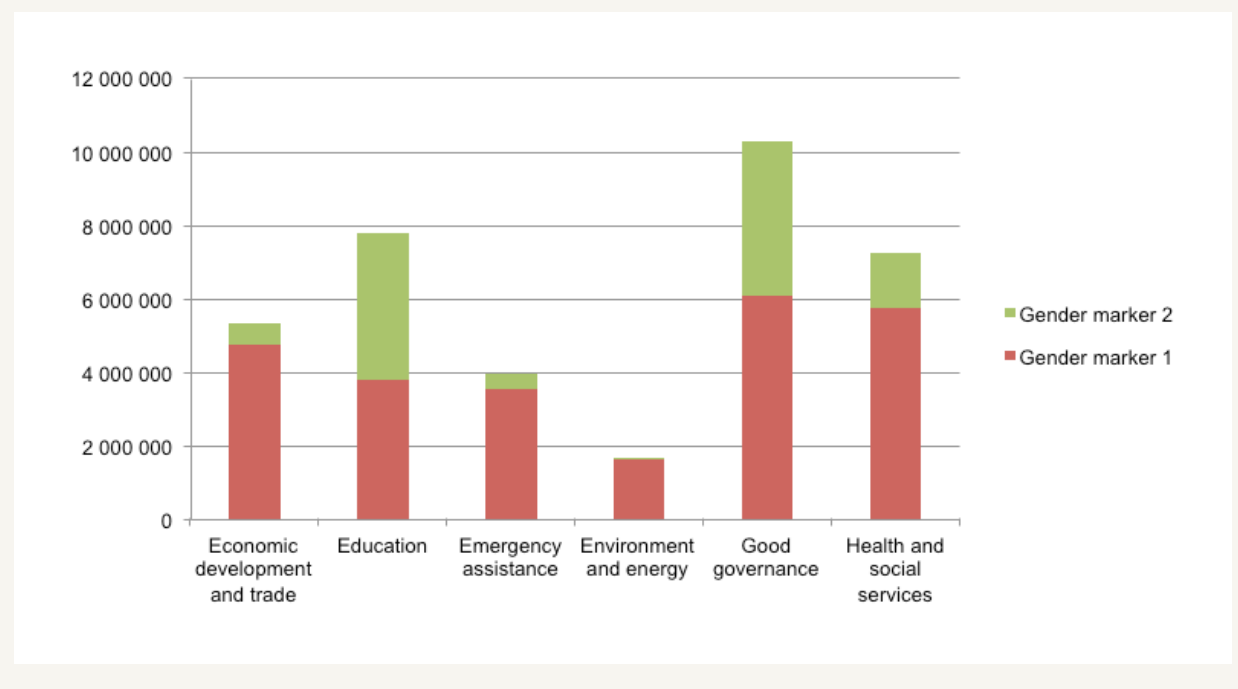
During this period, the overall volume of Norwegian ODA increased at a steady rate, with a higher rate of increase from 2011 (NOK 26.655 million) to 2013 (NOK 32.807 million). The share of ODA allocated under gender marker 0

(gender not an objective) increased at the same rate as overall ODA, going from NOK 21.518 million in 2011 to NOK 26.136 million in 2013 (as shown in figure 5), which means it remained at between 81 and 80 percent of total ODA over

the period. The composition of aid with gender markers 1 and 2 fluctuated slightly, with aid marked with gender as a significant objective (gender marker 1) going from 13 percent of total ODA in 2007 to 15 percent in 2013, increasing at a higher pace than aid marked with gender as a principal objective (gender marker 2), which represented 6 percent of ODA over the whole period and decreased slightly to 5 percent in 2013. From 2010 to 2012, the overall share of gender-marked ODA dropped slightly to 19 percent, from 21 percent in 2009, and it fell back to 20 percent in 2013. Total gender marked aid went from NOK 4.265 million in 2007 to NOK 6.671 million in 2013.

Accordingly, while the total volume of gender-marked aid increased over the period, it did not increase as a share of total ODA, and in fact it decreased slightly during a three-year period when the Gender Action Plan was in place. It is important to note, however, that there is evidence of inconsistencies in gender-marking across embassies (as we discuss further in Section 3) and, as such, the data on gender-marked aid does not reflect the reality of aid

**FIGURE 6:** TOTAL GENDERED AID BY TARGET AREA, 2007-2013 (NOK '000S)



Source: Norad/MFA 2015

resources supporting WRGE objectives. While there are countries where projects that are not gender-marked have significant WRGE objectives (such as Mozambique), there may be other countries where the opposite is true. As such,

while the gender marker remains a useful indicator to follow the trend of commitments towards WRGE ODA, it is not an accurate measure of results while inconsistencies in gender-marking remain.

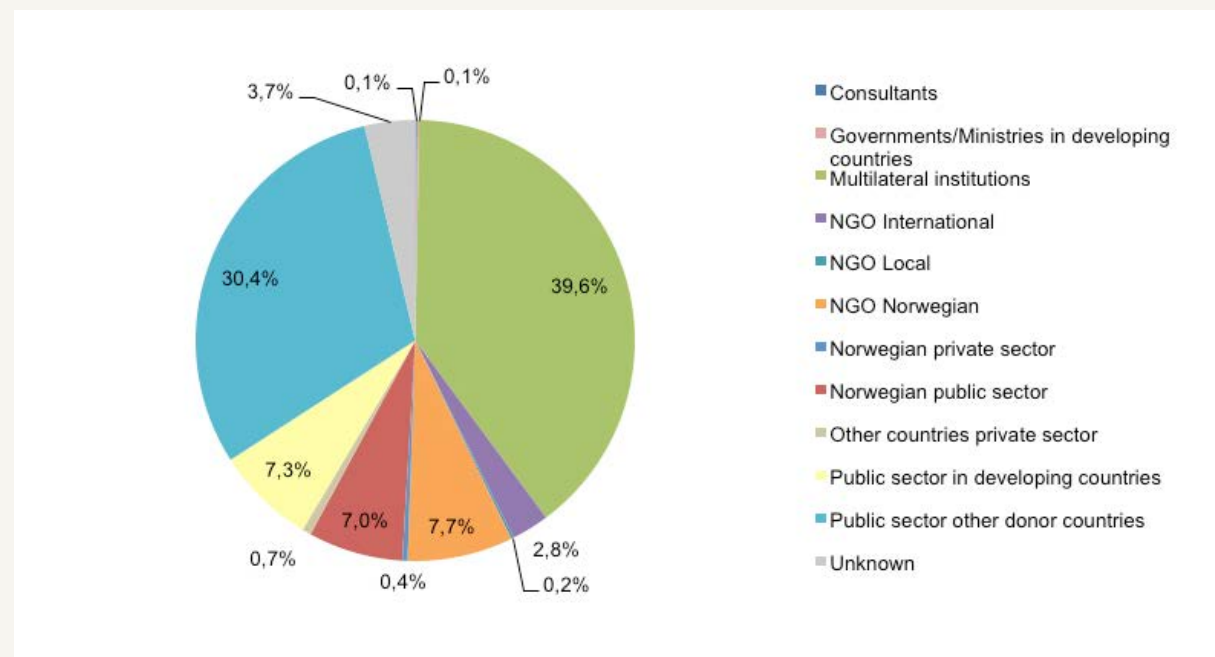
### 2.2.1 Gendered aid by target area

Gendered aid can be found in all target areas of Norwegian ODA, particularly as there has been a push for gender mainstreaming in non-traditional gender equality areas, such as energy and economic development, two of the areas which receive the greatest volumes of aid overall. Still, the share of gender marked aid in ‘traditionally’ gendered areas such as health, social services and education remains higher than in other areas, as illustrated by Figure 6. Education and Good Governance are the two areas for which there is a greater share of aid marked with gender as a principal objective given the support Norway provides to girls’ education (for example, through UNGEI), as well as to good governance through the support of initiatives for women’s political empowerment, civic and political engagement and small women’s NGOs. In all other target areas, the largest share of gender marked aid is marked 1 (significant objective).

### 2.2.2 Gendered aid by agreement partner

In terms of gendered aid by agreement partners, according to a mapping study of Nor-

**FIGURE 7: SHARE OF GENDER-MARKED AID BY AGREEMENT PARTNER, 2007-2013 (%)**



Source: Norad/MFA 2015

wegian funding to WRGE (Norad 2013a), the 20 largest international non-governmental organisation (NGO) partners took up 66 percent of the gender-marked allocations from 2002 to 2012. During the 2007-2013 period, multi-

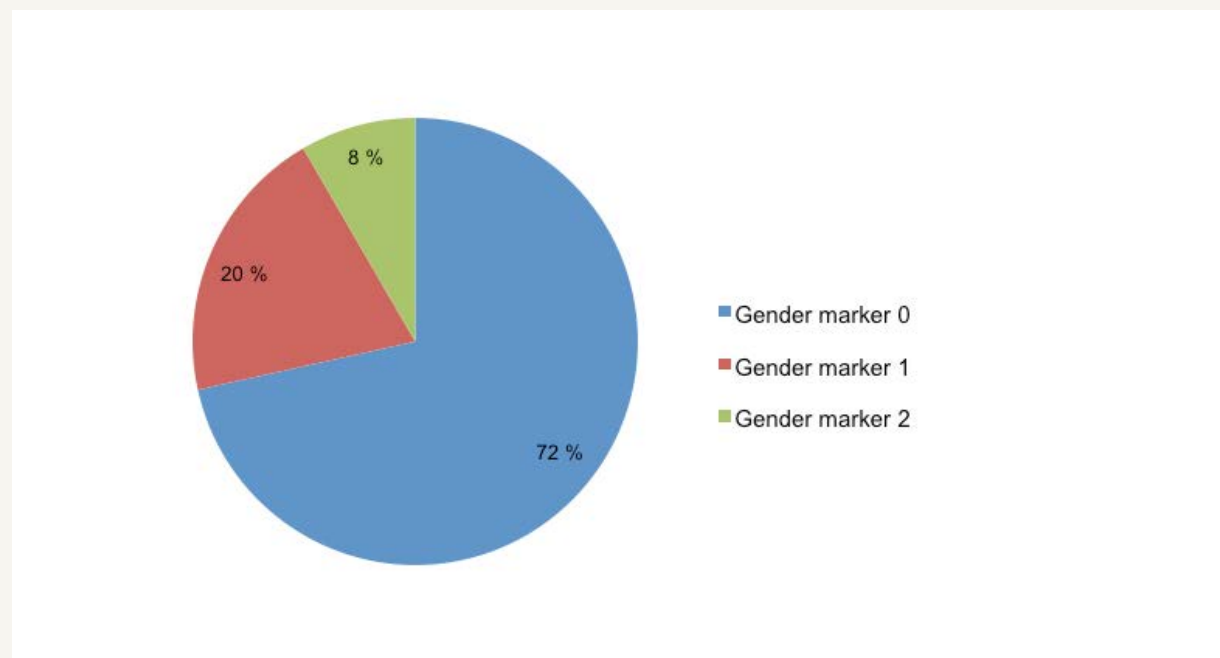
lateral organisations received the largest share of gender-marked aid, with disbursements over this period at NOK 14.37 billion, just under 40 percent of total disbursement. It is important to reiterate that, in this case, this full amount was



for multi-bilateral aid, since multilateral aid is not gender-marked – although it can be assumed that an important share of total multilateral aid supported WRGE objectives. Local NGOs as partners received NOK 2.8 billion over the period. Government partners received NOK 2.66 billion, or 7.3 percent of gender-marked funds. Norwegian NGOs were the second-largest partner, receiving NOK 11.05 billion over the period, which accounts for 30.4 percent of gender-marked aid.

Figure 8 shows the proportions of bilateral and multi-bilateral aid with different gender markers. Twenty percent of Norwegian bilateral and multi-bilateral aid during the 2007-2013 period had gender as a significant objective and 8 percent had it as a principal objective. Projects financed through the WGE Grant are marked with gender marker 2. Seventy-two percent of bilateral and multi-bilateral aid is gender marker 0. Although this could suggest activities financed in this way do not have gender as a principal or significant objective, in practice embassies have reported that they often also give gender marker 0 to projects or activities that have not been screened for gender, so a small share of this 72 percent

**FIGURE 8:** SHARE OF GENDER-MARKED BILATERAL AND MULTI-BILATERAL AID



Source: Norad/MFA 2015

may actually have a gender objective. The figure does not include core support to multilaterals – which comprises 25 percent of total Norwegian ODA – as it is all gender-marked 0 even when it has gender objectives.

### 2.2.3 Budget chapter 168.70

#### Women and gender equality

The budget chapter 168.70 Women and gender equality, or the Women and Gender Equality Grant (WGE Grant) was set up in 2007 with the objective of supporting new or expanded efforts to promote WRGE in line with the Gender Action Plan. The priorities for the scheme are set out in MFA's annual budget proposition. The allocation represents a relatively small share of total Norwegian ODA (approximately 1 percent) with a relatively small number of projects, although the number of projects grew significantly and steadily between 2007 (86) and 2013 (156), as Table 4 shows. Norad manages a share of the grant, close to 20 percent on average (although this share has varied year to year, from 15 percent in 2009 to 35 percent in 2013), while the rest has been extended by MFA through embassies.

Projects and programmes managed by Norad at global level are in different target areas that align with the four priority areas in the Gender Action Plan and aim to be catalytic and innovative, such as the development of a regional programme for climate smart agriculture through the New Part-

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF PROJECTS, 2007-2013

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2007-2013
WGE grant	86	96	106	145	182	176	156	947
Total ODA projects	6639	6332	6043	6282	6231	6409	6028	43964
Proportion	1.3%	1.5%	1.8%	2.3%	2.9%	2.7%	2.6%	2.2%

Source: Norad/MFA 2015

TABLE 5: VOLUME OF FUNDING BY TARGET AREA (NOK '000S)

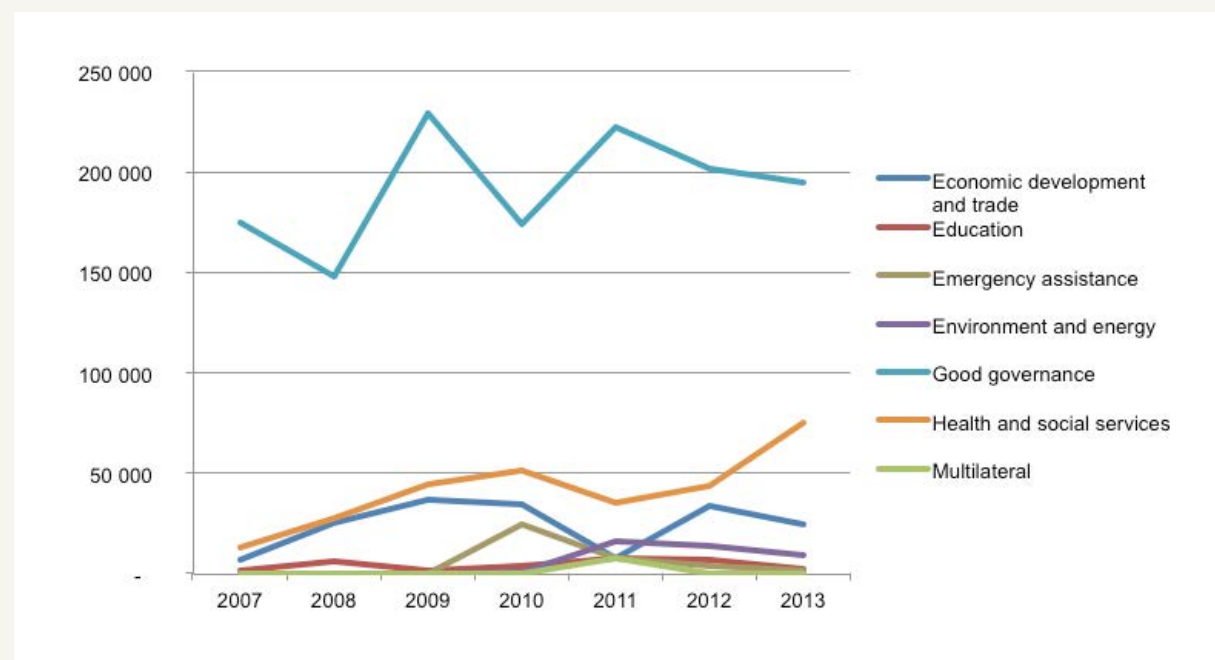
Target area	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Economic development and trade	6,832	24,880	36,566	34,539	7,645	33,315	24,455
Education	1,109	6,086	1,500	3,538	7,598	6,913	2,205
Emergency assistance				25,000	7,969	3,944	1,700
Environment and energy				434	16,077	13,800	8,892
Good governance	174,562	148,314	229,379	174,331	222,815	201,981	194,866
Health and social services	12,924	27,546	44,251	51,274	35,004	44,010	75,110
Multilateral					7,500		
In donor costs and unspecified	172	307	71	2,552	877	1,270	46
Total WGE Grant	195,599	207,133	311,767	291,669	305,484	305,233	307,181
% of total ODA	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	0.9%

Source: Norad/MFA 2015

nership for Africa's Development, assessments of different aspects of gender and energy or work on SRHR, such as that implemented by Ipas. There was an increase in the volume of funds allocated to the WGE Grant over 2007-2013, but the increase was not constant: there was a peak in 2009 and a drop in 2010, with the amount rising progressively again until 2013. Although this budget trend does not provide information on results from projects and programmes, it does indicate there was a budgetary commitment to strengthening this line. Funding is linked to demand for the grant, which indicates that embassies and Norad were interested in using it for programme funding.

Figure 9 illustrates the trends in funding in the portfolio for the Woman and Gender Equality Grant according to target areas. The largest volume of funds went to projects under the target area 'good governance', with numerous projects aimed at women's political empowerment, participation, land rights and citizenship. Resources targeted at 'health and social services' received the second-highest level of funding, with a generally rising trend in the period. The two largest projects by volume of aid included a

**FIGURE 9:** TRENDS IN RESOURCES FROM BUDGET CHAPTER 168.70 PER TARGET AREA (NOK '000S)



Source: Norad/MFA 2015

programme cooperation agreement with the International Labour Organization including actions against forced labour and trafficking and a global campaign to end fistula implemented by the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

The largest share of resources (41 percent) from the WGE Grant are implemented by multilateral institutions through multi-bilateral aid (see Figure 10), although there have been discussions within Norad as to the effectiveness of using this

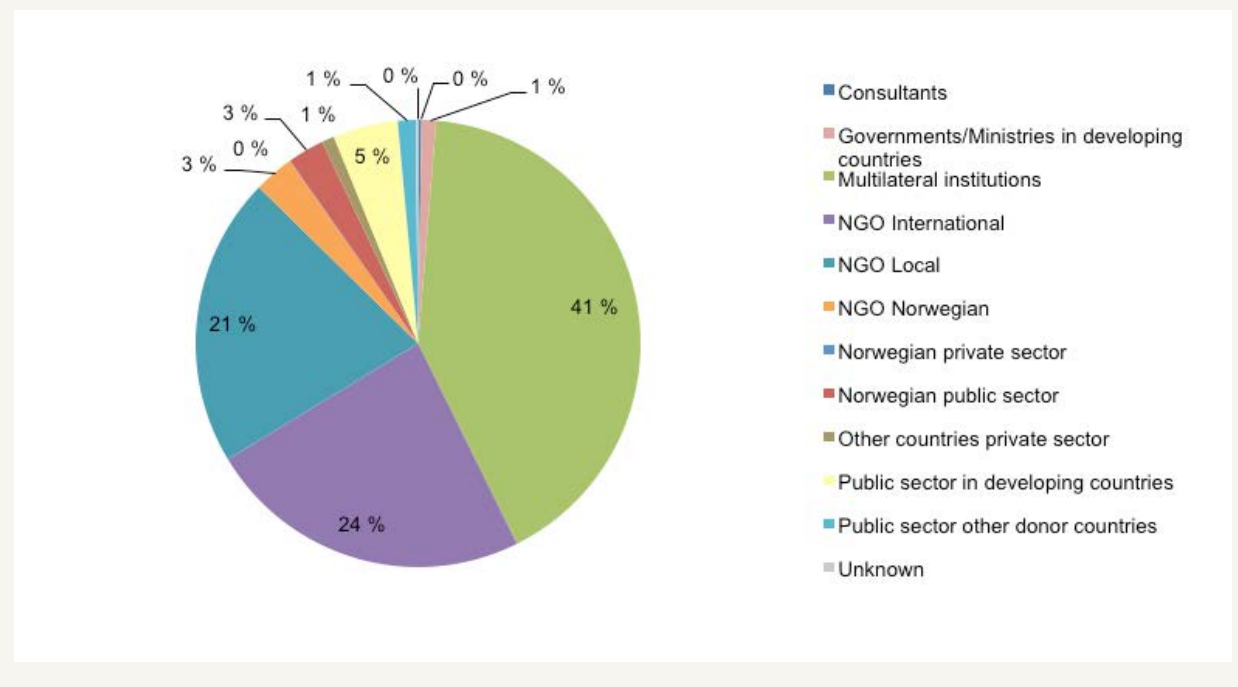
budget chapter to fund multilateral institutions, which may also be able to access core funding. However, on specific programmes and projects with innovative aims, the WGE Grant has been seen as a useful tool for implementation. International (24 percent) and local (21 percent) NGOs are the second- and third-largest implementation partners.

