

Promoting Male Responsibility towards Greater Gender Equality



A multi-country collaboration among Southern partners to reduce gender inequality by changing gender stereotypes and improving the status of women

Final Technical and Financial Reports (November 2004 - April 2008)

Prepared for: Canadian Partnership Branch, Canadian International Development Agency

Prepared by: HealthBridge

Project Number 5062683

Purchase Order 0007033979

GLAcct/CC/Fund: 52302/06113/0310

Vendor: 0001000926



June 2008

Promoting Male Responsibility towards Greater Gender Equality: Final Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary

List of Acronyms

Acknowledgements

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 2 |
| 1.1 | CANADIAN AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS..... | 2 |
| 1.2 | GOALS AND OBJECTIVES..... | 5 |
| 1.3 | OVERVIEW OF KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS..... | 6 |
| 2 | CONTEXT AND RATIONALE..... | 6 |
| 2.1 | OVERVIEW OF GENDER EQUALITY..... | 6 |
| 2.2 | GENDER IN SOUTH AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA..... | 7 |
| 2.3 | KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO ADDRESSING GENDER | 8 |
| 2.4 | RATIONALE FOR THE GENDER PROGRAMME..... | 9 |
| 3 | OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER PROGRAMME..... | 10 |
| 3.1 | INTRODUCTION..... | 10 |
| 3.2 | COMPONENT A: RESEARCH | 12 |
| 3.3 | COMPONENT B: MEDIA ENGAGEMENT | 13 |
| 3.4 | COMPONENT C: GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT..... | 17 |
| 3.5 | COMPONENT D: CAPACITY BUILDING..... | 19 |
| 3.6 | COMPONENT E: NETWORKING | 21 |
| 3.7 | COMPONENT F: PROJECT MANAGEMENT..... | 23 |
| 4 | RESULTS: GOAL ACHIEVEMENT..... | 25 |
| 4.1 | ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES 1 AND 2..... | 26 |
| 4.2 | ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES 3 AND 4..... | 30 |
| 4.3 | ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES 5 AND 6..... | 33 |
| 4.4 | ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT..... | 36 |
| 4.5 | ASSESSMENT OF VARIANCES..... | 36 |
| 5 | RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS | 36 |
| 5.1 | ASSUMPTIONS..... | 36 |
| 5.2 | OUTPUT LEVEL RISKS | 36 |
| 5.3 | OUTCOME LEVEL RISKS..... | 37 |
| 5.4 | IMPACT LEVEL RISKS | 37 |
| 6 | GENDER EQUALITY | 37 |
| 7 | PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | 37 |
| 8 | SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY | 38 |
| 9 | SUSTAINABILITY..... | 39 |
| 10 | LESSONS LEARNED..... | 40 |
| 11 | ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS | 50 |
| 12 | PROJECT EVALUATION..... | 50 |
| 13 | GOODS PURCHASED FOR THE PROJECT | 50 |
| | APPENDIX A: CPB PLANNING SHEET | 51 |
| | APPENDIX B: CIDA DECLARATION DOCUMENTS | 55 |
| | APPENDIX C: PROMOTING MALE RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS GREATER GENDER EQUALITY: LESSONS LEARNED | 57 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| APPENDIX D: EVALUATION REPORTS..... | 58 |
| APPENDIX E: SELECTED RESEARCH REPORTS..... | 99 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| FIGURE 1 HEALTHBRIDGE GENDER PARTNERS | 1 |
| FIGURE 2: OVERVIEW OF GENDER PROGRAMME COMPONENTS | 12 |
| FIGURE 3: PROJECT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE | 24 |
| FIGURE 4: OVERVIEW OF GENDER PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED OUTCOMES | 25 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|--|----|
| TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN VIET NAM | 20 |
| TABLE 2: ACHIEVING OUTCOMES 1 AND 2 | 26 |
| TABLE 3: ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTCOMES 1 AND 2 IN VIET NAM..... | 28 |
| TABLE 4: ACHIEVING OUTCOMES 3 AND 4..... | 31 |
| TABLE 5: ACHIEVING OUTCOMES 5 AND 6..... | 33 |
| TABLE 6: CPB PROJECT PLANNING SHEET..... | 51 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Promoting Male Responsibility towards Greater Gender Equality project (the Gender Programme)*, implemented by HealthBridge over the period November 2004 to June 2008, achieved significant results geared towards engaging men in gender equality and increasing the perceived value of women. Specifically, the Gender programme has demonstrated strengthened capacity in partner countries to develop and implement activities to improve male involvement in family issues and/or to improve the way that male role models are promoted and to design and undertake research in issues of importance to gender equality. The end of project evaluations in Bangladesh and Viet Nam found that the Gender programme addressed significant gaps in gender equality programming and succeeded in increasing public and government awareness of gender equality issues.

