

**Evaluation of the Integration of Gender  
Equality into Portuguese Development  
Cooperation  
(2011-2015)**

(EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

April 2018

### 1. Purpose of evaluation

As stated in the ToRs this evaluation focus on the integration of gender mainstreaming in Portuguese Development Cooperation (PDC) interventions (programs, projects and actions) between 2011 and 2015 (5 years). The evaluation purpose is: (i) Describe and analyze how gender equality has been mainstreamed, or not, in PDC interventions; (ii) Identify possible good practices and lessons learned; and (iii) Make recommendations for the future on gender equality in PDC.

The main beneficiaries of this evaluation are the several development actors, including political decision-makers, involved in the interventions of PDC, both public and private, civil society, among others, and developing partner countries.

### 2. Approach and methodology

The evaluation occurred between April and December 2017 with the collaboration of the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG). The evaluation included summative and formative elements, i.e., made an analysis of the performance and degree of success/failure as well as identified the respective reasons. It followed the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact/effects). To this end, it combined documentary analysis with semi-structured interviews and focus groups, as well as direct observation. The evaluation focuses on the interventions reported as Official Development Assistance (ODA), funded by the Portuguese government during those 5 years, in its main partner countries (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor-Leste), including bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

A sample of projects was drawn up on the basis of all interventions for the countries concerned during the period considered, representing 30% of ODA. It was carried out a field visit to Guinea-Bissau.

### 3. Main Findings

The commitments made at the international level on gender equality/equity have not been translated into priorities of the PDC practice. There is a gap between rhetoric and concrete actions. The Portuguese Cooperation Strategy for Gender Equality, adopted in 2011, was not translated into a strengthened approach to gender equality. The financial crises and the public administration restructuring (including the merger of Portuguese development agency and the departure of several technical cooperation experts) had a negative effect. Portugal is one of the group countries' who has given least attention to gender issues in development cooperation, both in specific projects and in the mainstreaming of the issue. Many of the problems/constraints and limitations identified in this evaluation are common to other donors. In general terms:

- Despite the political commitment, translated into the Strategy adoption and the inclusion of gender equality in the political and policy documents (Strategic Vision and Strategic Concept), there is no systematic incorporation of gender issues at the macro level;
- For the Portuguese development actors, gender issues are not an organizational priority;
- There are no full-time Human Resources (HR) devoted to gender equality either in the programming of cooperation with partners or in the design of development interventions;
- There is no adequate HR training in any of the PDC institutions and/or organizations;
- There is no specific budget for gender issues and cooperation budgets are not gender sensitive;
- Gender tends to be synonymous of women. But gender is a much broader question of power, which is related to the social roles that are attributed to women and men;
- Gender objectives, targets and indicators are weak or non-existent and are therefore rarely monitored or reported;

- Monitoring and evaluation systems are fragile or have many limitations on gender issues;
- One strength of PDC is the investment in cutting-edge rights issues, such as combating harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation (FGM) and support for sexual and reproductive health rights. There is also a strong commitment at the multilateral level to SDG 5.

The relevance of gender equality issues in the PDC is very limited. Not all cooperation experts know the Gender Strategy and those who know it, or know about it, do not use it to guide their work.

The results achieved are limited and are due to a few number of interventions (FGM, agriculture, reproductive health ...). The integration of a gender perspective in a structured and continuous way is very limited, preventing a significant contribution to the promotion of gender equality. As we see similar findings in evaluations from other donors we may conclude that development cooperation has in general difficulty to contribute effectively and in a sustainable way to improving gender relations. This reality will not be unfamiliar to the essence and purpose of the gender approach (the social transformation/change).

In the context of a declining budget for ODA, in the period under evaluation, interventions with Gender Markers 2 and 1 were residual. Between 2011 and 2015 the Strategy for Gender Equality did not allow leveraging the financial resources required to implement the actions foreseen in its Plan of Action nor did it promote a greater number of projects with Gender Markers 2 and 1.

Gender Markers 2 and 1 theoretically mean that part of the budget for a given intervention has been earmarked for the integration of gender issues. In practice, however, the absence of training on gender equality may lead to some inconsistency in score assignments, making it difficult to determine accurately the resources used to promote gender equality.

In the sample of interventions analyzed, the absence of specific objectives, targets and

indicators for the promotion of gender equality did not allow to accurately account financial resources and to analyze the efficiency of their use.

Given the inadequate attention to gender issues at the early stages of development interventions, it is difficult to make its monitoring and evaluation. There are no specific gender indicators that go beyond the level of activity output for the final beneficiaries. Monitoring data disaggregated by sex are not collected in the implementation phase. This reality contributes to the lack of attention to women's rights and gender equality in many evaluations. Despite these limitations, it can be stated that in some cases there are some effects - education, health and rural development sectors in Guinea-Bissau - even if a gender mainstreaming approach has not been followed.