### Results from the Women and Gender Equality Grant at global level

The case studies in Section 3 present detailed analysis of results from projects funded through the WGE Grant at the country level.

At the global level, according to discussions with advisors in the different sections who have developed programmes using the grant, there is no strategic plan that dictates how it should be used; allocations rather respond to demand from the different sections and opportunities to support projects and programmes aligned with the grant's rules and the Gender Action Plan. In this sense, it is a flexible instrument, which can be a positive feature, allowing for innovation and adaptation to changing conditions. At the same

**FIGURE 10:** BUDGET CHAPTER 168.70 BY IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER (%)



Source: Norad/MFA 2015

time, such flexibility means it is sometimes difficult to ensure these results are catalytic.

An example of the contribution of the WGE Grant's results and contributions can be found

in the health sector. Norad's Health Section found the grant opened up opportunities to address specific aspects of women's health more strategically, working beyond medical services. In this respect, 2013 was a peak funding year

for the grant, with a focus on SRHR and work through NGOs supported. This was seen as key to contributing to progress in the achievement of MDG 5 on maternal health.

A specific example comes from the work carried out by Ipas supporting women and girls' access to safe and legal abortions. Ipas has been running for 40 years and achieved positive results prior to Norway's contribution, which started in the 2012/13 financial year. As such, the WGE Grant has contributed to expanding results achieved rather than achieving new ones. The programme has continued into 2015, but, in line with the period for this evaluation, below are some key results achieved from 1 July 2012-30 June 2013, largely (but not exclusively) with support from Norway, as reported by Ipas. These met or exceeded the programme's objectives for that year:

- 159,224 more uterine evacuation procedures were provided at 1,537 more sites performing Ipas interventions in one more country than in 2012;

- Some provinces in South Africa started to implement liberalised policies (such as putting in place policy and regulatory frameworks that facilitate maximum access under existing laws, and to increase advocacy and action by influential national and sub-national organisations) with Ipas' assistance, in addition to the 17 countries where such actions are already being implemented.
- There was an increase in the number of women who received uterine evacuation procedure at Ipas intervention sites, also receiving a modern contraceptive method, from 152,529 (74 percent) to 275,538 (85 percent).
- 211,145 more women attended Ipas-supported interventions that promote women's knowledge, skills, social support and ability to obtain safe abortion care.

#### **2.2.4 Support to multilaterals**

According to the Gender Action Plan, Norway was to advocate for gender mainstreaming in the core activities of all UN organisations and

multilateral finance institutions. It would also give priority to cooperation with multilateral organisations that develop and implement clear and concrete targets and tools for promoting WRGE. The Gender Action Plan also states that Norway would advocate for the establishment of a strong, independent normative and operational UN entity for WRGE. Indeed, in line with the Gender Action Plan, promoting gender equality across multilateral agencies has been an important achievement for Norway. The 2009 mid-term review (NIBR 2009: 20) recognised that Norway influences 'the way in which the core activities of UN organizations incorporate and mainstream WRGE issues' through board representation.

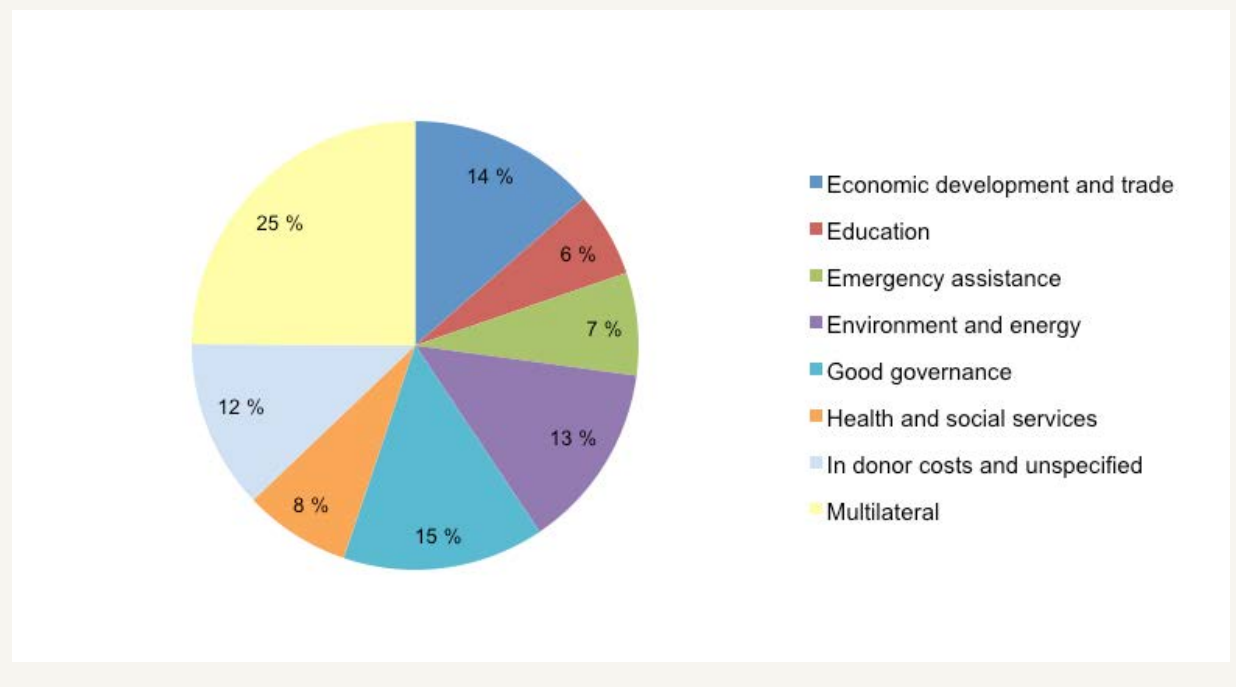
Norway has had important achievements in this international role. It had significant influence over the creation of UN Women in 2010, and to date is one of the largest bilateral donors to UN Women's core funding, contributing \$16.24 million in 2013; representing the organisation's top donor in 2012, with a \$14.83 million contribution; and leading by example with a \$14.68 million contribution in

2011.<sup>3</sup> Another important global-level WRGE achievement was forging agreements and consensus to include robust language on WRGE for the 2014 UN Women’s Commission on the Status of Women agreements, despite resistance from some member states (interview with MFA’s Section for UN Policy, February 2015).

Norway is also a leading player on the governing boards of multilateral agencies, where it champions the need to mainstream gender and to achieve better development results. It has supported the UN in implementing its One UN reform, as well as contributing to the joint budget reform of UNDP, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and UN Women that seeks to grant greater member state insight into expenditures. Further, Norway has contributed to board decisions on improved transparency by making the internal audit reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF public (OECD 2013). This is important as these three UN agencies have significant gender mandates.

3 <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/4/interview-with-norway-minister-of-foreign-affairs>

**FIGURE 11:** NORWEGIAN ODA, BY TARGET AREA, 2007-2013



Source: Norad/MFA 2015

Norway can take credit for support to key UN agencies working on WRGE and has voiced the need for them to look at their record on WRGE and to promote better reporting in this area. For example, in the case of UNICEF, as part of its

presence on the Executive Board, Norway has on several occasions taken up the need for better reporting on gender issues – in particular in discussions on the annual report of the executive director and reporting on gender policy. Norway

**TABLE 6: TREND IN VOLUMES OF AID TO MAIN MULTILATERAL PARTNERS (NOK '000S)**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total	% of total ODA to multilateral agencies
Total, multilateral agencies	10,288.60	11,267.30	12,104.60	12,614.90	12,475.70	13,266.30	14,334.40	86,351.80	
UNDP	1,716.40	1,750.50	2,015.20	2,144.30	2,007.70	1,851.10	1,959.20	13,444.40	15.6
UNICEF	1,135.10	1,186.60	1,297.70	1,318.50	1,310.10	1,366.50	1,403.50	9,018.00	10.4
World Bank	475.80	876.01	799.13	761.63	531.93	489.58	623.05	4,557.13	5.3
UN Women	0.00	0.00	15.60	115.38	164.74	146.91	164.21	606.84	0.7
UNIFEM	119.41	97.47	162.96	18.96	13.90	2.83	-0.14	415.38	0.5

Source: Norad/MFA 2015

has also advocated for clearer policy guidance on gender mainstreaming as a part of UNICEF's new gender policy and in the new strategic plan to be taken up (information from MFA's Section on UN Policy).

However, Norway needs to continue working with UN agencies to improve their results performance in relation to WRGE, as there is room for improvement within the UN system. To date, UN Women's overall achievements have not yet been ground-breaking, and UNICEF has a mixed record on gender results. The latter has supported significant achievements in terms of the MDGs focused on women and girls' education and health, but still has more to do in relation to promoting women and girl's empowerment and inclusion (see also UNICEF 2008).

Figure 11 shows Norway's commitment to supporting multilateral agencies: core support to multilateral institutions amounted to 25 percent of total ODA over the 2007-2013 period. Given Norway's commitment to promoting WRGE, a part of this goes to supporting WRGE objectives, even if it cannot be gender-marked as it is not targeted to specific areas. In addition, 39.6 percent of resources in the other target areas go to multilateral institutions in the form of multi-bilateral aid, which is gender-marked. As such, almost 47 percent of total ODA was channelled through multilateral agencies in the period 2007-2013 (information from Norad's Statistics Section). According to Norad (2013), the 20 largest multilateral partners were responsible for a full 95 percent of the gender-marked allocation between 2002 and 2012, mainly in the form of multi-bilateral aid, which is gender-marked.

Table 6 shows the trend during the period 2007-2013 in volumes of aid to the main multilateral partners that carry out WRGE actions: UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNIFEM and UN Women. These amounts include multilateral (not gender-marked) and multi-bilateral (gender-marked) ODA. The last column indicates the share of total aid to multilateral donors they each represent.

In relation to gender-marked aid – that comes in addition to core funding, which is not gender-marked – among the multilateral organisations UNICEF received the largest allocations for WRGE: 36 percent of the funding. This can be explained by consistent multi-bilateral allocations over the 10-year period to the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), of which Norway is one



of the largest bilateral donors. Gender-marked allocations to UNICEF peaked in 2010, with more than NOK 690 million. UNDP received the second-largest volume of gender-marked allocations – NOK 360 million or more per year in the period 2008-2011. Together, UNICEF and UNDP received more than half of the NOK 13.9 billion gender-marked allocations over the 10-year period. Among the smaller actors, UNIFEM and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees started with almost nothing but then achieved annual transfers of, respectively, NOK 41 million and NOK 30 million annually. UNIFEM and UN Women must be seen as one organisation from 2009, when the first transfer to UN Women (which officially started work in 2010) was made; together they received NOK 96 million in 2011.

WRGE results from these agencies to which Norwegian aid is contributing are assessed on the basis of their own reporting mechanisms rather than by MFA, which, as discussed above, is difficult since – particularly in the case of core funding – the process is complex and attribution is difficult to ascertain. In the case of core funding, however, there is scope to consider how

MFA measures the extent to which Norwegian aid is contributing to results multilateral agencies achieve: a percentage of the results agencies report that is proportional to Norway's financial contribution to the agency is considered attributable to Norwegian aid. This approximation is understandable given the challenge of disaggregating each donor's contribution to results, but means that it is impossible to evaluate these results in relation to a specific donor's contribution.

In addition to its instrumental role in the creation of UN Women, Norway has had influence in the case of the World Bank. The Bank's creation of its own WRGE action plan (largely focused on women's increased economic participation) was seen as a crossroads here. The strategy has been to make WRGE an umbrella facility and push for WRGE through participation in boards. This initiative has largely been pursued by Nordic countries, including Norway (interview with MFA focal point in the World Bank). Other examples of results achieved through Norway's support to multilateral institutions are highlighted in Norad's annual results reports. For instance, the

2008 results report noted that, with Norwegian support, UNDP and UNICEF had built capacity in rural areas of Nepal and Mozambique, both in women's groups and in local NGOs. Additionally, cooperation between UNICEF and Save the Children Norway had contributed to results in Nepal through extensive campaigns to promote education for girls. The 2013 results report noted that Norway was the third-largest donor to UNICEF, supporting the organisation with almost NOK 1.4 billion in 2012. Core support amounted to one-third (NOK 450 million) and earmarked funds two-thirds (NOK 916 million). In 2012, UNICEF's budget totalled NOK 23 billion. Whether we look at core support or UNICEF's total budget, Norway's share was 6 percent for that year. One of the many specific WRGE results UNICEF achieved was support to Somali government agencies to enable nearly 90,000 more girls to attend school in 2012 compared with the previous year. Because this result was achieved mainly through UNICEF funds, according to MFA's mechanism to measure how its financial contribution contributes to achieving results, 6 percent – that is, schooling for 5,400 of these girls – can be linked to Norway's contribution.

These examples highlight the relevance of Norway's role as a donor that prioritises WRGE in its work with multilateral agencies, and how this has enabled its development cooperation to achieve some important results at the global level.

### **2.3 RESULTS MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING MECHANISMS**

We now turn to a discussion of the results management and reporting mechanisms in place for Norwegian ODA and with respect to WRGE specifically. This section also explores some of the weaknesses identified in the way these mechanisms are used in practice. These need to be strengthened for a focus on results to feature more prominently in all programme phases, particularly in programme reporting, to enable greater clarity and better communication of WRGE results achieved through Norwegian development assistance.

#### **2.3.1 System overview**

The Grant Management Manual (MFA n.d.) sets out general rules for the management of grants by MFA and Norad, including for results reporting. It establishes rules to promote good practice

and harmonised follow-up of grant management by all units in MFA and Norad. The main focus of annual or short-term progress reports is to be on outputs and, to the extent possible, outcomes. However, in the manual and in most grant scheme rules, the requirement for periodic and/or final reports is that they must include documentation on outcomes and, if possible, impacts. This requirement is repeated in all training on results management, both at the MFA training centre and in training on generic results-based management held at embassies. All reports must include information on the handling of identified risks, including corruption, and the project's effects in relation to the environment, climate change and gender equality (the three crosscutting issues). However, results reporting in crosscutting areas requires support from other staff in embassies, which is not always available.

#### **2.3.2 WRGE-specific reporting**

In terms of WRGE-specific reporting, the Gender Action Plan suggests embassies develop action plans for their work on WRGE. These should be operational and results-based, with clarity on how results will be measured. In the particular case

of grants related to WRGE, guidance suggests gender equality plans and reports from embassies will be used as tools to monitor implementation of the global Gender Action Plan and evaluate the need for follow-up measures. In principle, reports must include concrete results and examples of targeted activities, as well as information on longer-term efforts to exert an influence through the policy dialogue and in multi-donor cooperation. MFA is responsible for documenting concrete development results for WRGE, and for this it needs concrete input from embassies.

Norad's Gender Secretariat, which coordinated the collection of reports from all six pilot embassies, developed a template to provide pilot embassies with guidance on reporting in this area. Even so, while some staff in embassies saw the process as positive, others viewed it as time-consuming and did not always do it (Norad 2014).

The report on lessons learnt from gender reviews (Norad 2011) notes that engagement by embassy management is necessary to create the enabling environment and systematic approach to gender mainstreaming necessary for change to

occur. As such, embassy management is to be responsible for the results the embassy contributes to and must demand gender-responsive reporting from staff. However, in practice, embassies in general do not report thoroughly on WRGE results. Only pilot embassies reported more systematically on WRGE (when the pilot was operating). Introducing planning and reporting guidelines in pilot embassies seemed promising. In particular, in addition to embassy action plans on gender equality, the embassies' annual business plans included specific goals related to gender equality (Norad 2014), which were seen as a way to institutionalise WRGE reporting through annual reporting mechanisms. In fact, one of the recommendations from the review of pilot embassies (*ibid.*) was to introduce clear reporting requirements for WRGE in established reporting routines, such as business plans. At the moment, business plans capture only a very general synthesis of WRGE work and do not really document results. The review notes that embassy gender focal points found yearly reporting a helpful way to enter into dialogue with other sectors at the embassy and provided an opportunity to discuss gender mainstreaming across portfolios. However, the fact that

specific WRGE planning and reporting ended with the pilot embassy initiative implies such mechanisms were not institutionalised.

To support WRGE work at embassy level, MFA has developed and shared via the intranet a document called '10 Tenets'. This guidance for heads of mission is a document on how to achieve results with regard to WRGE in-country. However, staff interviewed in the case study countries did not know about this document.

### **2.3.3 Challenges to results reporting in general**

According to insights derived from interviews with relevant staff in different departments in Norad and embassies, as well as from past reviews of Norway's results management system, results reporting is generally weak within Norwegian development cooperation, for a variety of reasons.

Frameworks on results reporting are clear about requirements, but reporting is not consistent in practice, with reports varying in their level of detail. 'Can We Demonstrate the Difference Norwegian Aid Makes?' concludes that:

*[The] development of grant scheme rules and a new Grant Management Manual could have improved consistency and coherence around results measurement. But the non-mandatory use of templates means there are no clear standards [...] Staff do not have access to appropriate detailed information to implement the basic guidance given in the Grant Management Manual [and] the absence of a clear approach to and guidance on reviews and evaluations means their use within the grant management cycle is fragmented and their quality is variable (Itad 2014: 86).*

Recommendations in this evaluation led to an expansion of the mandatory training in grant management. A one-day course in results measurement and risk management – mandatory also for managers – will likely contribute to improving results measurement and reporting. Currently, time pressures for staff are limiting the time they have available to focus on results reporting, a constraint that might be lessened as a result of training on results reporting.

While it is clear there are multiple guidelines on results reporting, assessments of Norwegian

development cooperation – including those focusing on WRGE – agree results management and reporting is weak. Indeed, according to Lindkvist and Dixon (2014), while the Norwegian aid administration’s guidelines and procedures might give the impression of an institutional focus on results, in reality rules, regulations, handbooks and guidelines are many and fragmented. The main document is the Grants Management Manual, but there are also other handbooks and numerous grant scheme rules, creating unnecessary confusion (Itad 2014).

Therefore, despite guidelines, in practice reporting is quite flexible, and seeking support from the Results Management and Quality Assurance Department is optional, for both the technical advisory teams at Norad (such as the Gender Unit) and embassies. In practice, such support is seldom requested. This process has been queried by external evaluations (Itad 2014) and has implications both for overall results and for WRGE results reporting.

The 2014 evaluation of results measurement (Itad 2014) showed that, while grant reports in

general explain how money is used, they fail to provide real analysis of how resources result in real benefits to those affected. Further, processes and programme design are not necessarily developed to generate results. As noted in Itad (2014: xv),

*Analysis by Norad’s Evaluation Department (EVAL) in 2011 found that none of the reports on grants that were evaluated could reach firm conclusions about the results being achieved. Reports showed well what money was being spent and what direct activities or services were being delivered. But critical questions about whether those services gave rise to real benefits for poor people and other target groups proved elusive.*

#### **2.3.4 WRGE results reporting challenges**

One of the critiques in Norad’s 2009 mid-term review of the Gender Action Plan was that it did not have in place an adequate results reporting framework. This was partially addressed with the creation of the gender pilot embassies, which developed action plans for their work on WRGE, on the basis of which reporting would take place.

These plans have been instrumental in creating awareness of gender equality, identifying clear priorities and enhancing accountability for gender mainstreaming at the embassies that have used them. Further, the initiative pushed for yearly reporting using a template developed by Norad technical advisors, drawing out results. This was partially successful, but, as we note later, an important limitation is that embassies, including pilot embassies, have not consistently utilised such WRGE plans and reporting templates. Further, some of the pilot embassies are no longer developing or updating plans for WRGE, nor are they reporting according to the templates. Lack of institutionalisation of annual reporting after the pilot embassy initiative led to the loss of opportunities to build on the initiative (interview with LIRE).

Moreover, a report examining the three-year experience of the pilot embassies (Norad 2014) notes that, while yearly reporting did improve along the way in terms of both quality and quantity, there were challenges regarding the way development cooperation results were reported: the focus was largely on activity, process and output, with often little to say about outcomes

or likely impacts. Given the degree of decentralisation in the system, reporting is dependent to a great extent on inputs and reporting from development partners, who may not have the same level of rigor in the design, implementation, analysis and evaluation of results. This is underpinned by possible capacity gaps in understanding what ‘mainstreaming’ gender really means.

Another challenge is insufficient involvement of embassy management in promoting WRGE, observed in the assessment of the pilot embassy experiences (Norad 2011). The review called for greater management involvement, including incorporating WRGE reporting into embassy-wide yearly reports, annual meetings and analysis of results. This has not happened consistently, and rather depends on the individual capacity, engagement and time availability of staff in embassies. In general, progress on WRGE implementation and results is seen as depending on individual commitment and interests (interview with LIRE).