The Gender programme was designed to (i) increase men’s responsibility in reproductive and sexual health (RSH), including their use of condoms and vasectomy, and their willingness to support their partners in reproductive decision making; (ii) change men’s perceptions of masculinity to include positive factors such as taking economic responsibility for the family, supporting others, being an active member of the household, and being a good role model for and being actively involved in raising children; (iii) reduce social acceptability of violence among men, promote more positive ways to resolve conflict, raise perceived worth of females; (iv) contribute to the policy debate on women’s rights and work to improve the legal situation of women; and (v) build the capacity of local NGOs and government staff to work effectively in gender equality and male responsibility in RSH. The programme was implemented primarily in Bangladesh and Viet Nam, with some activities also implemented in India, Nepal, and Pakistan.

Through the Gender Programme, HealthBridge and its partners undertook important and innovative work on a number of issues, including:

- Equitable division of domestic responsibilities (including RSH, parenting, household work),
- Economic and social value of women’s unpaid work, and

- Promotion of positive gender messaging.

A number of achievements were noted by the end of the project, including:

- Increased awareness of what “gender equality” means within project communities,
- Involvement of more NGOs in gender activities through networking,
- Change from “negative” gender messaging to positive messaging,
- Publication of state-of-the-art research results,
- Contribution to improved understanding of the links that exist between economics, environmental issues, transportation issues, legal issues, and gender inequality,
- Demonstration that, even in conservative societies, advances can be made discussing and undertaking family planning, and
- Expansion of “new” ideas internationally.

In each of the partner countries, project partners have enhanced their capacity to act as leaders in gender issues both within their own countries and regionally. Networks were developed or strengthened in each country and many new organizations became involved in gender equality programming. Public awareness of the economic contribution of women’s unpaid work has increased in all project countries, as has media coverage of the subject. The media is now more engaged in reporting positively on gender issues, representing a major shift in attitudes.

Ownership of the programme and of the Gender network through participatory approaches in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the programme will also contribute to longer term sustainability. Collaboration and sharing of information, lessons learned, and methodologies with other local organizations, international agencies and other funders further enhances the potential long-term reach and effect of the programme.

LIST OF ACRONYMS:

| | |
|---------|--|
| ESAF | Evangelical Social Action Forum |
| HBV | HealthBridge Viet Nam |
| NCFAW | National Committee for the Advancement of Women |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organisation |
| RECPHEC | Resource Centre for Primary Health Care (Nepal) |
| RSH | Reproductive and Sexual Health |
| SAMAR | Society for Alternative Media and Research |
| WBB | Work for a Better Bangladesh (Bangladesh) |

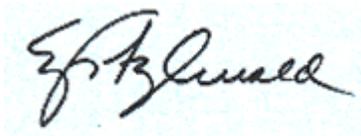
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ottawa, June 2008

The *Promoting Male Responsibility towards Greater Gender Equality* project (Gender Programme) would not have been successful without the extraordinary contributions of our partners: Shakila Ruma, Buddhadeb Biswas, and Najnin Kabir at WBB in Bangladesh, Shoba John and Phaeba Thomas of HealthBridge (the latter originally of ESAF) in India, Shanta Lall Mulmi and Reetu Pradhan at RECPHEC in Nepal, Arshad Ali Syed and Zehra Kaneez at SAMAR in Pakistan, and Pham Thi Hoang Anh, Nguyen Thi Hoai An, Le Thi Thu, and Nguyen Van Tung at HealthBridge in Viet Nam. Our colleagues in local NGOs, mass organizations, and government agencies in Bangladesh and Viet Nam, far more than we can name here, also contributed significantly to the many achievements of the Gender Programme. Our numerous colleagues and friends around the world generously shared information, ideas, and experience.