Although it can be said that PDC contributed to the empowerment of women in some contexts (in the case of Guinea-Bissau), there is no evidence that this contribution was intended, which leaves it with no technical and financial sustainability.

The lack of mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of gender equality in development interventions, the few operational tools and the lack of a knowledge management system, coupled with limited resources make sustainability very low.

#### **4. Lessons Learned**

From this evaluation, and evaluations carried out by other donors on gender mainstreaming in development cooperation and OECD-supported studies, it is possible to identify the following lessons learned:

1. A key factor in the effective implementation of a gender policy includes: (i) an administrative structure and a command and responsibility line (existence of a gender-dedicated unit / person with a cross-cutting mandate); (ii) resources available.
2. Gender issues should be included in the design and implementation of all policies, programs and projects, not just those dealing with women. This means including gender objectives, targets and indicators

- and not just references to gender mainstreaming, which means a dilution of the approach. The responsibility for integrating a gender perspective is not only from Camões, I.P., but also from the other PC actors’.
3. Gender equality is a question of women and men. Gender questions are issues of power relations between women and men, the roles socially attributed to one another and varying between countries, cultures, thematic or social group. Promoting gender equality is working with all these dimensions. It requires political leadership and programming that addresses the strategic interests of women and men as well as their practical needs. Because most projects focus on women, they tend to have limited impact.
  4. Economic projects that include women seem to have a potential for transforming gender relations, contributing to their empowerment: women are able to increase their output and income. This increase gives them greater self-esteem and self-confidence by strengthening their position at home and in society and increasing the power of initiative and development of competences hitherto undervalued.
  5. Measure what is done. Quantitative and qualitative methods which demonstrate what is being done and what has been achieved are essential. The monitoring & evaluation system should enable not only to know what is done but also to draw lessons from what really works to promote gender equality.
  6. Be realistic. The change in gender equality is not short-term. It requires persistent commitment. It is important to realize that governments have a rather limited role in changing the social fabric and sometimes it is necessary to address the deep and structural causes of gender discrimination. It's a long-term process that takes generations to arrive.
  7. Evaluations of other donors have found that integrated projects offer better opportunities to address complex gender issues.
  8. There are some areas where action is needed to mainstream gender equality into an organization's culture: 1) The organization board, which must consistently lead and support the integration of gender equality; 2) Create accountability systems and incentives so that experts and teams do not evade responsibility for presenting gender equality results; 3) The work to promote gender equality must be properly funded and should be led by experts with leadership capacity in the organization; 4) Procedures and practices should be well defined; 5) There should be a consistent approach to recording results and disseminating lessons.

### 5. Recommendations

- R1** - Revise / update the Portuguese Development Strategy for Gender Equality by adjusting it to the changes that have occurred both internally and in the international context. Submit the new Strategy for Council of Ministers’ ensuring its political relevance and transversal character. The Action Plan is a good practice that should be maintained. At the same time, it should identify the associated financial resources, the responsibility of each stakeholder and the related calendar.
- R2** - Strengthen human resources at headquarters with training and experience in gender equality, along with R1. At the same time, give an organizational priority to this issue.
- R3** - Integrate gender issues in the policy dialogue with partner countries and in the dialogue with all Portuguese development actors.
- R4** - Integrate the gender perspective in the strategic documents (country strategic programs) linking it to targets and indicators adjusted to the reality of each partner country.
- R5** - Reflect the strong support given at the multilateral level to SDG 5 in the bilateral approach, while translating the strong political commitment on gender issues at the national level, thus implementing the 2015 DAC Peer Review recommendation.

- R6** - The definition of guidelines on gender mainstreaming in the different CP actors interventions' would help to strengthen the development of gender-disaggregated indicators and a results-based management approach of gender equality.
- R7** - Identify focal points in each development institution / actor for gender issues to support the implementation of the Strategy, both at headquarters and in the field.
- R8** - Promote/conduct gender equality training, both at headquarters (Camões, IP and other CP actors), and on the field, including how gender equality expenditures are marked and the more consistent use of the gender markers. This training should promote the improvement of the skills of monitoring (based on indicators), evaluation and internal learning and between partners.
- R9** - Integrate a gender perspective into the management cycle, starting with the ex-ante evaluation, giving a significant weight to gender issues in such evaluation, integrating gender equality into results-based management.
- R10** - Include quantitative and qualitative data in the definition of interventions outcomes' to better capture the complexity involved in promoting women's rights and gender equality.
- R11** - Include in the interventions reports' information (quantitative and qualitative) on gender issues (possibly through the definition of a report template to be applied by all PC stakeholders) and strengthen internal knowledge management systems on this subject.
- R12** - Define guidelines for the interventions conception to contemplate this and other cross-cutting aspects. When it issues its prior opinion, Camões, I.P. should ensure that these issues have been integrated.
- R13** - Increase the number of projects with Marker 2, as the feminization of poverty is a structural problem in partner countries. Include Marker 2 in all health areas where gender equality issues are more cross-cutting.