Further, while partners implementing gender-targeted programmes and projects may have more clarity about the types of results being

sought in relation to WRGE through programme implementation, this may not be the case with partners (and technical staff) working on ‘gender-mainstreamed’ projects in areas such as energy or climate change. As the mid-term review (NIBR 2009) points out, while reporting on targeted activities is easier, there is a need for greater explanation of how activities that involve mainstreaming will in fact lead to mainstreaming. Training on results-based management and gender equality for embassy staff and partners is one way of achieving common ground (Norad 2013b) but may not be achievable, as MFA has limited standalone gender equality training and it is now only part of general grant management training (see below). In addition, many embassy staff face significant time demands, making it difficult for them to attend these courses.

With respect to WRGE results reporting, there is a further complicating issue. Results with a transformational impact tend to be visible in the medium to long term, whereas many of the projects financed in this area are evaluated in the short term. For example, the ‘Review of Norad’s Assistance to Gender Mainstreaming in the Ener-

gy and Petroleum Sector 2010-2014’ found projects generally lasted no more than six months, which is an insufficient time to be able to see results on WRGE (Norconsult 2015): longer-term assessments would be useful to document results (outcomes and impacts). This does not mean results are not being achieved, rather they are difficult to assess, so results monitoring and reporting systems need to be improved so they can capture these longer-term impact pathways.

## **2.4 HUMAN RESOURCES**

The human resource dimension is crucial to ensure staff in both Norad and MFA have sufficient knowledge and support to realise WRGE objectives in the Gender Action Plan.

### **2.4.1 Staffing structure**

In order to support efforts to deliver on the Gender Action Plan, Norway invested in Oslo-based staff who could support WRGE activities at the country level. In the case of Norad’s Section for Rights and Gender Equality, a team of four<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> There were five advisors in 2013, but the number has been reduced to 3.5 positions currently.

advisors has provided technical assistance and advice to embassies and led on embassies' gender review processes, which result in recommendations on how embassies can support their WRGE plans and results. Their role has been substantive in the implementation of the gender pilot embassies, and in the push for strategic projects such as gender and energy and gender and climate change.

Other departments in Norad, such as Global Health, Civil Society and Research, have gender focal points, who work with the Section for Rights and Gender Equality to implement programmes, particularly those financed through the WGE Grant. There are staff members in Norad who are not gender focal points but who work on gender issues in new and emerging areas, such as in the Section on Clean Energy.

At MFA, a Gender Unit was placed in the Section for Global Initiatives in the Department of Global Affairs for the rollout of the Gender Action Plan. This consisted of three staff members, headed by an ambassador/senior advisor on gender issues (NIBR 2009). The Gender Unit institu-

tionalised an internal resource group to develop the Gender Action Plan and to be responsible for overseeing implementation. The group had members from all main development cooperation departments, but they acted in a personal capacity, not as department representatives (*ibid.*). By 2011, the Department of Global Affairs had been reorganised and moves had been made into the implementation phase, with a focus on increased mainstreaming and integration of WRGE throughout. The three-person team continued its work through 2011-2013. Since 2013, following the move to further mainstreaming, two persons have been dedicated to the portfolio (interview with MFA Human Rights Department). Having a smaller team may constrain the capacity within MFA to manage and oversee the continued delivery of WRGE results.

At the embassy level, there were dedicated gender focal points during the gender pilot embassy initiative. Only a few of these remain, such as in Mozambique, where the position will be discontinued as from July 2015. In most embassies, it is the political affairs counsellor who functions as a gender focal point and is responsible for

following up on WRGE issues. As this is one of the many functions of the role, detailed engagement on WRGE issues is not always possible (see, e.g., Box 7 on Tanzania in Section 3). An additional challenge posed by not having a specific gender focal point is that such a role should in principle require the capacity both to develop targeted WRGE activities and to support other colleagues who may not have strong gender expertise to carry out mainstreaming work. While it may not be feasible to have a dedicated gender focal point in all embassies, given resource constraints, pilot embassies with more dedicated focal points were in a better position to promote WRGE. These should serve as an example of the role such a staff member can play in promoting WRGE results.

A similar situation exists in Norad. Gender focal points and resource persons working on gender mainstreaming in different sections do not have a clear job description, so their work tends to be defined largely by individual plans and efforts. Further, no specific capacity-building on gender mainstreaming is provided within the various sectors. Other constraints for Norad staff, par-



ticularly those working on gender mainstreaming without it being their main role, include insufficient time to perform required tasks successfully as well as limited management support and acknowledgement of gender mainstreaming as a priority area.

However, it is also worth pointing out that gender focal points may need to be complemented by additional sector-specific expertise, given the level of technical specialism required in some target areas. For example, a review of Norad's Framework Agreement with ENERGIA (Norconsult 2015) noted that, while most gender focal points in embassies had a good general basis for gender mainstreaming, they had not had extensive training on gender mainstreaming in relation to the energy and petroleum sectors. The review noted that this was an issue because gender focal points might be called on to give advice on a very wide range of activities and interventions. For example, Nepal's National Rural and Renewable Energy Programme includes many different forms of energy source, energy delivery modality and technology. In Uganda, the embassy's support included assistance in very technical areas

such as electricity transmission. In the countries reviewed, staff working on gender participated in Framework Agreement events (trainings/workshops), which was in and of itself a form of capacity-building. Indeed, many explained they were first exposed to this specific area by participating in the training activities of the Framework Agreement (*ibid.*).

#### **2.4.2 Job descriptions and performance**

A useful way to encourage positive performance with respect to WRGE is through job descriptions and performance assessments, which can generate accountability with respect to promoting relevant results. Presently, in MFA, in addition to staff with specific responsibilities on WRGE, such as those in charge of engagement with the UN system, managers have 'gender equality' as an element of their job description, although this generally refers to ensuring gender equality in the work environment. At embassy level, only the political officers as de facto gender focal points require mandatory gender knowledge/experience, but the depth of this experience is dependent to a large extent on how explicitly the portfolio of the embassies requires such skills

and experience, and thus if the head of mission emphasises this in the job descriptions, but this is not standard.

The gender pilot embassy initiative review (Norad 2014) suggests accountability in relation to the Gender Action Plan can be enhanced by making performance on gender equality a standard topic for professional assessments for all staff, including management. This is currently not the case. Managers have an annual 360 assessment from eight peers, with gender equality one of the assessment criteria, but again this tends to look more at whether they created a positive environment for gender equality among colleagues rather than the content of their work on gender. Performance assessments of other staff may be assessed on the basis of their work on WRGE, but as this is not an institutionalised requirement in human resource policy, this will depend largely on the focus managers at embassies give to this issue.

#### **2.4.3 Capacity-building on WRGE**

Aware of the need to provide capacity-building on WRGE, MFA developed specific gender



training for staff, and in some cases partners (in courses at regional and country level, generally delivered by local gender experts). This type of training was supportive of the Gender Action Plan. However, it was optional, and is now no longer provided on a standalone basis, as it was not well attended. Some key elements of gender equality relating to its integration as a crosscutting theme are provided as part of the compulsory core course on financial and grant scheme rules, alongside the other three cross-cutting areas (corruption, climate change and environment). However, the training is not clear on how integration is achieved in practice: it does not cover what it means to plan for gender mainstreaming and evaluate results in this area, or how to achieve WRGE results in areas that are not traditionally 'gendered', such as energy, oil and climate change. Moreover, capacity-building on gender is still seen as an important need in embassies for relevant staff, even if in many cases there are not enough resources – time and staff-wise – to take more specifically tailored WRGE training.

Different reviews have identified lack of capacity and knowledge among staff and partners in relation to WRGE as one of the obstacles to achieving and documenting results in this area. As such, prioritisation of capacity-building of both embassy staff and partners is a key success factor for mainstreaming in practice. The review of the gender pilot embassy initiative (Norad 2014) highlights as an example that use of the international network ENERGIA has been instrumental to achievements in mainstreaming gender in energy sector cooperation in Mozambique and Uganda, given the capacity development that has been provided in this area as part of the Framework Agreement. It also points out, however, that capacity-building in this area should not be conceptualised as a one-off activity, but requires continuous attention, particularly in an environment of high turnover/rotation, such as in embassies.

## 3. Country-level findings

We now turn to a discussion of the findings from our country case studies at systemic, project and organisational levels. Our discussion is based primarily on our three in-depth country cases, but where relevant we also draw on examples from Tanzania and Zambia. We urge the reader to refer to the more detailed case study reports (see Annexes 10-13) to understand the underlying evidence in greater depth. It is important to highlight from the outset that all five countries included in our evaluation face significant WRGE challenges across all four pillars of the Action Plan, as Table 7 highlights. It is against this backdrop that our discussion of specific programme interventions takes place. Please also refer to Annex 7 for country breakdowns on gender-marked aid by target area and agreement partner during the evaluation period, as well as for the Women and Gender Equality Grant.

### 3.1 SYSTEMIC-LEVEL FINDINGS

The first level of results we assessed at country level was outcomes at the systemic level. Here, we were interested in policy and legal changes related to WRGE; increases in funding; shifts in discourse about WRGE; improved attention to

WRGE within national dialogue processes between embassy staff and the government; and a strengthened evidence base on WRGE at country level (which could more effectively underpin enhanced policy and programming initiatives to promote WRGE). Overall, Norwegian development cooperation's contributions to improvements at this level have been mixed, both within and across countries. Table 8 provides summary messages regarding our findings at this level.

#### 3.1.1 Policy and legal outcomes

Overall, Norwegian development cooperation, through its partnership with civil society organisations (CSOs) that play a key role in national policy advocacy work, has contributed to a number of **positive policy and legal changes** aimed at advancing WRGE. In Ethiopia, a combination of documentary evidence and key informant interviews indicated that Norway's support to leading non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and NGO networks working on female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and harmful traditional practices more broadly had played an important role in securing the development of a national policy framework on harmful traditional

practices led by the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs and a National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Children in Ethiopia (2013). In addition, it had contributed to the inclusion of FGM/C prevention in the 2010-2015 Growth and Transformation Plan. This is highly significant given that 10-15 years ago FGM/C was scarcely discussed in public, let alone seen as sufficiently important to include as a target in the national development plan. Moreover, the government included ambitious targets – to almost eliminate female circumcision from a prevalence of 37.7 percent in 2010/11 to 0.7 percent in 2014/15.

Similarly, Norway has provided support to key CSOs championing WRGE in Mozambique and Nepal, contributing to **important legal shifts**. In Mozambique, long-term support to Organisation of Mozambican Women and Forum Mulher has made it possible for them to influence political debates on the Family Law and the Law against Domestic Violence (Tvedten *et al.* 2008). In Nepal, while there was no tangible policy change during the evaluation period, the institutions Norway supported are, according to focus group

**TABLE 7: KEY GENDER INDICATORS IN FOCAL COUNTRIES**

	Detailed indicator	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nepal	Tanzania	Zambia
General	UN Development Programme Gender Inequality Index 2013	121	146	98	124	135
	Social Institutions and Gender Index ranking, 2012 (out of 86 countries)	64	39	36	47	58
	Gender gap in education (population with at least some secondary education)	Women: 7.8% Men: 18.2%	Women: 1.5% Men: 6%	Women: 17.9% Men: 39.9%	Women: 5.6% Men: 9.2%	Women: 25.7% Men: 44.2%
Political empowerment	Women in legislative positions	MPs (lower house: 27.8% Senate/upper house: 16.3% Ministers: 13%	MPs: 39.2% Minsters: 28.5% Governors: 27.2%	MPs (lower house): 29.9%	MPs: 36%	MPs: 11.5% Local government: 6 %
	Quotas – e.g. in parties, legislature, executive, judiciary	No known quotas exist	30% in institutions for community participation and consultation	33% of candidates for Constituent Assembly. 40% of candidates for municipal councils	30% in National Assembly	No quota, although Southern African Development Community has set goal of 50%
Economic empowerment	Labour market composition by gender	Women: 78.2% Men: 89.4%	Women: 77.6% Men: 72.2%	Women: 54.3% Men: 63.2%	Women: 88.1% Men: 90.2%	Women: 73.2% Men: 85.6%
	Access to credit by gender	12% of those accessing agricultural credit. 64.44% of microfinance borrowers	Women clear minority of the District Development Fund	Not available	Not available	Access to credit restricted
	Gender wage gap	Men earning an average of Birr 862 per month, compared with women's wages of Birr 647	Not available	Not available	Not available	Women without education: 65% of their male counterparts. Women with tertiary: 95% of their male counterparts
	Gender and migration rates	Between 2004 and 2006, 99% of legal migrants to Middle East were female	Not available	95.1% of labour migrants over past six years men but significant increase in women's permits, at 239%, compared with nearly 133% for men	Not available	Not available
	Gross national income per capita	Women: 1,092 Men: 1,515	Women: 939 Men: 1,086	Women: 1,857 Men: 2,554	Women: 1,501 Men: 1,903	Women: 2,344 Men: 3,455

→



	Detailed indicator	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nepal	Tanzania	Zambia
Gender-based violence	Justification of physical violence on women by men for at least one of five specified reasons	Women: 68% Men: 45%	Women: 22.9%	Women: 23% Men: 21%	Not available	Not in report
	Experience of violence	70% at one point in their lives, over 50% in the preceding 12 months	Experience of physical violence: 33.4%. Experience of sexual violence: 12.3%	48% at one point in their lives, over 28% in preceding 12 months. Physical violence: 26.8%. Sexual violence: 15.3%	44% at one point in their lives	47% since they were 15, 33% in preceding 12 months. Sexual violence: 20%
	Harmful traditional practices	74.3% of women aged 15-49 had experienced female genital mutilation/cutting	Proportion of women in polygamous households: 22.5%	<i>Deuki</i> : offering young girls to temples for ceremonial purpose; <i>Chaupadi</i> : menstrual seclusion, with women kept out of the house, living outdoors	Not available	Not available
Sexual and reproductive health rights	Total fertility per woman	4.77	5.9	Not available	Not available	6.2
	Adolescent fertility (births per 1,000 women aged 15-19)	78.4	137.8	73.7	122.7	125.4
	Early marriage	63% of girls married by age 18 compared with 14% of men	Marriage under age 15: 14.0%	28.9% of girls aged 15-19 married, divorced or widowed, compared with 7% of men	Not available	Not available
	Access to antenatal care (proportion of pregnant women)	42.5% at least one visit	90.6%	92% of the wealthiest Nepali women, 33% of the poorest	Not available	More than 90%
	Women having institutional deliveries	10% of births attended by skilled health professionals	54.8%	11% of the poorest and 82% of the wealthiest women receive skilled delivery services	Not available	47% of women deliver in health facilities, 46% have assistance of a skilled health provider
	Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births)	350	500	170	460	440
	HIV rate	Women: 1.9% Men: 1%	Women: 18.4% Men: 12.8%	Not in report	Not available	Women: 16.1% Men: 12.3%
	Use of contraception	5% aged 15-19, 29% aged 30-34, 11% aged 45-49	12.2%	50%	Not available	33%
	Legality of abortion	Legal in cases of rape and incest, where the woman's health is in danger and in cases of foetal impairment	Legal only to save a woman's life or to preserve her health. Not permitted in the event of foetal impairment, on request, on social or economic grounds or in cases of rape or incest	Legal on medical or social grounds	Legal only on medical grounds	Legal on medical or social grounds

Note: Latest reported data for each country.

Source: Case study reports (Annex 10-13), HDR statistical table, Social Institutions and Gender Index. Some data missing for desk study countries, where review was more light-touch.

discussions and key informant interviews, widely perceived as responsible for multiple previous policy-level improvements (including assuring 33 percent women's representation in the Constitutional Assembly pending elections and a finalised Constitution). This provides them with the legitimacy to continue to influence ongoing policy change dialogue processes.

By contrast, ***the inclusion of WRGE in sector-based development policies has been relatively weak***, especially in energy and agriculture in Mozambique. In the former, 'mainstreaming' initiatives at central level often do not reach the regional and district institutions that are closest to the target group. In the latter, WRGE-related interventions at local level (including the project this evaluation assessed) are often driven by NGOs and farmers unions without much political support from central level.

### **3.1.2 Funding outcomes**

According to documentary evidence and key informant interviews, ***shifts in funding allocated to WRGE in the three in-depth case study countries have been limited*** and the ministries

mandated with promoting WRGE are woefully under-funded compared with other sector ministries. While it is difficult to trace direct links between Norwegian development cooperation and national funding levels for WRGE, donors can, for example, play a catalytic role in supporting gender budgeting initiatives so levels of investment in promoting WRGE are more transparent. However, there is no evidence Norway has supported such efforts. According to key informant interviews, the heightened national profile of efforts to address harmful traditional practices and FGM/C in particular in Ethiopia has led to increased programmatic funds, but this is also because of a broader global push to address this issue as part of current efforts to support adolescent girls' wellbeing as agents of change in the development and poverty reduction process. In Nepal, there are specific funding pots earmarked to support women's development at district level. Through its support to the Inter-Party Women's Alliance (IPWA) and the Local Governance and Community Development Programme, Norway was able to increase women's influence over how such funds are used, as reported by key informants, but these discussions also revealed that women's ability to

shape how these funds are distributed continues to be limited, as it is still the case that most key politicians and decision-makers are men.

### **3.1.3 Discursive outcomes**

While discursive changes are a more contested indicator of results, we believe that, given the importance of social norms and cultural practices in shaping gendered outcomes, ***how forms of gender discrimination and rights violations are conceptualised and articulated is a critical indicator of WRGE results***. In this area, ***the Norwegian embassies in our three country case studies have contributed positively*** in a number of areas.

First, to return to the example of FGM/C in Ethiopia, according to a combination of documentary evidence, key informant interviews and focus group discussions, a decade ago this was a taboo topic in many parts of the country and scarcely mentioned in policy circles. Now, not only is the government aiming to eliminate the practice altogether, but also the Joint Programme run by Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and Save the Children International (see Annex 9)

and supported by the Norwegian embassy in Ethiopia has worked closely with the major national religious institutions in the country to develop position papers based on their own religious texts as to why FGM/C is not in keeping with their religious traditions. To date, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, various protestant denominations and the Ethiopian Catholic Church have all developed such high-level declarations (see also Box 1). Dialogues are ongoing with the Ethiopian Muslim Development Agency, but the shift has been more one related to changing the type of practice undertaken (from the more invasive infibulation type to the less invasive Type 1 form, or sunna).

The embassy's support to the Human Rights Centre at Addis Ababa University – a public institution – to undertake a large-scale project on the provision of legal aid to poor men and women can also be seen as critical to promoting discursive buy-in to women's legal rights in a broader context where the very language of 'rights' has become controversial since the passage of the 2009 civil society registration law (the Proclamation to Provide for the Registration

and Regulation of Charities and Societies). In this law, NGOs are prevented from carrying out policy advocacy work on rights-based issues, including on gender-related rights. In other words, the embassy sought a creative and proactive solution to ensure women's legal rights would not be rendered invisible in Ethiopia's current political environment.

Second, on Mozambique, key informants argue that active support of CSO partners such as Forum Mulher advocating for WRGE changes has meant the Norwegian embassy has contributed to a range of important discursive shifts. These include those around vanguard gender-related rights issues including gay rights, men's engagement in promoting more egalitarian gender issues and the right to access an abortion. Advocacy over time has also led to the familiarisation of terms such as 'gender equality' and 'women's rights', particularly in urban local communities with better access to media, for which there are no equivalent phrases in local languages.

Finally, in Nepal, the revolution brought issues of 'social inclusion' including WRGE into the main-

stream discourse in an unprecedented manner, but there are concerns that some of the gains, reflected in the Interim Constitution, are currently at stake, as the ongoing discussion on the design of the new Constitution shows. The Norwegian embassy is seeking to directly address these risks of reversal by helping strengthen the national movement currently fighting to ensure this does not happen.

In all three cases, however, based on a triangulation of secondary literature and key information interviews, we can see **more limited inroads have been made into shifting discourses within sector development policy spaces**. Gender is still largely seen as an add-on rather than a core part of more effective delivery of broader sectoral goals. Where it does exist, such as in agriculture in Mozambique, it is largely NGOs and farmers unions that push it rather than the ministry.

### **3.1.4 National dialogue process outcomes**

Given the move in the 2000s away from tied aid and towards budget support, national dialogue processes – at least in theory – became one of the key vehicles through which donors could

articulate their priority concerns. Although budget support has been scaled back, including by Norway, national dialogue processes remain a key part of government–donor relations. For Ethiopia and Mozambique, overall our key informant interview findings suggested ***inclusion of gender issues within these dialogue platforms has been limited at best***. Gender is seen by senior management at embassy level as one of multiple competing priorities and is at risk of being ‘imposed’ by Norway rather than part of a genuine dialogue on priorities. Moreover, although Norway is part of donor–government working groups at country level, it has not played a proactive role in championing particular WRGE changes.

In the case of Nepal, the embassy has played a more proactive role, directly supporting women’s NGOs and CSOs that are at the forefront of WRGE advocacy efforts and has helped strengthen their participation in drafting efforts for the Constitution, as well as vis-à-vis UN Security Council 1325 and its implementation.

**BOX 1: ENGAGEMENT WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO TACKLE DEEPLY ROOTED HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES IN ETHIOPIA**

One of the effective strategies Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) is employing in its approach to promoting social norm change around female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is working with religious leaders at national level so they can take ownership of the issue and then work through their own institutional structures to disseminate messages down to community level. NCA works with all the major religious traditions in the country, including the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the major protestant churches, the Ethiopian Catholic Church and the Ethiopian Muslim Development Agency, and has worked successfully with all but the latter to develop and publish position papers based on their own respective religious texts as to why FGM/C is a harmful traditional practice and should be actively tackled by religious leaders.