This project would not have been possible without the financial support provided by the Canadian Partnership Branch of the Canadian International Development Agency.

Sincerely,



Sian FitzGerald
Executive Director



Lori Jones
Director of Special Projects



Debra Efroymsen
Regional Director



Figure 1 HealthBridge Gender Partners

1 Introduction

HealthBridge's recently completed project, *Promoting Male Responsibility towards Greater Gender Equality (the Gender Programme)*, sought to identify ways to encourage positive male involvement in and responsibility for family-related matters in India and Viet Nam, specifically related to reproductive and sexual health, but also to parenting, economic decision-making, and household work. A parallel goal of the Gender Programme was to increase men's involvement in efforts to reduce violence against women in Bangladesh. In addition, through the programme, HealthBridge's local partners carried out research on the economic value of women's unpaid work in Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Viet Nam. This final report provides details on the activities and achievements of the project, from its beginning in November 2004 until its completion in April 2008. Originally scheduled to end in October 2007, the project received a six month no-cost extension to enable it to complete the implementation of all scheduled activities and to take advantage of additional opportunities presented late in the project. This project was funded by, and acknowledges the support of, CIDA.

1.1 Canadian and Partner Organizations

The Gender Programme was managed by HealthBridge and primarily implemented by partners in the three original project countries¹. Research was also carried out in two additional countries during the project's last year of implementation. The partnerships developed with local partners were vital to ensuring that project activities were culturally appropriate and sustainable (in Viet Nam, the project was implemented by the HealthBridge local office, while in India and Bangladesh it was overseen by HealthBridge staff working with local partners).

1.1.1 HealthBridge – The Canadian Partner

HealthBridge (formerly PATH Canada) has worked since 1982 in Asia, Africa, and the Americas to improve health, especially the health of women and children. In its earliest years, it undertook research and identified technologies and products that would improve contraception and reproductive and sexual health in developing countries. Over the past 25 years, HealthBridge has evolved into an agile and efficient organization whose aim has been expanded to improve the health of vulnerable populations, including those at risk of malnutrition, infectious disease (particularly malaria and HIV/AIDS), and emerging epidemics, such as obesity and tobacco-caused diseases.

HealthBridge is internationally known for undertaking pioneering research, identifying and deftly addressing critical gaps in health and health equity in the developing world, working effectively with local partners to bring about policy change, and bridging the gaps between health services and the people who need them. Its areas of expertise include food and nutrition, malaria, gender and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS, tobacco control, and Ecocities. HealthBridge has experience in more than 30 countries; it is headquartered in Canada with on-site representation in Bangladesh, Viet Nam and India.

¹ Activities in Bangladesh and Viet Nam were funded by CIDA, while the activities in India were funded by HealthBridge.

HealthBridge has been working on various aspects of gender equality since 1995, and has recognized the critical need to actively engage men through positive images and messages, and to address the perceived lack of value of women as a root cause of gender inequality and power imbalance.

1.1.2 *The Local Partners*

Original Project Partners – CIDA-funded

Bangladesh



HealthBridge helped found Work for a Better Bangladesh (WBB Trust) in 1998, and has worked closely with it since. The two organizations have jointly implemented programmes on tobacco control and gender (both with funding from CIDA), and began working together on transport issues in 2004. Prior to the Gender Programme, HealthBridge and WBB Trust co-designed a TV drama which included various episodes on issues of gender equality and violence (positive images of masculinity, good husbands and fathers, controlling anger, peaceably resolving disputes among spouses). The two organizations also worked together to protest the formerly common practice of publishing gruesome photos of dead bodies in the newspapers, which resulted in the Ministry of Information demanding the practice be stopped, and undertaking research, report writing, engaging print and electronic media, networking, and advocacy for gender, tobacco control, and environmental issues. WBB has a network of over 300 organizations, including NGOs focused on gender and violence. WBB is an active member of a working group on the girl child.