In the case of the Mekane Jesus Church, which is the largest protestant church in Ethiopia, NCA with Norwegian funding is supporting a three-year project with the affiliated Theological College to develop and integrate a module on harmful traditional practices, including FGM/C, as part of its core teaching syllabus. This approaches the issue from theological, women’s rights, health and legal perspectives. Despite initial resistance, it is now being rolled out to thousands of theology students in 11 theological institutions across the country, with plans to expand to the 46 bible schools across the country. The project manager spearheading these developments was excited by the uptake of the issue but noted that it would take time – and likely additional sensitization work – before the messages would be internalized among clergy at the community level.

**3.1.5 WRGE evidence base outcomes**

A robust evidence base is one of the preconditions of sound policy and programming; without it there is a strong risk that interventions will not effectively address key gendered vulnerabilities in context-responsive ways. Gender-disaggregated data remain a significant problem across much of the Global South, and our case study coun-

tries are no exceptions. ***Norway has, however, contributed in a modest way to strengthening the WRGE evidence base in each case.*** In Ethiopia, for example, key informant interviews revealed that Norway funded two rounds of a national survey undertaken by the FGM/C network EGALDAM (Ye Ethiopia Goji Limadawi Dirgitoch Aswegaj Mahiber) on prevalence across



**TABLE 8: SYSTEMIC-LEVEL OUTCOME CHANGES, BY COUNTRY**

	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nepal
Policy/legal change	➤ Good – Contribution to inclusion of FGM/C prevention in national Growth and Transformation Plan and in Ministry of Women, Youth and Children’s Affairs national policy framework on harmful traditional practices.	➤ Poor – on inclusion of WRGE issues in sector-based development policies (particularly energy but also agriculture). Good – on WRGE-related laws promoted through supported civil society organisations.	➤ Good – While there has been no significant tangible progress at policy level for WRGE in the period under review, the institutions supported by Norway are responsible for many of the previous successes and through Norway’s support their legitimacy and ability to influence current ongoing processes has been strengthened.
Funding change	➤ Limited – Generally limited but contribution to increased funding for FGM/C programming given heightened awareness among government and donors on FGM/C in Ethiopia.	➤ Poor – as government funding to WRGE remains low (Ministry of Women and Social Affairs).	➤ Limited – Government funding to WRGE (Ministry of Women and Social Affairs) remains low. Although specific funds are allocated for women at district level, it is unclear if women have any ability to impact how these funds are used. IPWA supported by Norway is seeking to increase women’s influence on the use of these funds and is on occasion successful. Still very few examples available.
Discursive change	➤ Good – A decade ago FGM/C was a taboo subject; now government is aiming to eliminate it within a decade and it is included in position papers of major national religious institutions/councils based on own religious texts. Support to the Human Rights Centre at Addis Ababa University gives legitimacy to the human rights discourse in context where ‘rights’ has become a very controversial concept.	➤ Good – on national discourses around sensitive WRGE issues through catalytic support to NGOs. Poor – as gender mainstreaming has not become part of sector-related discourses (particularly in energy, but also in agriculture).	➤ Mixed – The revolution brought inclusion and WRGE into the mainstream discourse. There are concerns that some of the gains, as reflected in the Interim Constitution, are currently at stake. Norway’s work seeks to directly address this by strengthening the national movement currently fighting to ensure this does not happen.
National dialogue process change	➤ Limited – gender mentioned according to embassy staff but as one among competing priorities; not proactive contributor in donor-government gender working group.	➤ Limited – gender issues largely ‘imposed’ by Norway in sector-based programmes (except for NGOs). Norway is not a proactive contributor in the donor-government gender coordination group.	➤ Good – Gender issues part of the national dialogues as a result of women’s active participation during the revolution. Norway’s support helps these forces maintain the pressure.
Evidence base on WRGE change	➤ Limited – Contribution to funding of national survey by FGM/C network EGALDAM on FGM/C prevalence/support for alignment of EGALDAM and Demographic and Health Survey data on FGM/C prevalence given differential sampling methods.	➤ Limited – some impact through support to the National Statistics Bureau for the sex disaggregation of data; little in terms of sector-related baselines/evidence with the partial exception of data on SRH through NGOs.	➤ Good – Disaggregated data now available for the energy sector make it possible to see impact and gaps.

Note: Green signifies significant achievement, yellow signifies mixed or limited achievement and red signifies low or lack of achievement.

the country. It also supported a follow-up study aimed at enabling researchers, policy actors and practitioners to reconcile differences between EGALDAM data and those of the Demographic and Health Survey dataset arising as a result of differential sampling approaches.

In Mozambique, key informants argue the embassy has had some impact on strengthening the WRGE evidence base by providing support to the National Statistics Bureau to collect sex-disaggregated data. However, little attention has been paid to strengthening sector-related baselines, with the partial exception of data on sexual

and reproductive health (SRH) through NGOs. In the case of Nepal, the embassy’s internal reporting points towards the Norwegian embassy having played an important role in ensuring the availability of disaggregated data by gender within the energy sector, allowing observers to better assess gaps and impacts.

### 3.2 PROJECT-LEVEL FINDINGS

The second level of outcome findings we analyse is that at project level. As discussed in Section 1, in each country we selected one or two projects per one or two Gender Action Plan thematic pillars (see also project summaries in Annex 8). In Ethiopia we focused on gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), in Mozambique on women's economic empowerment (through the energy and agriculture sectors) and in Nepal on women's political and economic empowerment (the latter through the energy sector). We also looked comparatively at the implementation of energy sector projects in Mozambique and Nepal.

In terms of our conceptualisation of results at project level, our definition is arguably closest to that of proponents of a more tangible/visible definition of results, although we are interested in a combination of attitudinal and behavioural changes and improved access to services that together promotes advances in WRGE. Specifically, our indicators (1) improved access to services or infrastructure; (2) improved participation of women and girls within the household

and broader community; (3) reduced discriminatory social norms and practices at community level; (4) improved community awareness on women and girls' rights; (5) improved community leader awareness of women and girls' rights; (6) enhanced engagement of men and boys on WRGE; (7) improved capacities of local officials on WRGE; (8) improved WRGE law enforcement; and (9) improved learning about WRGE and adaptation of lessons learned into ongoing programming. Clearly, the case study projects can be seen only as examples and do not provide an embassy portfolio-level assessment of results. What our findings highlight, though, is that, to effectively assess results, more in-depth and rigorous evaluations are needed (as opposed to relying on partner self-reporting), in particular the routine use and follow-up of baseline assessments. Only then are the complexities of progress on advancing WRGE likely to be identified, especially in areas related to attitudinal and social norm and practice changes.

#### 3.2.1 Changes in access to services or infrastructure

***Overall improvements in gendered access to services or infrastructure were limited among our case study projects,*** but to be fair two focal projects (the female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) prevention project in Ethiopia and the Inter-Party Women's Alliance (IPWA) political empowerment project in Nepal) did not include service or infrastructure improvements as part of their goal. Among those that did, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA)/UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) joint programme on adolescent SRH in Ethiopia saw limited improvements in its stated goal of improving the coverage and quality of youth-friendly SRH services. Key informant interviews, focus group discussions and individual interviews with beneficiary and non-beneficiary adolescents pointed to an array of shortcomings of SRH services provided on university campuses, including lack of accessibility for disabled students (despite this being an explicit programme target group), limited provision of confidentiality (e.g. lack of soundproof consulting spaces to give students the confidence to

discuss potentially sensitive SRH concerns) and poor provision of contraceptive supplies (e.g. multiple complaints about unfilled condom dispensary boxes on campus).

***In the energy sector projects, results were also mixed.*** In Mozambique, fieldwork showed improvements in gendered access to the advantages of electrification were limited because of a limited number of private/business connections. In addition, interventions to support the positive discrimination of women in terms of access to business and private connections were inadequately targeted (as is possible for ‘the poor’, where men tend to gain). Weak supply was exacerbated by limited demand among women given the small scale and limited economic viability (i.e. poor planning) of a women-focused project intended to enhance demand.

By contrast, in Nepal, the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPCC) project saw significant improvements in gendered access to services. Some examples, as reported by key informants, included clear indicators and subsidies to ensure sustainable access to energy services for

**BOX 2: MAGAR BALAMI MAGAR, WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR, SURKHET, NEPAL**

Deepika Balami Magar, 24, lives in an eight-member family, belongs to the Janajati ethnic group and studied till the 8th Standard. Magar believes her noodle business has transformed the family’s economic condition.

Magar received entrepreneurship development training organised by the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPCC) Regional Resource Centre/Association for Social Transformation and Humanitarian Assistance (RRC/ASTHA). Prior to this, she had not been very sure about the prospects of a noodle business. After RRC/ASTHA committed its support, Magar went ahead with her idea. As a women entrepreneur, she was also able to receive subsidies from the National Rural and Renewable Energy Programme/AEPCC. This was of great help, she says, as it enhanced her confidence and boosted her motivation levels. Micro hydropower electricity in Babiya Chaur was also of great help to her in setting the business up.

Magar’s business has been doing well. Her average monthly income now is NRs 20,000. She says there is still a great deal of opportunity for her as the demand for noodles is double what she is producing currently. She says she is planning to buy a bigger machine to meet the demand and has already discussed this with RRC/ASTHA. Her mother and all four sisters are employed now, thanks to her business. After setting it up, she was able to attend training in Baglung on business technical skills, also facilitated by RRC/ASTHA.

Although she feels bad about not being able to complete her education, Magar feels proud to be recognised as a successful businesswoman from a socially excluded group. She proudly mentions that she and family members are the only women entrepreneurs from her community in this area. Not only has her business flourished but also she says her noodles have had a positive impact on the health of the people, as there has been a decrease in the consumption of instant noodles. She gets complemented quite often and feels happy about it.

Magar says she is sad that a few people in her community still look down on her, believing women should not be involved in such business. She also comes across many who are jealous. But this has motivated her even more, she says. Magar feels happy her family does not have to use the money sent by her father, who works as a security guard, from India. This has created a savings habit among them. She plans to buy a motorbike so she can do the marketing for her business on her own. She hopes she can serve as a role model for others and other women from her community will be inspired to do business like her and improve their economic condition.

female-headed households. Moreover, many of the services provided (e.g. solar-powered water pumps and improved cooking stoves) were explicitly aimed at reducing women's work burdens and time poverty. See also Box 2.

***Finally, in the Mozambican agriculture sector projects, women have benefited from enhanced ownership to land, seeds and training.*** Although support to cash crop production was initiated without an explicit gender focus, interventions focused increasingly on women as locally based government and aid organisations confronted realities on the ground. The project helped around 540 farmers, including almost 250 women, obtain legal ownership of their farmland. While production of soya has put women in the difficult situation of having to balance the need for income with the need to spend time on food production, an explicit strategy of empowering women through adult education has put women in a better position both in agricultural production and in domestic space. Almost 3,500 people graduated from the literacy programme, two-thirds of them women. Over 6,000 people, mostly women, participated

in the nutrition training— even though the evaluation recognises there are no data to measure the real impact on household food habits.

### **3.2.2 Changes in participation of women and girls within the household and broader community**

Although participation of women and girls itself does not automatically lead to material improvements, it is very often a precondition for change and, according to international human rights treaties (e.g. the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), a right to which all people are guaranteed. ***Again, here the projects we assessed ranged from demonstrating positive contributions at this level to showing very limited progress.***

The most positive examples were found in the agriculture sector project in Mozambique, where women were organised into associations both to enhance their market participation and to facilitate their involvement in adult education opportunities; and the energy project in Nepal, where the embassy's support has seen in-

creased participation of women from planning through to implementation and upkeep. However, our findings were unable to confirm whether quotas had translated into meaningful participation of women. One of the reasons identified in focus group discussion and in-depth interviews was that most women and people from socially excluded groups were nominated on the basis of seniority (in line with local customs) rather than eligibility. With limited awareness and education, they are unable to play a substantial role in decision-making. Moreover, in some instances, men attend meetings on behalf of women, saying women have to attend to their chores or are menstruating. Nevertheless, we feel the 33 percent representation quota in community electrification and 50 percent representation in related income-generating projects have improved women's involvement in the micro hydropower and productive energy use programme components.

More limited findings were identified in the energy sector projects in Mozambique, owing to limited gender sensitivity and affirmative action on the part of central national energy institutions

### BOX 3: THE EMPOWERMENT DIVIDEND OF NEPAL'S IPWA

Rekha Yadav, 40, is an Inter-Party Women's Alliance (IPWA) member from the central Terai district of Mahottari. A mother of two and a Master's degree graduate, she has been involved in politics for past 22 years, having started her career at age of 14 in the Nepali Congress (Democratic Party). She is now associated with a Madhes-based regional party.

According to her, one of IPWA's biggest contributions is unity among women for women rights despite their different political ideologies. She feels a common platform for women from all political parties has made women's voice stronger. This has increased their self-confidence. In the past, it was very difficult for her to advocate for women rights, even within her own party. Joining IPWA gave her confidence and she says she is clearly able to present her case now, as women's issues have become a common item on the agenda for all political parties. Her association with IPWA has also enhanced her leadership and self-development skills.

Yadav thinks that, as an IPWA member, she has also played an active role in making local bodies accountable for women's issues. In the past, the village planning process was male-dominated, but now women are well represented. Allocation of the budget for women rights is taken up as a major issue.

Being a member of IPWA has also allowed her to share her knowledge. In 2010, Yadav participated in a US Agency for International Development-supported Leadership Development Program in Bangladesh. She was able to learn a lot of new things related to women rights and her confidence level went up. Once she got back from the training, she organised interaction programme for fellow IPWA members of her district.

Yadav sees barriers to women entering politics as Nepal's patriarchal society, lack of awareness, limited education and poverty. Further, Madhesi women are too dependent on their husband's income. She says she was among the first generation of women leaders from Madhes to be involved in politics. She was lucky, as her father was a politician and her husband was educated and supportive. They also had a comparatively better economic situation. But for the most part, society does not approve of women's involvement in politics, seeing women who spend most of their time in meetings and in other programmes with male members as 'spoilt'.

*'I am grateful to my husband who has done so much for me. He allows me to go for party meetings, pays my expenses and also looks after kids. All my colleagues are not as lucky as I am though.'*

Yadav still sees male domination in local-level institutions despite there being a policy explicitly on women's participation. During the village planning process, women's attendance is minimal and their issues are often ignored. In some village development committees, male politicians have even manipulated the provision for 33 percent women's representation in user committees: they put forward the names of their own wives and daughter so they can control the decision-making process.

Yadav says bringing a change in the attitude of men will be a long-term process but she is quite optimistic, as IPWA along with many other NGOs is working in the area. Educated men have also been very supportive of the women's agenda. She believes if women are strong no politicians will dare to abuse them.

*'If empowered women are getting abused in politics, imagine the plight of marginalised women.'*

Yadav opines it can be difficult to measure the real impact of IPWA but she is hopeful there will be increased participation of women in the local elections – a sign of progress for IPWA. To make IPWA more effective, she stresses the need to link it with income-generating activities, as for women economic constraints are one major obstacle to entering politics.

and their Norwegian twinning partner programme designers and implementers. The fieldwork (key informant interviews, focus group discussions, community mapping) showed small parallel interventions related to, for example, subsidised connections and credit would have made it possible for women to relate proactively to the important development intervention electricity represents.

The projects under review in Ethiopia also had more limited effects on women and girls' participation. In the case of the FGM/C prevention programme, while focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and key informant interviews all indicated a significant increase in women's participation in community dialogues and related savings and credit groups, as well as of girls in girls clubs focused on eliminating harmful traditional practices within schools and the broader community, this was limited to one project district. More specifically, active participation of women and girls in Kembatta zone was significant and visible; in Wolyta zone, it was much more limited. This was especially the case with girls' participation: clubs were found to have less

resonance in a community where adolescent girls were typically circumcised as young children rather than at puberty (as in Kembatta), when girls' agency could potentially make a decisive difference in circumcision outcomes.

In the case of the adolescent SRHR project, focus group discussions and individual interviews with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries revealed that, on account of poor age-sensitive targeting, only a limited number of adolescent girls and young women were included in income-generating projects, and that overall the projects they were involved in tended to be less sustainable than those involving older adult women. Moreover, overall coverage levels were very low relative to the programme budget.

### **3.2.3 Changes in discriminatory social norms and practices at community level**

Given the key role discriminatory gendered social norms and practices play in maintaining gender inequalities and hindering the advancement of women and girls' rights (e.g. Bichieri 2006; Jones et al. 2010; Mackie et al. 2012), assessing the extent to which projects are contributing

to a reduction in discriminatory social norms and practices is an important component of advances in WRGE. ***Again, here our case study projects reveal mixed results, with good results in agriculture in Mozambique and energy in Nepal but weak or limited findings in Ethiopia and in the energy sector project in Mozambique.***

Starting with good practice, fieldwork (key informant interviews, focus group discussions) showed that, in the agriculture sector project in Mozambique, education and women's empowerment was facilitated to change agricultural practices from only food crops to a combination of food and cash crops. Discriminatory practices reduced and women's economic independence enhanced. In the case of Nepal's energy sector programme, while it is too early to assess a reduction in discriminatory attitudes and practices, clear gender-sensitive indicators and goals have been integrated into the programme. In addition, discussions with RRC/ASTHA officers in Surkhet confirmed they had received gender tools and social mobilisation guidelines that were integral in bringing a gender and social inclusion dimension to their work. This, however, had not come

with training for the staff. Within communities, while quotas guarantee women's participation and income-generating initiatives appear to have increased their economic participation, impacts remain limited on the decision-making level, which for the most part seems to still be mostly male-dominated.

More limited findings were identified in the Ethiopian gender-based violence and SRH projects, as well as in the energy sector project in Mozambique. First, in the case of the FGM/C prevention programme, in Kembatta zone the research team found very high – albeit likely overstated by the implementing NGO – evidence of a change in attitudes and practices over the course of the evaluation period (but also stemming from an earlier phase of support by the embassy and other donors). Most powerfully, there was good evidence on the basis of secondary documentation, key informant interviews and community timelines that thousands of girls in the zone now do not undergo the often painful, risky and traumatising practice of Types 3 and 4 FGM/C, and moreover that the lives of circumcisers have been transformed as a result of awareness-raising

on the harms of the practice and access to alternative income-generating opportunities. By stark contrast, efforts to scale the project up to a neighbouring zone, Wolyta, have borne limited fruit, owing to poor programme design (including limited reflection as to which of the multi-stranded components of the approach had been key to success in Kembatta) and lack of a well-thought-through baseline and its application to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) over time.

Second, in the case UNICEF/UNFPA adolescent SRH programme, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and individual interviews with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries found limited evidence that it had contributed to significant shifts in the attitudes of parents and community members in terms of their response to adolescent SRH needs and rights. This is primarily because, at community level, the focus was on peer-to-peer education and youth dialogues rather than engaging with adults and parents on these issues.

In the case of the energy sector project in Mozambique, opportunities to contribute to changes in discriminatory gendered social norms and

practices have been missed because of a number of programme design and implementation shortcomings. A dearth of social development or gender experts on the project teams meant little thought as to the types of measures that might mitigate gendered risks from community-level changes once electrification had been achieved. One community assessment found that, while electrification had enabled the establishment of a night school, which women could also attend, lack of protective measures (e.g. adequate lighting, secure night-time transportation) had led to unintended negative consequences in the form of a spike in out-of-wedlock pregnancies and/or sexual assault. In addition, limited outreach of the project's gender component meant efforts to enhance demand for electrical connectivity by women were limited, thereby further cementing the gender divide in economic empowerment opportunities.

### **3.2.4 Changes in community awareness on women and girls' rights**

Closely linked to the indicator on reduced discriminatory social norms and practices is improved community awareness of women and



girls' rights. Overall, the findings across our projects were relatively positive, with key informant interviews, focus group discussions and community timelines pointing to improved awareness among community members of women's involvement in cash as well as food crop production (Mozambique); in the political sphere, including dialogues about constitutional reforms and how the different options under discussion can benefit or hamper women's rights (Nepal); in diverse spheres of life as a result of access to the media and a broader view of the world following rural electrification (Mozambique); and about the negative consequences of harmful traditional practices, especially the health risks of FGM/C (Ethiopia) and the importance of securing access to SRH services to reduce the vulnerability of tertiary-level girls/young women (Ethiopia). Where projects included an explicit community awareness-raising component, however – as in the two Ethiopian projects, which promoted community participation in a series of awareness-raising dialogues (in the case of the FGM/C project culminating in community-wide declarations of the abandonment of FGM/C) – individual and group interviews at community level highlighted

that insufficient attention was given to addressing the politicised nature of community gatherings and the potentially silencing effect such power dynamics can have on the uptake of key messages. Accordingly, we heard repeatedly that people participated in meetings and professed a commitment to abandoning support for FGM/C but a number of underground practices were nevertheless deployed to circumvent 'imposed' norm changes. Community members may camouflage FGM/C ceremonies within other traditional ceremonies, carry out the practice without a ceremony late at night or cross into neighbouring districts where traditional norms persist.

### **3.2.5 Changes in community leader awareness about women's and girls' rights**

In contexts where the central state is either relatively weak or perceived as distant, local leaders – whether they be part of a modern government or related to traditional or religious authority structures – often have a disproportionate influence in shaping local population's attitudes because of their immediate visibility (e.g. Corbridge *et al.* 2005). ***Here too our case study projects, where changing community leader***

***attitudes was part of project objectives, enjoyed some success.*** The exception is the energy sector project in Mozambique, which has seen inadequate outreach to traditional authorities and religious leaders, again in part because of the technocratic focus of the project design and approach. By contrast, traditional leaders have been actively involved in the rollout of agriculture projects, thereby enhancing the transformative potential on women's lives. And in the FGM/C prevention programme in Ethiopia, there has been proactive engagement with community and religious leaders through community dialogues, albeit with different levels of success in different zones. Key informant interviews at national level concurred that, while considerable progress has been made in shifting discourse among national-level religious leaders, much work still needs to be done so such changes cascade down to community-level religious leaders.

### **3.2.6 Changes in engagement of men and boys on WRGE**

While gender-related projects have historically tended to focus on women and girls, there is increasing recognition within the international de-

velopment community that, if gendered attitudes and power relations are to shift, there needs to be proactive engagement with men and boys (Baker et al., 2007). **With the exception of the Ethiopian FGM/C prevention project, which actively involved young men in community dialogues and awareness-raising on the risks of FGM/C in terms of health and marital compatibility, however, we did not find strong evidence on such engagement in our case study projects.** While the UNFPA/UNICEF project on adolescent SRH aimed to involve both young women and young men, in practice the focus was predominantly on girls. Similarly, the Mozambique energy sector project saw men largely co-opting opportunities stemming from electrification for themselves rather than supporting women's more proactive involvement. In the agriculture sector, more active engagement with men was precluded as women themselves preferred to work independently of men (in other words the project did not attempt to break down gender-unequal ways of working).

### **3.2.7 Changes in capacities of local officials on WRGE**

As discussed above on capacity-building of partners, the evaluation team is of the view that, if project results are to eventually go to scale, investing in strengthening the capacities of local officials on WRGE is vital. **Here, our case study projects revealed mixed results.** On the positive side, key informant interviews indicated that the FGM/C prevention project actively engaged with local officials to raise their awareness of the negative consequences and ways prevention measures could be integrated into different sectoral activities (especially in education, health, women's affairs and justice). Similarly, in the Mozambique agricultural project, local authorities were actively involved in planning and implementation, through both the District Administration and the District Directorate for Economic Activities. At the other end of the spectrum, there was very limited evidence of improvements in local government WRGE capacities, given a combination of weak project outreach to local officials (energy project in Mozambique; political empowerment project in Nepal); weak M&E of local officials' engagement (SRHR project in

Ethiopia); and high staff turnover (SRHR project in Ethiopia), meaning efforts to integrate gender into these sectoral initiatives suffered from what is commonly known as 'the evaporation of gender policies'.

### **3.2.8 Changes in WRGE law enforcement**

While a key indicator of systemic-level results is to do with changes in WRGE-related laws, the corollary of this indicator at project level is enforcement of WRGE-related laws. In other words, to what extent are local populations aware of WRGE-related laws and to what extent are violations thereof reported and prosecuted by local law enforcement agencies? **For half of the case study projects, this indicator was not relevant; for those where it was, the results were somewhat limited.** In the case of Ethiopia's FGM/C prevention project, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and individual interviews suggested there was some evidence of increased reporting of violations of the law banning FGM/C at local level and a more limited number of successful prosecutions. However, we also uncovered examples of unintended negative consequences: the project's efforts to encour-

age reporting to local authorities had resulted in violent backlash and the temporary suspension of the project in one zone. In less serious cases, we also found that increased efforts to encourage reporting of violations were accompanied by a growth in underground practices, ranging from camouflaging the ceremony through to shifting to a different, less invasive, sort of practice (see also discussion above). Limited results in the case of Mozambique are more related to the limited role public institutions play in promoting WRGE in the agriculture sector and the more influential role of NGOs and farmers unions. Finally, in the case of the energy sector project in Mozambique, limited results on this indicator stem from the overall limited internalisation of WRGE concerns within the sector writ large.

### **3.2.9 Changes in learning about WRGE and adaptation of lessons learnt into ongoing programming**

Finally, an important indicator of WRGE results pertains to the extent to which lessons about WRGE are learnt and applied to ongoing programming. As Norad's 2012 Evaluation Department's Annual Report highlighted, there is in

general not enough done in terms of systematising and sharing evaluation findings and expanding good interventions within ongoing programming efforts. ***Here, our case study findings identified two examples whereby such learning is being actively integrated into ongoing programming, contrasted with three others where, despite innovative programming approaches and interesting implicit lessons, too little is being done to build on these lessons in subsequent programme phases.*** Both Mozambique's agriculture sector project and Nepal's energy sector project included clear WRGE indicators, and in the case of Mozambique these were monitored and lessons were fed back in in real time so as to enhance attention to WRGE over time. By contrast, in the case of the energy sector project in Mozambique, gender mainstreaming trainings and gender focal points has not translated into the adaptation of WRGE-related lessons by central management or at the district level.

In the case of Ethiopia's FGM/C project, while the Kembata zone implementation has been pioneering – even by international standards

– in multiple respects an underinvestment in strategic M&E and learning feedback loops has meant lessons have not been systematically teased out as to what aspects of bundled interventions are contributing to results. The lack of this learning in turn directly contributed to the very limited efficacy of the programme when it was scaled up outside the original zone. Similarly, in the case of the UNFPA/UNICEF programme on adolescent SRHR, insufficiently detailed and rigorous M&E processes have meant programme reports have overlooked quite serious shortcomings in service provision and targeting of income-generating projects. Weak M&E has also meant the project has not been able to respond adequately to an evolving landscape of SRH providers on campuses. Whereas the project was at inception pioneering, six years later it has been largely relegated to the role of 'gap filler' despite a very significant budget.

**TABLE 9: PROJECT-LEVEL OUTCOME CHANGES, BY COUNTRY AND PROJECT**

Changes in:	Ethiopia		Mozambique		Nepal	
	FGM/C	SRH	Energy	Agriculture	Energy	Participation
Access to services or infrastructure	Not part of programme aims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠ Limited improvements in youth-friendly SRH services; limited attention to accessibility for disabled students; unfilled condom boxes; lack of confidentiality in SRH service provision on campus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠ Poor – in rural energy project owing to ‘gender-blindness’ in implementation with examples of negative implications for gender relations and women. Limited – in project to enhance electricity demand among women owing to limited outreach/catchment of project activities. Poor – in gender mainstreaming in gas/oil: inability to implement projects to remedy negative consequences of ongoing activities (incl. Norwegian ones).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Good – in agriculture where education/ empowerment of women has changed agricultural practices and enhanced women’s economic independence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Good – energy services have indicators and subsidies to ensure sustainable access to services for women-headed households. Many of the services provided aim at diminishing burden of women.</li> </ul>	N/A
Participation of women and girls (household/ community/polity levels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Development of multiple uncut girls clubs in schools and communities in Kembatta; very few in Wolyta.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠ Limited improvement in participation of adolescent girls/ young women in sustainable income-generating activities. Targeting has been poor – involvement of adult women outside of campus has been more successful. Overall numbers also very limited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠ Limited – in rural electrification owing to limited number of private/ business connections and lack/in-adequacy of targeted interventions for positive discrimination of women. Limited – in electricity demand among women given small scale/ non-viability of project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Good – in agriculture with enhanced ownership to land, seeds and other input-factors among women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Energy programme requires quota of women in management committees, although it is still unclear if this translates into meaningful participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Good – embassy’s support has allowed increased participation and increased knowledge to participate at both central and community level.</li> </ul>
Discriminatory social norms and practices at community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Good but overstated evidence of change in attitudes and practices in Kembatta zone attesting to transformation in lives of circumcisers and avoidance of painful, risky and traumatising practice in thousands of girls. Very limited change in Wolyta zone when programme was scaled up from Kembatta owing to poor programme design and lack of well-thought-through and application of baseline information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠ Limited evidence that the programme has brought about changes in attitudes of parents and community to better respond to adolescent SRH needs and rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠ Limited – in energy owing to lack of gender sensitivity and positive discrimination with partial exception of the women and energy project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Good – in agriculture given organisation of women in associations and parallel efforts in adult education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Good – gender-sensitive indicators and specific goals have been introduced both in the embassy’s project and in the government’s single programme system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While no concrete results were reported or observed, the type of change sought is of a long-term nature. As such, changes would not be expected in such a short period. Concrete changes may come after the elections or once a new Constitution is agreed.</li> </ul>
Community awareness about women/ girls’ rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Establishment of community discussion groups to tackle FGM twinned with savings and credit groups in multiple villages across all districts of Kembatta zone; fewer set up in Wolyta zone. Limited attention to politicised nature of community group members thus potentially hindering uptake of messages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Mixed – initially UNICEF/ UNFPA joint programme was pioneering and helped put risks of tertiary-level girls on the agenda on campuses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⚠ Limited – as mainstreaming through courses and focal points have not been adapted at the district/community level. Good ‘by default’ as electricity has brought media outlets showing women in different/equal relations with men.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Good – as evidenced by the fact that WRGE has received increasing attention over the time-span of the project. Good – as women engaged in project have ‘led by example’ and shown it is possible to combine cash and food crop production.</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Good – one of the focuses of support has been to increase awareness at both central and community/district level.</li> </ul>

Note: Green signifies significant achievement, yellow signifies mixed or limited achievement and red signifies low or lack of achievement.





	Ethiopia		Mozambique		Nepal	
Changes in:	FGM/C	SRH	Energy	Agriculture	Energy	Participation
Awareness among community/traditional/religious leaders about women/girls' rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited – increased awareness and information but not always leading to behavioural change. Community leaders support community dialogues but may not be 'practising what they preach' – much more in Wolyta than Kembatta.</li> </ul>	<p>Our fieldwork focused on the programme's activities on campuses and in university towns with a more limited sample in rural communities, so not relevant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Poor – as the strong and influential traditional authorities and religious leaders have not been involved in the energy projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good – as community/traditional leaders have been involved in the agriculture projects.</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited – increased empowerment and capacity of IPWA members increases their ability to advocate for women. The project does not directly aim to affect any of these stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Engagement with men and boys on WRGE issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Involvement of men in community dialogue groups; increased awareness of young men about risks and disadvantages of FGM/C in Kembatta – demonstrated by young men now wanting to marry 'uncut' girls. Weaker evidence of this shift in Wolyta.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The joint programme aimed to involve young men in its activities but in reality this was limited. Campus gender officers said the programme primarily involved young women; for economic support a small number of men were included.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Poor – with men largely co-opting opportunities related to rural electrification and men not being involved in the women and electrification project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited – only indirectly in agriculture as women have preferred to engage/work independently of men.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited to AEPC staff who are trained on gender and social inclusion.</li> </ul>	N/A
Capacities of local officials on WRGE issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local officials aware of FGM/C problem and working actively to address it in Kembatta and to some extent Wolyta (e.g. head of local court is actively prosecuting but recognises limits to law enforcement endeavours).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ While the programme works through local government agencies, weak monitoring, limited funding per agency and high staff turnover mean capacity-building of local government officials on SRH issues has been limited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited – as local public officials have not been aware of the gender aspects of the projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good – the projects have involved local-level officials.</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited – increased empowerment and capacity of IPWA members increases their ability to advocate for women. The project does not directly aim to affect any of these stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Enforcement of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Contribution to improved reporting to community leaders/police/justice personnel in both zones. Unintended result: violent backlash and emergence of underground practices (after dark; camouflaged in other types of ceremonies; undertaken in neighbouring districts; shift to less severe type of FGM/C).</li> </ul>	<p>This was not part of programme aims.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited in energy sector in general as the sector has not internalised policies about WRGE, and few projects have specific gender components.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited – as gender issues are primarily promoted by NGOs/farmers unions through advocacy and not by public institutions.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A

Note: Green signifies significant achievement, yellow signifies mixed or limited achievement and red signifies low or lack of achievement.

### 3.3 ORGANISATIONAL-LEVEL FINDINGS

At the organisational level of outcomes, we are interested in two key dimensions: efforts to strengthen the capacities of Norway's engagement partners at country level to work on WRGE at scale and in a sustainable manner and efforts to strengthen the internal capacities of embassy staff to deliver on WRGE results. Both of these were identified as general areas for improvement in the 2009 country-level and overall gender reviews. (Annex 9 gives more detail in summary tables of the findings from the gender reviews compared with progress we identified during our evaluation of the 2007-2013 period.) Overall, they remain key areas where more attention is required if WRGE results are to be strengthened, as we discuss in more detail below.

#### 3.3.1 Changes in engagement partners' capacities to work on WRGE

While there is a tendency among some observers to want to define results narrowly in terms of material changes – number of schools or health clinics built; number of lives saved through an immunisation programme – **the evaluation team's stance is that, in the interests of achieving**

**programme scalability and sustainability over time, strengthening partners' capacities to undertake interventions independently is vital. This is perhaps especially the case with Norwegian development cooperation's emphasis on channelling a sizeable portion of its total funding through Norwegian and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which by their nature will only ever be able to work to a limited scale.** Without simultaneously enhancing partners' capacities – especially those in UN and government agencies – to learn and apply lessons from NGO experience, the parameters of identifiable results will be very modest. Thus, here we consider the following indicators: strengthened capacities of society to work on WRGE (including related monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and learning capacities); increased legitimacy of NGOs working on WRGE; and strengthened capacities of government partners, UN agencies and public sector twinning partners to work on WRGE.

#### Changes in civil society capacities

Overall, documentary evidence and key informant interviews provided clear evidence that

**Norwegian development cooperation has played an important role in strengthening the capacities of civil society organisations (CSOs) to work on WRGE** (see also Box 4 on Zambia). In Ethiopia, ongoing funding to the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)/Save the Children programme on female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) prevention, which involves 25+ national NGOs, has been instrumental in supporting the abilities of often small-scale organisations to design and implement initiatives in diverse parts of the country. NGO partners, especially those of NCA, repeatedly mentioned the quality of the relationship and support they enjoyed within the joint programme, including the development of annual objectives and indicators. Moreover, the programme's coordinating function has meant ongoing opportunities for knowledge-sharing among NGOs through joint meetings and support to the EGALDAM network, including its regular newsletter focused on good practice programming to eliminate harmful traditional practices. Where capacity-strengthening efforts have been less strong is in terms of equipping national NGOs/CSOs with the ability to carry out rigorous M&E of their programmes and to adequately



ly integrate learning into ongoing programme evolution. Overall, this was an area where levels of technical understanding and knowhow were decidedly limited, and where, as we argue in our recommendations section, considerably more attention is required if investments are to bear fruit in terms of scalability.

In Mozambique, other donors and CSOs interviewed for this evaluation argue Norway has played an important role in terms of strengthening CSOs working on WRGE, especially those working in vanguard rights areas, including gay rights and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) in a politico-cultural climate where such issues tend to be marginalised and/or invisibilised. In addition to this long-term history of support, the embassy plans to channel increased funding to CSOs through a multi-donor funding platform, which importantly brings strong technical knowhow (next to more general management and fund management skillsets, which too often in contemporary development tend to be prioritised at the expense of technical knowledge). In terms of support to WRGE-related CSOs, Oxfam has been selected as the lead managing agency,

**BOX 4: ZAMBIA'S NGO COORDINATING COUNCIL – AN EXAMPLE OF COORDINATED CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT FOR WRGE**

The Norwegian embassy's major WRGE partner in Zambia is the NGO Coordinating Council (NGOCC), through which it disburses funds to a number of partners (who are members of the NGOCC network) working on gender in different thematic areas. NGOCC has 27 staff and 104 member organisations, and a presence in all 10 provinces of Zambia.

Across a range of thematic areas, NGOCC conducts research in liaison with members focusing on policy analysis and research, produces gender position papers and packages research outcomes in specific formats to ensure relevance to members. It also convenes regular meetings and conferences on particular thematic areas. This enables similar organisations to share expertise and issues and provide learning platforms.

The partnership with the embassy began in the late 1990s. Starting on a financial basis, it has evolved over time to one based on capacity enhancement. NGOCC convenes donor roundtable meetings at least twice annually. As a member of the Sector Advisory Group on Gender, it works to develop relationships with the public sector to bring about WRGE goals. NGOCC staff stressed that its relationship with the embassy was dynamic and based on mutual learning. Embassy gender staff share learning from its work with other partners, sectors and countries, and also pay regular visits to WRGE projects run by NGOCC members in the field.

NGOCC also provides capacity development services to a range of actors. The embassy requests NGOCC provide capacity development to partners it considers weak on gender and help broker relationships between partners and other stakeholders in the field. NGOCC offers regular capacity development on demand but concedes it lacks capacity to 'do everything'. It acknowledges it treads a fine line between capacity development and actually getting involved in implementation with respect to the weakest organisations.

NGOCC works closely with members to develop project documents. It acknowledges this is a work in progress, as it takes time to internalise results-based management and reporting principles and to monitor all members effectively. It points out that many members are community-based organisations with very low levels of literacy. Accordingly, it has worked to simplify and streamline documentation, including proposal formats, to help such members devise and then monitor their activities. Two years ago, the embassy worked with NGOCC to develop a comprehensive, standardised reporting framework to help members develop funding proposals, identify and report results on the ground, prepare quality reports, etc.



which bodes well for strengthened capacities given its renowned strengths in this area – both globally and in Mozambique specifically.

In Nepal also, the embassy's track record in supporting CSO capacities on WRGE has been strong. A review of the portfolio, later confirmed through focus group discussions, showed Norway has directly supported a variety of CSOs that encompass a wide spectrum of interests and minority groups, but also explicitly focused on strengthening the district level through capacity-building and awareness-raising in a way that promoted increased dialogue and interaction between the central and district levels. This was done by earmarking funding for the central level and all 75 district-level chapters, as well as through Norway's support to the Inter-Party Women's Alliance (IPWA) National Conference, which brought members of district-level chapters together in Kathmandu.

### **Changes in legitimacy of NGOs working on WRGE**

Here, too, *Norwegian development cooperation has played a generally positive role in con-*

*tributing to the enhanced legitimacy of NGOs working on WRGE, especially vanguard rights issues.* In Ethiopia, international and national key informants alike emphasised such support had been of particular value given the increasingly restrictive policy and programming space available to NGOs working on gender and rights-related issues during the evaluation period, culminating in the passage of the 2009 civil society registration law. In Nepal, too, Norway's financial support has helped strengthen alliances among women's groups, which many of the participants interviewed were quick to point out had led to a more cohesive voice and approach among gender equality advocates. However, in Mozambique, while support for vanguard rights issues has been significant at the central level, there were concerns among some key informants that feminist approaches and a focus on 'taboo' topics (e.g. gay rights) lacked legitimacy and uptake at the local level.

Another important dimension of Norwegian support in this area relates to the *longer-term funding (compared with other donors) of programme interventions aimed at shifting deeply entrenched gendered social norms.*

For example, Norway's support over the past decade to the FGM/C programme has been vital according to key informants in enabling NGOs/CSOs to weather the uncertainties of social norm change processes, which often bring periods of reversals or backlash. Similarly, it could be argued that Norway's longer-term support in Nepal has contributed to greater cohesiveness among civil society actors, in turn enhancing their legitimacy.

### **Changes in capacities of government partners working on WRGE**

*Efforts to strengthen the capacities of government partners working on WRGE have been more uneven, with little or no support across the case study countries provided to women's ministries* (with the important exception of Zambia – see Box 5), despite very significant capacity gaps.

Some support – of varying intensities – has been provided to sectoral ministries to enhance their abilities to work on WRGE. In Ethiopia, for instance, the Norwegian embassy supported the development of a gender action plan in the Ministry of Environment and Forest as well as a six month-

**BOX 5: INVESTING IN CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING FOR UNDER-RESOURCED WOMEN'S MINISTRIES OF WOMEN – A GOOD PRACTICE EXCEPTION FROM ZAMBIA**

In 1980, the Ministry of Gender and Child Development in Zambia was a mere division of government. The embassy claims it contributed decisively to this positive change in status by working over many years on capacity development. Norwegian support to the ministry was channelled through the UN Development Programme and came to an end in 2012.

Embassy staff report that, 'We were asking questions around how WRGE policies could be pushed, legal frameworks altered, how to get international documents like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women domesticated. All this questioning was necessary. Although we worked on capacity development, gender focal points simply could not take effective decisions and had no budgets. However, thanks at least in part to our support, the Ministry of Gender and Child Development has now launched a Gender Equality Policy. One provision is to have a gender focal point at director level with their own dedicated gender budget. We support this approach. Every district in Zambia now has a gender focal point.'

long technical assistance post to help roll out the plan. Although this is an important first step, given the fledgling nature of the work on integrating gender into the country's environment sector acknowledged by key informants, such support is very modest at best. In Mozambique, as evident from fieldwork findings and relevant evaluations, there have been some concerted efforts in the case of district representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development through direct engagement as part of the soya bean project. Efforts to support government players within the energy sector have

been less effective, especially at district and local levels, where a gender mainstreaming approach has met with limited traction. An important exception is in Nepal, where the approach supported by Norway alongside other likeminded donors to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment through the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) project was credited by both donors and governments officials interviewed as critical to the process of integration of gendered dimensions into this government structure, including the establishment of a dedicated Gender Equality and Social

Inclusion Unit and the development of a related toolkit. See Box 6.

**Changes in capacities of UN agency partners working on WRGE**

***Norway's record on capacity-strengthening vis-à-vis UN agency partners' work on WRGE has also been quite mixed in our country case studies***

with long-term engagement on the part of embassies in Ethiopia and Mozambique, more recent engagement in the case of Tanzania (see Box 7) and limited engagement in Nepal. In Ethiopia, considerable funding in several phases has been provided to a joint UN Population Fund (UNFPA)/UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) programme on adolescent SRH. UNFPA and UNICEF appreciated the quality of interaction with the Norwegian embassy at reporting junctures and during field visits. However, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and individual interviews with beneficiary and non-beneficiary adolescents pointed to comparatively weak project-level outcomes, suggesting Norway's M&E of UN partners is inadequate, especially in light of the funding volume for this programme. Senior management at the embassy defended their close links to UN agencies

## BOX 6: RURAL ELECTRIFICATION IN MOZAMBIQUE AND NEPAL – DOING IT DIFFERENT WAYS

Development cooperation in the area of clean energy has been one of Norway's major priorities for decades, with a total of NOK 8.97 billion having been spent. However, a recent evaluation argued that aid to electricity provision has had a very limited effect on poverty reduction (Riksrevisjonen 2013). Nepal and Mozambique have been two of the priority partners, in addition to East Timor, Ethiopia, Liberia, Tanzania and Uganda.

In Mozambique, electricity has reached a relatively large number of rural district centres and villages (with Norway as a major contributor), but both connections and impacts on the poor and gender equality are limited. Nepal has been more successful in reaching poor women and men, by focusing on small-scale energy production and solar panels. In 2000-2013, Mozambique received more than NOK 1 billion for energy projects, whereas Nepal received less than NOK 200 million (Riksrevisjonen 2014). The two programmes assessed in this evaluation have both been defined with reference to the same Norwegian aid policy directives, with poverty reduction among women and men being the ultimate objective.

The Cabo Delgado Rural Electrification Project has been carried out through a combination of institutional development in the Ministry of Energy and the Mozambican electricity provider and heavy Norwegian involvement in all phases of implementation. The stated development objectives are 'enhanced economic development' and

'improved quality of life', but conditions in the districts/communities – including the position of women – are not taken into consideration, and the project has missed opportunities to support gender equality and women empowerment. Gender has been 'mainstreamed' into the relevant institutions through training and gender focal points, but the only tangible women-focused projects are small, detached from the main implementing bodies and largely developed by external entities. While electricity provision in Cabo Delgado has had a positive impact on public health and education institutions, business and private connections have been few and outcomes in terms of development, poverty reduction and gender equality very limited. Poor women, who are easily excluded in male-dominated local communities, have been left in particularly vulnerable.

The National Rural and Renewable Energy Programme in Nepal is a single programme modality that focuses on technologies such as solar energy (water pumps and lights), improved cooking stoves, micro hydropower, biogas, improved water mills, etc., which directly address women's needs and barriers to economic participation. The programme is integrated into all relevant public institutions at national and subnational level and aims to improve rural living standards by using energy to increase employment and productivity. Gender equality and social inclusion was included from the start and is built into each component through concrete activities. This explicitly

involves affirmative action and positive discrimination of target groups (mainly women and minorities) through subsidies and credit facilities, plus enforced participation of women through quotas. The rural energy subsidy policy proposes specific subsidies for women-headed households and marginalised households when extending off-grid energy services. Preliminary results show the project has reached and positively affected women's lives and increased their economic participation through technical training and income generation initiatives to ensure the services are sustainable over time.

#### BOX 7: NORWAY'S SUPPORT TO UN WOMEN IN TANZANIA

Until recently, Norway was the largest donor of UN Women's Tanzania office, with a NOK 10 million partnership agreement for 2014-2015. Although this agreement was made after the end of the Gender Action Plan period, its objectives align closely and include women's leadership and political participation; women's economic empowerment; ending violence against women and girls; and gender-responsive planning and budgeting. In addition to programmatic results, this support has facilitated increased institutional capacities for results-based management and a more coherent and robust programmatic framework on women's economic empowerment (UN Women Tanzania Country Office 2014). UN Women considers Norway's un-earmarked support important, enabling the country office to allocate resources according to its strategic priorities.

Norway's flexible grant might pose challenges for identifying specific results linked to these resources, although there will be a clear contribution of Norwegian aid to supporting agency-wide results. Currently, results include identifying and building consensus on critical gender and women's rights issues for advocacy with the Tanzania Women's Parliamentary Group to feed into the Constitutional Review process, a rare opportunity to ensure the Tanzanian Constitution responds to women's needs and concerns. Some of these demands are already reflected in the Constitution's most recent draft, which is pending approval during a forthcoming referendum.

Other UN Women projects being supported by Norway include work with the judiciary and police through the Women's Aid Centre to provide legal support to survivors of violence, providing capacity-building to women aspiring to political office in the forthcoming elections and supporting a strong platform for women involved in cross-border trade.

as part of Norwegian development cooperation's ongoing commitment to act as a 'critical friend' of the UN, especially given an international development environment in which there is increasing reliance on private sector actors. However, even senior managers noted that, in the case of support to addressing capacity gaps within UN Women in

Ethiopia, investments were yet to bear fruit. See Box 8. Similarly, while the Norwegian embassy in Mozambique has provided small-scale but longer-term support to the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) then UN Women, key informants suggested these agencies remained relatively weak in country, with ongoing capacity deficits.

#### Changes in capacities of twinning partners on WRGE

Among our three in-depth country case studies, ***only in Mozambique was engagement with twinning partners on WRGE a significant part of the embassy's portfolio***. Here, efforts to strengthen the capacities of twinning partners in sectors such as energy and fisheries were poor overall. While twinning partners have considerable influence as experts sitting at central level in government ministries, and through active engagement throughout the project development cycle and (albeit to a smaller extent) at project level, their modus operandi is to prioritise a technical focus, with no real internalisation of WRGE issues either in the Mozambican partners or in the Norwegian twinning partners – see Box 9.

**BOX 8: ETHIOPIA'S UNICEF/UNFPA PROGRAMME ON ADOLESCENT SRH – MULTIPLE MISSED OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN RESULTS**

While the UNFPA/UNICEF programme in Ethiopia is contributing to an important area of need and the focus on vulnerable girls at university campuses is innovative and necessary, evidence from key informant interviews, individual interviews and focus group discussions with adolescents suggests results have been limited, owing to a combination of poor targeting and weak monitoring, evaluation and learning over time.

First, while income-generating activity support was to target adolescents/young women, in Adama and Bahir Dar we found older adult women were also receiving the funding and that the type of training provided to younger women was often narrow in scope and the seed capital too small to ensure sustainable small businesses. Second, our findings revealed a number of service provision shortcomings, including infrequently stocked condom boxes and HIV kits at youth centres, SRH services that were inaccessible to girls with mobility-related disabilities and a lack of soundproof rooms to ensure confidentiality for young people seeking SRH advice. Third, while the programme also included a component on economic support in the form of small cash and in-kind stipends for university students, targeting of students lacked transparency and coverage rates were low, infrequent and inconsistent over time.

Overall, the programme sought to reach a large number of at-risk girls and their peers and communities but had limited monitoring and follow-up, thus key informants concluded budget allocations had been fragmented and spread too thin to be able to make a meaningful difference in the lives of all but a small number of beneficiaries.

**BOX 9: RURAL ENERGY SUPPORT IN MOZAMBIQUE – UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES**

Clean energy provision is one of the most important sectors in Norwegian development aid – and Mozambique one of the main partner countries. However, the sector has not contributed to reducing poverty for women and men (Riksrevisjonen 2013). One explanation is that the main stakeholders – including Norwegian twinning partners – have simply not given the issue sufficient attention.

Macomia is a remote district with among the worst poverty and gender inequality indicators in Mozambique. The Cabo Delgado Rural Electrification Project was not gender-marked but had gender indicators in its baseline study and other key documents. The coming of electricity in 2012 had immediate effects on public space and institutions. Businesses and private homes were slower to connect, because of inadequate local connections, high expenses and corrupt practices by the local electricity company. A community mapping exercise showed most connections were in the best-off part of town, with men as clients (no sex-disaggregated project data exist).

A small project whereby women use two freezers to keep frozen fish and soft drinks to sell has not yielded much income but has demonstrated that they can be economic agents in a context where this is culturally unheard of. And electrification of schools and hospitals has also been important for women. With more attention to the local situation of women, the arrival of electricity could have contributed to women's empowerment, gender equality and poverty reduction. Conscious recruitment of women in the gridline construction phase; prioritisation of credit for women in the male-dominated District Development Fund; a quota for poor female-headed households receiving private connections at subsidised rates; and the use of energy to show films about women's rights in schools and other public places are but a few examples. Parallel small-scale interventions on alternative energy, such as solar panels and refined cooking stoves, would also have opened new possibilities for women.

Without such targeted interventions, women are bound to lose out in male-dominated places like Macomia – and poverty reduction as the ultimate goal of all Norwegian development assistance will not be achieved.

**TABLE 10: ORGANISATIONAL-LEVEL OUTCOME CHANGES, IN TERMS OF CHANGES IN PARTNERS' WRGE CAPACITIES, BY COUNTRY**

Changes in:	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nepal
Capacities of civil society to work on WRGE (including M&E and learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ongoing funding to joint NCA/Save the Children programme on FGM/C prevention, which involves 25+ national NGOs. Repeated statement of quality of relationship with NCA in terms of supporting programme design and rollout; knowledge-sharing among NGOs through meetings and support of EGALDAM network. Inadequate support on M&amp;E and learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good – with long-term funding of key NGOs and funding of 'niche'/ marginalised NGOs on SRH. Capacity increase through joint funding mechanism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Norway has directly supported a variety of CSOs that represent a wide spectrum of interests and minority groups. Focus on strengthening links between central and district level, capacity-building and awareness-raising undertaken at both levels.</li> </ul>
Legitimacy of NGOs working on WRGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Funding of NGOs working on FGM/C and harmful traditional practices increases legitimacy in restrictive CSO climate in Ethiopia following 2009 CSO registration law. Also importance of commitment to long-term funding so critical to supporting social norm change, which can be non-linear.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited – NGOs supported by Norway increased political importance at central level, but with their 'feminist' approaches and 'taboo' topics (gay rights) still having limited legitimacy/uptake at local level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increased cohesion among different women's groups through supported alliances has helped strengthen legitimacy.</li> </ul>
Capacities of government agencies to work on WRGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited support via funding for development of action plan and six months of technical support for rollout of gender action plan in Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy and Ministry of Environment and Forest. No direct support to Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs, despite significant capacity-strengthening needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good for agriculture at provincial/district level owing to direct involvement in soya bean project. Limited for energy, with 'gender mainstreaming' not really having taken root, particularly at provincial and district levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The embassy's work in the area of energy has had a significant impact on mainstreaming gender in the energy sector through AEPC.</li> </ul>
Capacities of UN agencies to work on WRGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Considerable funding to UNFPA/UNICEF for SRH programming and UNFPA/UNICEF express appreciation of quality of interaction at reporting junctures but weak project-level results suggests M&amp;E of UN partners is inadequate, especially given the funding volume. Embassy management admitted capacity gaps of UN Women – providing support in 'critical friend capacity' but couldn't point to results as of yet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited – small but long-term support to UNIFEM and UN Women with delegation of responsibilities/decision-making but with the institutions remaining weak and with mixed results.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A – embassy did not seek to affect capacity of UN partners.</li> </ul>
Capacities of public sector twinning agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A in projects reviewed in Ethiopia.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Poor – with a primarily technological focus and no real internalised WRGE issues either in the Mozambican partners or in the Norwegian twinning partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A in projects reviewed in Nepal.</li> </ul>

Note: Green signifies significant achievement, yellow signifies mixed or limited achievement and red signifies low or lack of achievement.

### **3.3.2 Efforts to strengthen internal embassy capacities to deliver on WRGE results**

The second key dimension we consider in terms of organisational-level outcomes is that concerning the internal capacities of embassies to support WRGE. Here, we are interested in three main indicators: strengthened staff technical knowhow on WRGE; the institutionalisation of more effective gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms; and the strategic use of the WGE Grant.

#### **Changes in capacity on WRGE among Norwegian embassy staff**

**Documentary evidence and key informant interviews in Oslo and at country level suggest overall investments in strengthening WRGE-related capacities of Norwegian embassy staff are low**, in part fuelled by an attitude among senior management and staff that ‘gender’ is an area Norway ‘does well’ and thus specific capacity-strengthening initiatives are not needed. However, as international staff when posted abroad do not have specific training on WRGE and WRGE skills are not a core part of advisors’ job descriptions, such an assumption is problematic. Indeed, this is borne out at embassy level: some staff

are both highly knowledgeable and motivated to promote WRGE; others have considerably weaker understandings of WRGE – especially in terms of how to practically apply these within their day-to-day sector-based work. We are aware there are concerns within Norwegian development cooperation about potential abuses of capacity-building initiatives (see discussion in Norad 2012), but, given the relatively limited number of specialist WRGE staff within Norway’s aid system and the absence of a gender focal point at embassy level with a crosscutting mandate, if Norway is to be able to effectively deliver on its Gender Action Plan then a minimum skills base is essential. Strengthening applied gender analysis skills would help both in terms of project and programme design and in being able to engage in a more detailed manner with partners’ reported results.

#### **Changes in institutionalisation of more effective gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms**

In terms of gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms, **all three embassies engaged in more detailed WRGE reporting as part of the gender pilot embassy initiative**. Embassy staff and management viewed this relatively favourably as providing an op-

portunity to reflect in more depth on strengths and weaknesses of the embassy’s efforts to promote WRGE. However, **following the end of the pilot and the disappointing dearth of follow-up initiatives, while all three embassies still adhere to a gender action plan, they have reverted to the more generic and less detailed reporting format for WRGE**. Given the very top-line nature of this reporting format, it is inadequate to assess progress on WRGE and underlying drivers, both for embassy-level staff (who are at least familiar with the specific contextual variables at play) and especially for MFA and Norad advisors (for whom the limited analysis and contextualisation of the current reporting format precludes meaningful engagement). This weakness is exacerbated by the fact that NGO and UN reports, which constitute key data points for such reporting, are often less than rigorous in their presentation of results, as we discussed earlier in the project-level findings discussion.

#### **Strategic use of the Women and Gender Equality Grant**

Whether or not to focus on targeted support for WRGE or a gender mainstreaming approach has been a central tension within WRGE programming



for several decades. Mixed views in Oslo and at embassy level about the utility of the WGE Grant reflect this debate. At country level, Ethiopia on the one hand and Mozambique and Nepal on the other represent two polar opposites in the ways they have approached the WGE Grant funding pot. In the Ethiopian case, senior management have not looked to the WGE Grant as a potential source of funds, justifying this stance on the basis that gender dimensions can be funded through regular sector budget lines, without incurring the transaction costs of applying for separate funding. This said, the evaluation team is of the view that there would appear to be a number of potentially missed opportunities within existing sector programmes that could have benefited from catalytic funding provided by the WGE Grant. For example, an agriculture sector project that includes a component to strengthen tertiary-level educational opportunities in agriculture-related disciplines is covering the subsistence costs of a limited number of female students in the interests of supporting young women's opportunities, but both the amount and the level of coverage is limited and not commensurate with need. Similarly, while, as we discussed above, the Norwegian embassy is

providing short-term technical support to the Ministry of Environment and Forest, effectively rolling out the gender action plan is likely to require more consistent and longer-term support, and could usefully be supported by the WGE Grant.

***By contrast, the embassies in Mozambique and Nepal have proactively drawn on the Women and Gender Equality Grant as a source to strategically advance WRGE in particular sectors or thematic areas.***

In the case of Mozambique, some 20 institutions implemented a total of 47 projects with funding from the WGE Grant between 2007 and 2013 (total allocation NOK 91,658,000). The project with the longest history is the core funding provided to the umbrella organisation Forum Mulher, funded by the WGE Grant since 2009. Forum Mulher has had a strong impact particularly at central political level and in the promotion of pro-women laws. In the early phase of the period under assessment, many WGE Grant projects focused on SRH (partly stemming from the interests of the first gender officer); the second gender officer directed more of the funds towards sector programmes in energy and fisheries. Currently, the emphasis seems to

be on filling 'openings' in the overall gender portfolio, including support to men's involvement in gender issues (Men for Change (HOPEM)), SRHR, including the right to a safe abortion (Pathfinder) and gay rights (Mozambique Association for Sexual Minority Rights (LAMBDA)) (see also Box 10).

In Nepal, the embassy received NOK 63.7 million from the WGE Grant between 2007 and 2013, which was used to support 16 different initiatives. Most of these were linked to existing projects, such as support to Sankalpa and the Inter-Party Women's Alliance (IPWA), or to the implementation of work on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. There have also been some independent initiatives, including the creation of documentaries and support for network structures.

Overall, the WGE Grant was used mainly to strengthen the embassy's ongoing work of promoting political participation (through key partners such as Sankalpa and IPWA) and to mainstream WRGE, including work in the justice and security sector. In the latter case, support

**TABLE 11: ORGANISATIONAL-LEVEL OUTCOME CHANGES, IN TERMS OF CHANGES IN INTERNAL EMBASSY CAPACITIES, BY COUNTRY**

Changes in:	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nepal
Capacity on WRGE among Norwegian embassy staff	❌ No achievements here – one-day training on gender mainstreaming once during evaluation period; no tailored WRGE capacity-strengthening support.	❌ Limited – good and dedicated gender and individual programme officers but institutionally WRGE capacity-building and focus remain weak.	⚡ Limited and linked to the pilot initiative. New energy national staff highly gender-sensitive, but this was not thanks to training at embassy nor was it a requirement of the terms of reference.
Institutionalisation of more effective gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms	⚡ Weak legacy effect from gender pilot embassy initiative – gender action plan persists but no detailed reporting.	⚡ Limited – after improvements during the gender pilot embassy era, various reporting mechanisms with limited accountability and space for reflection and analysis.	⚡ Weak legacy from gender pilot embassy initiative; embassy has reverted to previous systems, which have limited ability to help identify progress on gender. Action plan continues. Reporting to MFA includes area on gender.
Strategic use of WGE Grant	❌ No use of WGE Grant – view of management is that can fund gender issues through regular sector budget lines but limited coverage of gender dimensions in other projects – e.g. low level of support to small number of girls at agricultural tertiary institutions; limited development of gender-sensitive indicators in energy and governance sectors, suggests more could be done.	⚡ Good – strategic/catalytic use of gender-grant to support NGOs working on WRGE and also to support sector-based programmes (energy and agriculture).	⚡ Good – the WGE Grant was used very much in line with its intended purpose, to strategically support existing initiatives, raising the embassy's efficiency and profile.

Note: Green signifies significant achievement, yellow signifies mixed or limited achievement and red signifies low or lack of achievement.

was provided in the implementation of the National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. Key informants at the embassy highlighted how the gender grant had proved an effective tool that allowed flexibility to react to rising issues: *‘We were able to come up with money quickly and make quick decisions, it helped in the development of a quicker national action plan.’* It also provided a useful counterbalance to the post-Beijing assumption that gender mainstreaming was the most effective approach: *‘Somewhere after Beijing, with the idea of mainstreaming, there was no specific money for gender. Women-specific projects were phased*

*out, they came back with the Gender Action Plan [...] We can now do it in reality because we have money. It’s the combination of a having a plan and funding’.* It also strengthened existing initiatives through short but strategic activities.

#### **BOX 10: HOPEM – MEN FOR CHANGE IN MOZAMBIQUE**

A key data point that underscores the strongly patriarchal nature of Mozambican society is its ranking at 178 out of 187 countries on the UN Development Programme Gender Development Index. Not surprisingly, then, policies and interventions to contribute to a more gender-equal society, from national authorities as well as donors, have found limited resonance in urban shantytowns and rural villages, where gender relations continue to be stubbornly unequal in both public and private space.

The NGO HOPEM (Men for Change) was established in Maputo in 2010 on the explicit recognition that gender equality would not be possible without the active involvement of men. It also recognised the dominance of men in Mozambican society was so strong that working directly with local populations would require resources the NGO would not have. For this reason, HOPEM chose educated young men in urban areas as their main target group – arguing they would be the opinion-makers of the future.

Norway was among the first donors to support HOPEM, with a core grant that left much of the strategic and practical work to the organisation itself. Total support for 2010-2013, from the Women and Gender Equality Grant, was NOK 7 million. Activities have been concentrated around classical advocacy work, including media and demonstrations, and activities showing Mozambican men are capable of acting differently than the statistics and stereotypes indicate.

The best-known activity is Men in the Kitchen. Around 10 training courses, each engaging around 250 young men, are organised per year, combining cooking with discussions on the importance of men involving themselves in domestic chores. Similar discussion groups have been held with men in informal markets and bars, and the project has made active use of local television and radio stations. Evaluations have shown young men are positive about contributing more at home, partly in urban contexts, where it is difficult to survive on one income, as this will free up time for women to work.

Other activities include seminars for musicians and other artists reaching young people to make them conscious of the importance of their representation of men; picture exhibitions; street theatre; school visits to discuss sexual violence; and an annual march gathering around 1,000 participants, in 2013 including the minister of women and social action. Since 2013, HOPEM's National Conference on Men and Masculinity in Gender Equality has attracted around 30 CSOs, showing there is potential for expansion of its activities.

In terms of short-term tangible outcomes, HOPEM may not score high. However, it is a good example of a project that has found an important niche in the dominant focus on women in development interventions for gender rights and women empowerment – realising that gender equality has to do first and foremost with the relations between women and men and that changing attitudes among men will take time.

**TABLE 12: WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY GRANT OUTCOME CHANGES, BY COUNTRY**

Changes in:	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nepal
Discriminatory social norms and practices	❗ Besides a one-day capacity-strengthening session on gender mainstreaming, not used.	⚡ Limited – in policy/legal interventions owing to limited impact on the local level of villages and shantytowns, where men still largely rule.	⚡ All work on WRGE seeks to change existing discriminatory norms and practices, which are widely seen as the key barrier to women's political empowerment. In addition, embassy has worked to challenge discriminatory practices that affect the LGBT community as well as women in minorities. The grant was also used to address underlying cultural practices that contribute to violence against women and girls.
Access to services or infrastructure		⚡ Limited – except in SRH, with access to contraceptives and safe abortions through SRH/Pathfinder project and support to health institutions at local level.	For the most part N/A with the exception of support provided for the BDS purchase of house for activities.
Participation of women and girls		⚡ Limited – as institutions are centralised and messages are seen as too 'political' at the local level of villages and shantytowns.	N/A
Learning about WRGE impacts and adaption by programme implementers		⚡ Good – with strengthened WRGE focus also in 'non-gender' CSOs.	N/A
Community awareness on WRGE		⚡ Good in urban areas and among people with access to media, poor in most rural communities where WRGE messages do not reach.	⚡ Increased through documentaries and support provided to Sankalpa (which has 666 women activists at the sub-ward level working to increase awareness) and the work of IPWA.
Traditional/religious leader WRGE awareness		⚡ Limited – as community/traditional/religious leaders have not been specifically targeted in interventions to enhance WRGE issues (even though they reach a large number of women and men).	N/A (limited if assumed that religious leaders may have had access to the documentaries).
Engagement with men and boys on WRGE issues		⚡ Good – with the unique focus on men through the HOPEM –network, even though it is largely centralised.	⚡ Limited – engagement through its support to LGBT rights; in political empowerment IPWA has a deliberate strategy to work with male counterparts in political parties and has among other things contributed to joint political statements from all the main parties related to gender-based violence.
Capacities of local officials on WRGE issues		⚡ Limited – as most relevant NGOs do not cooperate closely with/involve local officials.	No capacity-building initiatives supported through the WGE Grant.
Enforcement of the law		⚡ Limited – as relevant laws (Family Law, Law against Domestic Violence) only partially grounded at local level.	⚡ Limited – LGBT rights work includes legal aid and advice. Some engagement of IPWA and Sankalpa members in support of specific cases linked to gender-based violence.

Note: Green signifies significant achievement, yellow signifies mixed or limited achievement and red signifies low or lack of achievement.

## 4. Conclusions

Overall, Norwegian development cooperation's efforts to promote WRGE have produced mixed results in terms of its intended effects. A number of positive and highly innovative projects and programmes in Southern partner countries have benefited from Norwegian support, and in general Norway is often seen as a pioneering donor in WRGE, especially with regard to vanguard gender rights issues, such as support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights; eliminating harmful traditional practices; and engaging with men and boys to challenge dominant masculinities. However, there is also an array of areas in which Norway's record is much more limited, and this is exacerbated by relatively weak reporting mechanisms and limited attention to rigorous monitoring, evaluation and learning.

The approach has also resulted in some significant unintended effects. The strong emphasis on WRGE in relations with development partners favours conditionalities based on universal rights at the expense of the principle of recipient responsibilities enshrined in the Paris Declaration, to which Norway also is a signatory (as in, for

example, the issue of gay rights). Similarly, an emphasis on the model of an 'engaged, critical friend' with partners (whether they be the UN or non-governmental organisations (NGOs)) at times means evaluation efforts are not as probing or rigorous as they ought to be. At country level, a strong emphasis on women in gender relations/the equality equation has in some cases had the effect of marginalising poor men or endorsing men's tendency to 'defend their rights'. In Mozambique, for example, projects arguably favour women in agricultural land allocation and energy-related job creation. In other cases, a strong focus on vanguard rights issues (such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in Ethiopia) has contributed to backlash—sometimes violent in nature – at the local level.

Here, we begin by presenting a summary of strengths and weaknesses in terms of intended results at outcome level, followed by nine overarching recommendations the evaluation team believes would enable Norwegian development cooperation to become more strategic and effective in its efforts to enhance WRGE. We also provide a summary response to the evaluation

questions posed at the outset of the evaluation in Table 13.

### 4.1 KEY STRENGTHS

In terms of core strengths, at the global level Norway has made important contributions as an advocate of WRGE internationally and in the multilateral system. There is a dedicated department on gender in Norad – though the number of advisors has gone down from five in 2013 to 4 staff currently - which embassy staff actively draw on as a resource for general advice as well as for more tailored capacity-strengthening efforts in specific sectors, such as energy. There is also a Gender Action Plan with clearly articulated pillars and objectives, which serves as umbrella guidance for work on WRGE at global and country levels.

At country level, Norway's strengths as a WRGE donor are multiple. Norway frequently plays a pioneering or innovative role in WRGE, facilitated at least in part by the fact that it is a comparatively small donor that enjoys legitimacy in the area of gender, given its positive track record on advancing WRGE domestically and its

being a strong advocate of WRGE in the international arena. This is seen in its investment in vanguard rights issues where other donors are more reluctant to work. Issues where Norway provides strategic support include LGBT rights, prevention of FGM/C and provision of free legal aid for poor women. Our findings also highlighted that Norway's willingness to think outside the box and provide support where other donors are less forthcoming is critical. Good examples include the embassy in Nepal's support of the political umbrella NGO group the Inter-Party Women's Alliance (IPWA) and the embassy in Ethiopia's support to the university-based Centre for Human Rights to provide legal aid for poor women and men in a context where work on rights issues is significantly restricted. Importantly, such investment is often longer term than the typical three-to-four-year funding cycles of other donors and is critical in terms of Norway's work in supporting shifts in gendered social norms: the global evidence base points firmly to the fact that change processes require a long-term approach, given that reversals and backlash are often part of the process and that behavioural changes require considerable time.

In terms of the partners it supports, Norwegian development cooperation provides an important source of support to non-governmental and civil society organisations (NGOs and CSOs), which is critical in a global context where funding streams for civil society are becoming more limited. This includes support for NGO/CSO networks to coordinate the work of small-scale national or subnational NGOs. Norway also actively supports the UN's work on WRGE, again in a context where other larger donors are often turning to alternative actors to deliver development goals, especially the private sector. Additionally, there is evidence from some embassies of a strong emphasis on national ownership of projects and programmes, as reflected in Norwegian development cooperation's alignment with local structures as opposed to setting up parallel institutions or processes. Norway has also invested in setting up network structures (Ethiopia's EGALDAM on eliminating harmful traditional practices; Nepal's IPWA) – an area of support from which other donors increasingly shy away as it is more challenging to demonstrate 'results' narrowly defined.

Norway has also shown a will to improve its efforts in relation to WRGE in the period under evaluation. The pilot embassy initiative led to improvements in both focus and reporting at the embassies involved, even though it has not been followed up on since its termination (see next section). Another such initiative is the still ongoing Women and Gender Equality Grant. Findings show that, when utilised well, this enables catalytic and timely support to work on dimensions of WRGE that would otherwise not be easily addressed through mainstream sector budget lines. This is particularly the case in terms of initiating action on vanguard rights issues, as mentioned above, taking advantage of arising opportunities or securing gains for ongoing projects.

Finally, as regards dissemination of results, existing data on WRGE are easily accessible for country-level constituencies through the Norad homepage and the annual result report (which will dedicate its 2015 issue to WRGE).

#### **4.2 KEY WEAKNESSES**

Our findings from the desk review, key informant interviews and project-level qualitative case studies point to a number of key weaknesses in

terms of Norwegian development cooperation's ability to deliver on results vis-à-vis advancing WRGE. At a macro level, these include Norway's relatively low ranking in terms of the proportion of gender-marked aid among donor peers and an unclear division of labour between Norad and MFA on the WRGE mandate. Moreover, the positioning of staff posts in MFA in the Section for UN Policy and the stand-alone 1325 post are relatively weak and lack the institutional clout to be able to affect more crosscutting change across the ministry. In addition, it would appear that the staff making policy have very limited say as to what is happening at country level and how policies are applied (e.g. during the pilot, a gender focal point was proposed, but there was no means to enforce this and no say in embassy-level staffing). In the case of MFA, this weakness is further evidenced by the fact that posts here are not viewed as a resource to be drawn on for support on WRGE by embassy staff, with the exception of individual desk officers, who may have a personal interest in championing WRGE.

In terms of the gender marker system, our findings pointed to highly inconsistent use of the system. While there is guidance on its application, it lacks clarity (especially concerning the definition of gender marker 0). In addition, because project managers identify for themselves their gender markers without a clear understanding of the system or adequate checks and balances to promote consistency, the way embassies apply the marker system varies considerably. Some embassies with an active portfolio of gender-responsive projects have a low level of gender markers 1 and 2; others that are less active have a higher level. Moreover, while Oslo staff said they had omitted marker 0 to ensure staff thought about gender, this has not been very effective, as embassy level staff have little awareness of this; there is considerable confusion in general about the marker system and, because there is no option to not use a marker, in effect marker 0 becomes undefined. In short, the inconsistent use of the marker hampers effective understanding and monitoring of gender-targeted and gender-mainstreamed aid investments.

At organisational level, there has also been very limited investment in capacity-building for staff on WRGE and in particular an absence of tailored sector-specific capacity-strengthening, for example in agriculture, energy or governance. While there has been training on WRGE for embassy staff, as well as for other stakeholders such as twinning partners, including through regional workshops, this has not been sufficient, and some staff are too stretched for time to attend. There appears to be an assumption that staff have the requisite WRGE knowhow and skillsets, when in reality this is highly variable. Linked to this is an overreliance on individual champions to promote WRGE, who do not always have sufficient management support given stretched capacity and resourcing. Accordingly, while some very innovative and important work is being undertaken at headquarters and embassy levels on WRGE, this appears to be more linked to the personal commitment and energy of individual staff than stemming from strategic institutionalised support.



Our evaluation also found limited detailed engagement and relatively weak monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of projects and programmes by embassy staff, resulting in weak learning feedback loops and limited monitoring of quality. While creative approaches to streamlining management transaction costs are being experimented with in different embassies (e.g. delegating management of CSO portfolios to technical experts; working through UN agencies to deliver programmes with local governments), these approaches do not always have adequate checks and balances in place. Moreover, while Norway's emphasis on working through NGOs and CSOs has its merits, there is little attention to project M&E, limiting potential learning opportunities that could then be used as the basis for advocacy with national governments and other donors to scale up funding in promising WRGE areas.

We also found a limited legacy of the gender pilot embassy initiative implemented in 2008-2012. The more detailed reporting format on WRGE results, which embassy staff viewed positively, has been discontinued. Embassy-level gender action plans, similarly seen as useful

tools, have not been proactively revised or updated since the end of the pilot. Moreover, there has been no analysis of lessons learnt or the impact of the initiative. As such, it is not possible to take advantage of this experience.

Further, our findings point to mixed use of the Women and Gender Equality Grant in terms of the extent as well as the quality of its use. There is good evidence from two of our case study embassies that the WGE Grant is being put to catalytic use and funding WRGE dimensions that would otherwise be difficult to invest in. However, there are also instances where the grant has been used to fund activities that should otherwise have been integrated into sectoral budgets, and yet others where it is not utilised at all because of concerns about management transaction costs.

Finally, despite the strong focus on results and results-based management at global level, there is no systematic use of baselines, and, moreover, these often do not inform later stages in the project development cycle. The use of end-line studies revisiting the baseline in a systematic

manner also seems to be rare – with most projects effectively closing when the final evaluation is done. Furthermore, despite stated goals in Norad's own practical guide to results management (Norad 2008) of including quantitative and qualitative data, there is an overreliance on the former – making it difficult to capture central aspects of women empowerment such as 'rights' and 'equality' that have to do primarily with social relations with men. Reporting of results on WRGE also tends to focus on central Norwegian and partner institutions, with more limited dissemination to other stakeholders – including the ultimate target group of poor women and men themselves.

**TABLE 13: SUMMARY FINDINGS IN TERMS OF THE CORE EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

Evaluation criterion	Evaluation questions	Summary findings
Effectiveness	<p>To what degree has Norwegian support to WRGE led to the intended results? This will include results at three broad levels:</p> <p>1) contributions to more systemic changes (e.g. laws, regulations, funding, discourse, gendered social norms).</p> <p>2) project level results;</p> <p>3) organisational change.</p> <p>To what degree has Norwegian support to WRGE led to unintended consequences, positive or negative?</p> <p>Contributing factors for the results achievement or the lack thereof will be discussed</p>	<p>Our findings suggest the following intended results:</p> <p><b>Systemic level:</b>                      Norwegian development cooperation through its partnership with civil society organisations has contributed to a number of positive policy and legal changes aimed at advancing WRGE. By contrast, the inclusion of WRGE in sector-based development policies has been relatively weak.</p> <p>Shifts in funding allocated to WRGE in the three in-depth country cases have been limited, in contexts where the ministries mandated with promoting WRGE are woefully under-funded compared with other sector ministries.</p> <p>The Norwegian embassies in our three country case studies have contributed positively to discursive shifts on WRGE in a number of areas. However, more limited inroads have been made into shifting discourses within sector development policy spaces.</p> <p>The inclusion of gender issues within national dialogue platforms has been limited in Ethiopia and Mozambique but relatively more proactive in the case of Nepal.</p> <p>Norway has contributed in a modest way to strengthening the WRGE evidence base in the case study countries.</p> <p>Norway has been a very important player in the promotion of WRGE support by multilateral agencies, with significant levels of funding and active advocacy in multilateral fora. For example, Norway was instrumental for the creation of UN Women and is the second largest donor of core funds for this agency.</p>

→



Evaluation criterion	Evaluation questions	Summary findings
		<p><b>Project level:</b> Overall improvements in gendered access to services or infrastructure were limited among our case study projects</p> <p>The projects we assessed ranged from demonstrating positive contributions in terms of promoting women and girls' participation in the household and community through to very limited progress.</p> <p>The projects reveal mixed results in terms of reducing discriminatory norms and practices, with good results in agriculture in Mozambique and energy in Nepal but weak or limited findings in Ethiopia and in the energy sector project in Mozambique.</p> <p>Overall, the findings in terms of improved community awareness of WRGE across our projects were relatively positive, with evidence pointing to improved awareness among community members: about women's involvement in cash as well as food crop production (Mozambique); in the political sphere, including dialogues about the constitutional reforms and how the different options under discussion can benefit or hamper women's rights (Nepal); in diverse spheres of life as a result of access to the media and a broader view of the world following rural electrification (Mozambique); and about the negative consequences of harmful traditional practices, especially the health risks of FGM/C(Ethiopia) and the importance of securing access to SRH services to reduce the vulnerability of tertiary level girls/young women (Ethiopia). In terms of community leader awareness about WRGE, where changing community leader attitudes was part of project objectives, our case study projects enjoyed some success, with the exception of the energy sector project in Mozambique, which saw inadequate outreach to traditional authorities and religious leaders, again in part because of the technocratic focus of the project design and approach.</p> <p>In terms of engaging with men and boys, with the exception of the Ethiopian FGM/C prevention project, which actively involved young men in community dialogues and awareness-raising, we did not find strong evidence on such engagement in our case study projects.</p> <p>In terms of improving capacities of local officials on WRGE, our case study projects revealed mixed results.</p> <p>In terms of WRGE law enforcement, for half of the case study projects, this indicator was not relevant, but amongst those where it was, the results were somewhat limited.</p> <p>In terms of improved learning about WRGE and integration into programming, our case study findings identified two examples whereby such learning is being actively integrated into ongoing programming contrasted with three others where, despite innovative programming approaches and interesting implicit lessons, too little is being done to build on these lessons in subsequent programme phases.</p>



→

Evaluation criterion	Evaluation questions	Summary findings
		<p><b>Organisational level:</b></p> <p>Norwegian development cooperation has played an important role in strengthening the capacities of civil society agencies to work on WRGE in all three case study countries, as well as in contributing to the enhanced legitimacy of NGOs working on WRGE, especially vanguard rights issues. This supportive role has been reinforced through longer-term funding (compared with other donors) of programme interventions aimed at shifting deeply entrenched gendered social norms.</p> <p>Efforts to strengthen the capacities of government partners working on WRGE have been more uneven, with little or no support across the case study countries provided to ministries of women.</p> <p>Norway's record in terms of capacity-strengthening vis-à-vis UN agency partners' work on WRGE has also been quite mixed in our country case studies, with long-term engagement with UN agencies on the part of embassies in Ethiopia and Mozambique and limited involvement in Nepal.</p> <p>Among our three in-depth country case studies, only in Mozambique was engagement with twinning partners on WRGE a significant part of the embassy's portfolio, and here efforts to strengthen the capacities of twinning partners in sectors such as energy and fisheries were poor overall.</p> <p>Investments in strengthening WRGE-related capacities of Norwegian embassy staff were low, in part fuelled by an attitude among senior management and staff that 'gender' is an area Norway 'does well' and thus specific capacity strengthening initiatives are not needed.</p> <p>In terms of gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms, as part of the gender pilot initiative all three embassies engaged in more detailed WRGE reporting, and this was viewed relatively favourably by embassy staff and management as providing an opportunity to reflect in more depth about strengths and weaknesses of the embassy's efforts to promote WRGE. However, following the end of the pilot and the disappointing dearth of follow-up initiatives, while all three embassies still adhere to a gender action plan developed during the pilot phase, they have reverted to the more generic and less detailed reporting format for WRGE.</p>

→

→

Evaluation criterion	Evaluation questions	Summary findings
		<p><b>Unintended results:</b> Norwegian development cooperation's approach has resulted in some significant unintended effects.</p> <p>Its strong emphasis on WRGE in relations with development partners favours conditionalities based on universal rights at the expense of the principle of recipient responsibilities enshrined in the Paris Declaration to which Norway also is a signatory (as in, e.g., the issue of gay rights).</p> <p>Similarly, an emphasis on the model of an 'engaged, critical friend' with partners (whether they be the UN or non-governmental organisations) at times means evaluation efforts are not as probing or rigorous as they ought to be.</p> <p>At the country level, a strong emphasis on women in gender relations/the equality equation has also in some cases had the effect of marginalising poor men or endorsing men's tendency to 'defend their rights'. For instance, in Mozambique, projects favour women in agricultural land allocation and energy-related job creation. In other cases, a strong focus on vanguard rights issues (such as in the case of female genital mutilation/cutting in Ethiopia) has contributed to violent backlash at the local level.</p> <p>In terms of partnering with government ministries, avoidance of partnerships with ministries of women due to capacity gaps has inadvertently contributed to exacerbating the marginalisation of such ministries. However, the reverse is that partnerships with sectoral ministries where gender considerations are prioritised have the potential to contribute to significant longer-term impacts. For example, the Nepal RNE's work with AEPC is resulting in structural changes such as the addition of a GESI Unit and the development of various policies and tools.</p> <p>Finally, in terms of unintended impacts we also saw that women's increased involvement in projects has simultaneously meant an additional workload for them, as their participation in for instance politics and in the energy sector in Nepal comes in addition to taking care of traditional household chores.</p>

→



Evaluation criterion	Evaluation questions	Summary findings
Relevance	<p>To what degree is Norwegian support to WRGE relevant in view of national priorities, needs and possibilities?</p> <p>To what degree is Norwegian support to WRGE in line with the strategic priorities outlined in the Gender Action Plan?</p> <p>To what degree has funding through the Women and Gender Equality Grant been used in accordance with its intentions?</p>	<p>Overall, Norway's support is well aligned with national government priorities in the case study countries. Where it is championing vanguard rights issues it has done so through local NGOs.</p> <p>Norwegian support is in line with the strategic priorities outlined in the Gender Action Plan, although, given that these are quite broad, it would be difficult to envisage a compelling counterfactual.</p> <p>Funding through the Women and Gender Equality Grant has in two of the three case study countries been largely used in accordance with its intentions, funding catalytic interventions in particular sectors or thematic areas. By contrast, it has been virtually unused in Ethiopia.</p> <p>Funding through the WGE Grant at the global level has also been used according to its intentions, to support the strategic priorities in the Action Plan and to promote some innovative and potentially catalytic projects in sectors where Norway has promoted mainstreaming, such as energy.</p>
Sustainability	<p>To what degree has Norwegian support influenced, positively or negatively, national processes to improve WRGE, including influencing national ownership of the issues or the capacity of national institutions and implementing partners?</p> <p>To what extent has Norwegian support contributed to the sustainability of project/programme objectives?</p>	<p>Norwegian support has played a limited role in positively influencing national processes to improve WRGE. This is reflected in Norway's low profile role in donor/government/non-governmental organisation working groups on gender; its very limited role in supporting ministries of women; and its mixed role in supporting gender mainstreaming within other ministries.</p> <p>In terms of programme sustainability, Norwegian support has been innovative, given its long-term focus on programmes aimed at shifting entrenched gender norms. This allows time for non-linear change processes to take their course and for programmes to be adapted accordingly (as in the case of support to eradicate harmful traditional practices in Ethiopia).</p>

## 5. Recommendations to strengthen results

Our overarching recommendation is that Norwegian development cooperation aim towards a more strategic use of its limited existing resources for WRGE. To this end, we have identified nine specific recommendations we believe would support this effort. We are sympathetic to the fact that managers and advisors have large portfolios and multiple demands in terms of the results they are asked to deliver, but believe the evidence points to multiple areas in which a more strategic approach could do much to overcome the bottlenecks identified above in terms of delivering on WRGE results. Additional resourcing would of course be desirable, especially in light of the relatively low levels of funding to gender-marked aid by Norway.

Even without this there is considerable room for improvement. Importantly, we do not think it is possible to make recommendations that could risk being construed as ‘quick fixes’ at project level. Instead, our recommendations focus on ‘structural’ or ‘process’-oriented issues, which the evaluation team believe are essential: if reporting systems are not strengthened and

applied consistently there is simply no way for Norwegian development cooperation staff and their stakeholders to know what has or has not been achieved and to promote stronger results. The nine specific recommendations identified to strengthen Norway’s work on WRGE are discussed in order of feasibility in the short to medium terms and are as follows:

**1. Continue to focus on areas where Norway has a competitive advantage and can play a catalytic role.** This may be in areas other larger donors have difficulty accessing, such as civil society (including traditional leaders and religious institutions) longer-term social norm change processes, or in key strategic sectors such as energy. Given its relatively small size but high reputation, its resources would be more effective when used to leverage larger donors.

**2. Harness learning from the gender pilot embassy initiative.** The team concludes there has been no post-pilot formal assessment of the impact, benefits and lessons learnt of the exercise and views this as a missed opportunity. For Norway to fully benefit from this investment,

it is critical to revisit the lessons and to build on them where appropriate, as well as to scale up their application to other embassies. Positive contributions of the pilot observed in the process of this exercise included the development of country-specific gender action plans, more extended reporting formats on WRGE and the deployment of a specific gender focal point at embassy level with a crosscutting mandate (as opposed to simply managing a portfolio of projects that include a focus on WRGE). Our findings suggest that, with such mechanisms in place, there is reduced risk of gender ‘evaporation’ in projects and programmes not specifically focused on WRGE. Moreover, learning from other evaluations on gender mainstreaming in donor agencies (e.g. Jenson 2006) indicates gender focal point posts need to have sufficient status and coordinating powers in order to play a cross-embassy coordinating and monitoring function of embassy performance vis-à-vis WRGE. Should resourcing for a specific gender focal point not be forthcoming, we would strongly recommend greater investment in regular and tailored capacity-strengthening across the board for all staff (Recommendation 5).



**3. Ensure greater consistency in use of the gender marker system.** While ensuring greater consistency in the use of the gender marker system will not lead to better results on the ground, it is a prerequisite for Norway to understand what it is achieving. In order to address the highly variable application of the gender marker system across embassies, the existing guidance and related training component of the compulsory grants management capacity-building needs to provide more concrete definitions and examples of each marker, especially in the case of gender marker 0. More specifically, clarity must be provided as to whether gender marker 0 should be assigned when managers deem gender considerations not relevant to the project/programme in question or when gender will be mainstreamed within the project. The difference is significant, and an additional rank may need to be added to address this ambiguity. We would also recommend that the current system, whereby project/programme managers assign the marker themselves, contain checks and balances. One possible option would be for senior management in each embassy to screen a sub-sample of

projects/programmes every year, with gender advisors in Oslo in turn screening a sub-sample of these. Another, more robust, option would be to mandate that all projects be screened for gender-related implications as part of the funding sign off process. In Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, for instance, all projects are screened independently for gender-related content and, importantly, the onus is on project managers to justify why gender considerations are not relevant. Where managers are unsure about how to make such assessments, technical advice is available from gender advisors – for example to help them think through how an infrastructure project or an energy sector programme might have a gendered impact. Norway could consider the adoption of such a system, but it is likely to be a longer-term endeavour given the staffing and resources required.

**4. Expand strategic use of the Women and Gender Equality Grant.** Our findings indicate that, when used well, the WGE Grant can play a catalytic role in supporting issues and organisations that would struggle to get funding

through sectoral budget lines, can accelerate ongoing processes and can increase the focus on gender. As such, we conclude it is an effective tool to promote results on WRGE and would recommend it be scaled up. To address variable levels of knowledge about the grant at embassy level, we would recommend that guidance on its purpose be widely distributed, including to non-gender specialists, as a mechanism to encourage greater engagement with WRGE in other sectors. Examples of good practice of its usage need to be documented (including those included in this evaluation report) and disseminated. Increased support could also be used to incentivise a more proactive role on the part of Norway in country-level government–donor–NGO gender working groups.

We would further recommend that the WGE Grant budget be increased and a specific budget line be devoted to funding support for strengthening monitoring, evaluation and learning skills – either of partner organisations or to access external experts. This would help address our general conclusion about the weakness of monitoring, evaluation and learning feedback loops

within Norway's WRGE programming more generally. See also Recommendations 7 and 8.

**5. Invest in more in-depth and tailored capacity-strengthening of staff.** Our findings highlight that it is critical to move beyond the assumption that Norway 'does gender' well and that everyone has the tools by virtue of being part of the Norwegian civil service. More specifically, in order to address the limited institutionalisation of WRGE and the overreliance on the commitments of individual staff, it is critical to increase gender-responsive programming training during staff inductions (both when joining MFA and when being posted to embassies), as well as to provide tailored gender mainstreaming training for sector specialists – especially in 'non-traditional' strategic sectors such as energy, agriculture or the private sector. We would recommend that training be provided at the design stage of new projects/programmes so staff can immediately see the practical relevance of the skills being taught. We also recommend that MFA provide an earmarked funding line to embassies on an annual basis in order to ensure delivery of this. It is critical that such training

be provided to international as well as national staff. Similarly, we would recommend that staff undergo such training every two years so as to be able to benefit from evolving learning and good practice examples of integrating gender in sectoral projects across diverse contexts. Because of the level of specialisation required and the volume of need, while Norad gender advisors may be able to fulfil some of the required capacity-strengthening, it is likely that increased external recruitment will also be necessary in order to deliver satisfactorily.

To ensure delivery on WRGE results is not seen as the sole domain of gender specialists within Norwegian development cooperation, specific responsibilities for delivery on WRGE should be written into all job descriptions and job performance assessments, including those of senior managers at embassy level.

Finally, we also recommend that all project/programme managers be provided with mandatory monitoring, evaluation and learning training so they can better support the design and delivery of rigorous and context-sensitive impact eval-

uations.<sup>5</sup> Project/programme managers do not need to know how to undertake such evaluations themselves, but, if Norwegian development cooperation is to be able to demonstrate strong results with regard to WRGE, they need to become more savvy consumers and defenders of monitoring, evaluation and learning reports from their partners. Organisations such as 3IE and the Better Evaluation Network, which regularly provide such training, could be good suppliers of such capacity-strengthening services.

**6. Develop a clearer division of labour between Norad and MFA for the delivery of WRGE results.** To provide greater clarity about the roles and functions of staff with a WRGE-related mandate in Norad and MFA and their expected synergies, a clear staffing strategy and organogram would be advisable. Currently, MFA's focus on WRGE is oriented primarily towards the UN and other multilateral agencies through board representation and participation in international fora and international reporting (e.g. to

---

<sup>5</sup> Here we are defining impact evaluations broadly rather than using the more narrow meaning of randomised control trials.

the Commission on the Status of Women), including vis-à-vis UN Security Council Resolution 1325, rather than providing either a support or a screening role on WRGE initiatives at embassy level. To address this, we would recommend a specific unit be established, possibly along the lines of the gender helpdesks found in the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID), to field requests for support from embassies either to specialised advisors in Norad or to external experts, as well as to provide more detailed annual checks of results reporting from embassy level. (See Recommendations 7 and 8 on the need for improved reporting to facilitate such a role.)

**7. Invest in more rigorous monitoring, evaluation and learning competencies in-house and among partners.** To strengthen results monitoring and reporting as well as learning on WRGE, a number of sequenced and complementary steps need to be undertaken.

First, there is a need to develop an explicit theory of change to articulate the change pathways

assumed to underpin the Gender Action Plan. The evaluation team developed their own based on their reading of the Gender Action Plan but it is critical that the theory of change adopted be owned by Norwegian development cooperation agencies and regularly updated.

Second, reporting procedures on WRGE results need to be streamlined in line with the theory of change, and clear points for monitoring, evaluation, learning and follow-up identified. More specifically, the level of detail and contextualisation of reporting by embassies to MFA in Oslo needs to go beyond the current top-line tick-box style format and instead be sufficient so that advisors can engage in a meaningful way with reported findings. Sharing of relevant experiences between embassies or within sectors could be encouraged.

Third, MFA and Norad need to tackle the currently cumbersome database and invest in a more user-friendly knowledge management system in order to address the limited institutional memory on WRGE initiatives, lessons learnt and good practices at Oslo and embassy

levels. At country level, it would be advisable if embassy websites were used more proactively and regularly to report on good WRGE practices, and incentives provided to encourage sharing of results and learning from projects in accessible formats to stakeholders at district and community levels.

Fourth, as mentioned in Recommendation 5, there is a need to invest in skilling up in-house staff, including national staff, who tend to be stronger repositories of embassy institutional memory given potentially their longer tenures than those of international staff. In this way, they will be better able to provide or source technical support for the delivery of more rigorous impact evaluations of WRGE project/programme results.

Finally, this should be complemented by mechanisms whereby civil society and UN partners are incentivised to invest in high quality monitoring, evaluation and learning, including carrying out and following up on thorough baseline assessments. Mixed methods evaluation approaches combining both quantitative and qualitative or participatory methodologies should be encour-

**BOX 11: THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX – DEVELOPING GENDER-RESPONSIVE INDICATORS FOR NON-TRADITIONAL SECTORS**

Possible quantitative gender indicators for energy interventions include proportion of female-headed households with private connections (usually among the poorest); proportion of women heading connected businesses; level of electrification in public spaces frequented by women, such as informal markets; and changes in women's use of educational and health services with electricity.

In agriculture, key quantitative gender indicators include changes in the frequency of contacts with agricultural administrators and extension officers; proportion of women owning/controlling land; level of animal traction/mechanisation among female farmers; and relative importance of food crops and cash crops for female farmers, indicating degree of economic independence. All will require baselines with sex-disaggregated data. To complement such data, qualitative information on changes in social relations between men and women, changes in the total workload of women and changes in the extent to which women organise themselves in associations, etc., will be important.

aged, given the complexity of assessing change in terms of, for example, gender power inequalities, social norms, empowerment, agency and identity (see, for example, Box 11). As part of this general strengthening effort, it will also be important to develop more nuanced indicators to capture WRGE changes, including discursive changes, improvements in networking and partner capacities and social norm change.

**8. Refine the definition of results for interventions related to WRGE.** This evaluation has been built on a combination of (1) a broad approach focusing on the use/prevalence of gender markers in Norwegian support to WRGE and (2) deeper analysis of a limited number of carefully selected projects in three case countries. The latter have been assessed on the basis of a political economy and an anthropological approach, respectively, focusing on change at three levels:

1. Systemic-level change – contributions to changes in laws/regulations, funding levels, discourse, issue legitimacy and national-level dialogue process content;
2. Project-level change – changes in the position/empowerment of women and people's attitudes and behaviours towards gender equality;
3. Organisational-level change – contributions to changes among partners – government and non-government organisations, private enterprises and twinning partners.

Reporting on the results of Norwegian support to WRGE has, to date, however, tended to focus on outputs/outcomes at the field/institutional levels, primarily using quantitative data. We recommend that results be instead reported on the basis of matrixes covering all three levels mentioned, using quantitative as well as qualitative data, so as to better capture the complexity of progress on WRGE and the range of indicators included in our theory of change.

**9. Capitalise on Norway's core strengths vis-à-vis WRGE policy and programming and think BIG...** The first eight recommendations all focused on undertaking existing activities in a more strategic and coordinated manner. This recommendation calls for more of existing resources to be invested in gender-marked aid so Norway's budget allocations are better aligned with its stated commitment to promote WRGE and more in keeping with top-performing donors. In-house, given the need for stronger results reporting emphasised above, cuts in gender specialist staff posts in Norad and MFA need to be addressed and the relative positioning of those posts reassessed so they can play a more influential and crosscutting role in Norwegian development cooperation. Externally, greater focus could be placed on ensuring the inclusion of gender within mainstream sectors (e.g. private sector development or education) (see also Box 12). Moreover, Norway could consider leveraging key pillars of Norway's own success in terms of advancing WRGE, ranging from positive discrimination for employment of women in public institutions to accessible and affordable provision of child care to facilitate women's opportunities for economic

**BOX 12: THINKING BIG**

The Norwegian projects assessed in this evaluation are either sector related initiatives that seek to mainstream and accommodate issues of women's rights and gender equality (WRGE) into what are primarily sector-based endeavours or projects with a primary focus on WRGE that tend to be smaller and linked to 'women' issues like sexual and reproductive health rights. An alternative approach is to think big and combine a focus on economic empowerment and poverty reduction (as the ultimate goal of all Norwegian development aid) with a primary focus on women. DFID's planned LIGADA-project in Mozambique is based on an explicit recognition that mainstreaming gender has not delivered good results, as well as the importance of women for urban development and poverty reduction.

The project will have four lines of operation: The innovative component is centred on identifying and nurturing local capacity to deliver projects/products which will increase economic empowerment among low income young women. The broker component will facilitate relationships and fund activities between private sector and other stakeholders, focused on incentives to recruit and retain young women in work. The learn component aims to establish baselines, design quantitative and qualitative research to improve the understanding of the economic situation of urban women and girls, and pathways to decent work. And the brand component involves the development of an urban 'brand platform' on women, girls and work – focussing on social norms and behaviour change, work in relation to risky behaviours, gender-based violence and women's time poverty. The project will be implemented 2015-2020, and has a total budget of approximately 150 million NOK (DFID 2015).

empowerment. To date, Norway has not been a significant player within social protection debates. However, it has much to offer here, given its own experience of developing and delivering a vanguard social welfare system (including special support to single mothers, conditional cash transfers for people in difficult situations, paid leave of absence for mothers and fathers after birth) that is the envy of WRGE advocates globally.

# Annexes

- ANNEX 1** – Terms of Reference
- ANNEX 2** – List of documents
- ANNEX 3** – Interviews and data collection
- ANNEX 4** – Country case study selection
- ANNEX 5** – Data collection instruments
- ANNEX 6** – Maps of field sites
- ANNEX 7** – Additional data
- ANNEX 8** – Project summaries
- ANNEX 9** – Comparison of 2009 Gender Review with 2014 findings
- ANNEX 10** – Zambia desk study report
- ANNEX 11** – Ethiopia case study report
- ANNEX 12** – Mozambique case study report
- ANNEX 13** – Nepal case study report

Annex 1-10 and the case country studies for Ethiopia, Mozambique and Nepal can be found as separate reports at our websites. [www.norad.no/evaluation](http://www.norad.no/evaluation)

# List of tables/figures/boxes

## LIST OF TABLES

- TABLE 1:** Evaluation questions
- TABLE 2:** Breakdown of interviews by site
- TABLE 3:** ODA to health and social services (NOK '000s)
- TABLE 4:** Number of projects, 2007-2013
- TABLE 5:** Volume of funding by target area (NOK '000s)
- TABLE 6:** Trend in volumes of aid to main multilateral partners (NOK '000s)
- TABLE 7:** Key gender indicators in focal countries
- TABLE 8:** Systemic-level outcome changes, by country
- TABLE 9:** Project-level outcome changes, by country and project
- TABLE 10:** Organisational-level outcome changes, in terms of changes in partners' WRGE capacities, by country
- TABLE 11:** Organisational-level outcome changes, in terms of changes in internal embassy capacities, by country
- TABLE 12:** Women and Gender Equality Grant outcome changes, by country
- TABLE 13:** Summary findings in terms of the core evaluation questions

## LIST OF FIGURES

- FIGURE 1:** Theory of change
- FIGURE 2:** Donors with the largest volumes of gender-marked aid (US\$ millions)
- FIGURE 3:** Donors with the largest share of gender-marked aid (%)
- FIGURE 4:** Gendered aid as share of total aid, top 10 bilateral donors (%)
- FIGURE 5:** Total gender-marked bilateral and multi-bilateral ODA (NOK '000s)
- FIGURE 6:** Total gendered aid by target area, 2007-2013 (NOK '000s)
- FIGURE 7:** Share of gender-marked aid by agreement partner, 2007-2013 (%)
- FIGURE 8:** Share of gender-marked bilateral and multi-bilateral aid
- FIGURE 9:** Trends in resources from budget chapter 168.70 per target area (NOK '000s)
- FIGURE 10:** Budget chapter 168.70 by implementation partner (%)
- FIGURE 11:** Norwegian ODA, by target area, 2007-2013

## LIST OF BOXES

- BOX 1:** Engagement with religious leaders to tackle deeply rooted harmful traditional practices in Ethiopia
- BOX 2:** Magar Balami Magar, women entrepreneur, Surkhet, Nepal
- BOX 3:** The empowerment dividend of Nepal's IPWA
- BOX 4:** Zambia's NGO Coordinating Council – an example of coordinated civil society support for WRGE
- BOX 5:** Investing in capacity-strengthening for under-resourced women's ministries of women – a good practice exception from Zambia
- BOX 6:** Rural electrification in Mozambique and Nepal – doing it different ways
- BOX 7:** Norway's support to UN Women in Tanzania
- BOX 8:** Ethiopia's UNICEF/UNFPA programme on adolescent SRH – multiple missed opportunities to strengthen results
- BOX 9:** Rural energy support in Mozambique – unintended consequences
- BOX 10:** HOPEM – Men for Change in Mozambique
- BOX 11:** Thinking outside the box – developing gender-responsive indicators for non-traditional sectors
- BOX 12:** Thinking big



## Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>AEPC</b>	Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (Nepal)	<b>IPWA</b>	Inter-Party Women's Alliance	<b>PROMAC</b>	Climate-Smart Agriculture in Mozambique
<b>ASTHA</b>	Association for Social Transformation and Humanitarian Assistance (Nepal)	<b>LAMBDA</b>	Mozambique Association for Sexual Minority Rights	<b>RRC</b>	Regional Resource Centre
<b>AGIR</b>	Programa de Ações para uma Governança Inclusiva e Responsável (Mozambique)	<b>LGBT</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender	<b>Sida</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>CMI</b>	Chr. Michelsen Institute	<b>LIRE</b>	Section for Rights and Gender Equality	<b>SIPU</b>	Swedish Institute for Public Administration
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation	<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation	<b>SRH</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)	<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal	<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (UK)	<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)	<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>EDM</b>	Mozambique Electrical Utility	<b>MHP</b>	Micro-Hydro Power (Nepal)	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Fund
<b>FGM/C</b>	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting	<b>NCA</b>	Norwegian Church Aid	<b>UNFPA</b>	UN Population Fund
<b>GBS</b>	General Budget Support	<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation	<b>UNGEI</b>	United Nations Girls Education Initiative
<b>GCHMDG</b>	Global Campaign for the Health Millennium Development Goals	<b>NGOCC</b>	NGO Coordinating Council (Zambia)	<b>UNICEF</b>	UN Children's Fund
<b>GoN</b>	Government of Nepal	<b>NIBR</b>	Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research	<b>UNIFEM</b>	UN Development Fund for Women
<b>EGALDAM</b>	Ye Ethiopia Goji Limadawi Dirgitoch Aswegaj Mahiber	<b>Norad</b>	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation	<b>WRGE</b>	Women's Rights and Gender Equality
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus	<b>NRREP</b>	National Rural and Renewable Energy Programme (Nepal)	<b>WGE Grant</b>	Budget chapter 168.70 Women and gender equality, or Women and Gender Equality Grant
<b>HOPEM</b>	Men for Change (Mozambique)	<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance		
<b>HTP</b>	Harmful Traditional Practices	<b>ODI</b>	Overseas Development Institute		
		<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development		