WBB's original significant financial support for tobacco control, when it was still a relatively new and unknown NGO and when tobacco control was not generally seen as a development issue, came from CIDA. After two phases of CIDA-funded projects, WBB is now well-known internationally for its successful work in tobacco control, and is currently receiving funding for a far larger project via Bloomberg Philanthropies. It anticipated that a similar pattern will follow with gender equality.

Viet Nam



HealthBridge has had a presence in Viet Nam since 1995 and has worked in the areas of tobacco control, reproductive health, and nutrition. Originally supported mainly by HealthBridge in Ottawa, the Viet Nam office now has many sources of support. HealthBridge is the only NGO in Viet Nam to make tobacco control and prevention a programmatic focus, and, as this project demonstrated, the only NGO to address gender in the way that this project does. In Viet Nam, HealthBridge produced a series of three very popular reproductive health and sexuality books in Vietnamese and English, *Let's Talk About Love, Sexuality, and Health*; *Growing Up, Puberty, Blossoming*; and *Youth Who Love Life Know About HIV/AIDS*. The books were developed based on qualitative research with youth and were pre-tested with youth throughout Viet Nam. They include direct quotes from youth, are non-judgmental, and reflect young Vietnamese people's perceptions and feelings. The books are used widely by such agencies as UNFPA, WHO, Population Council, and Family Health International. In addition, HealthBridge Viet Nam has experience using qualitative research methodologies and has used participatory and learner-centered methodologies in all of its trainings. HealthBridge has trained staff at the Viet Nam Women's Union and Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in

Gender, Family, Women and Adolescent in reproductive health issues, and has worked in partnership with the Viet Nam Women's Union for the delivery of reproductive health training to migrant workers in Hanoi factories. It collaborated with the Thai Nguyen Health Department to conduct the research *Risk Factors for Women Seeking Abortions in Thai Nguyen Province: Working to Improve the Delivery of Reproductive and Family Planning Services*. HealthBridge is one of the founding members of the Reproductive Health Implementation Group, and works regularly to update and share reproductive health information and experience with Vietnamese and international organizations.

Original Project Partners – HealthBridge-funded

India



HealthBridge began working in India in November 2001, and its initial work in that country focused on tobacco control. Through the Gender Programme, HealthBridge began working with two NGOs, the Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF) and the Mission for Population Control (MPC). ESAF had ten years of experience working on community health. In 2003, it successfully completed the implementation of a joint project with an Indian partner, Deepam Educational Society for Health-DESH, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The project consisted of community discussions on male involvement in reproductive and child health, engaging a multi-pronged intervention strategy involving schools and workplaces, and the creation of community self-help groups of men, women, boys and girls. ESAF has also carried out projects for the Kerala State AIDS Control Society, working with truck and taxi drivers, men having sex with men, and migrant laborers. ESAF has considerable expertise in forming groups, particularly for micro-entrepreneurship and local culture and art forms, and in training community-based institutions on various health issues.

Mission for Population Control (MPC) operates a successful program to encourage couples to practice contraception and otherwise address their reproductive and sexual health needs. MPC has succeeded in increasing community willingness to prevent unwanted pregnancy via modern methods, and thus reduce threats to women's health and family economics.

Additional Project Partners – CIDA-funded

Nepal



HealthBridge had been supporting the Resource Centre for Primary Health Care's (RECPHEC) tobacco control work since November 2001; recently, RECPHEC has obtained funding via the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids/Bloomberg Philanthropies for its tobacco control work. In 2005, HealthBridge's support was expanded to include Ecocities and gender. RECPHEC is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that believes in a holistic approach to health and in the capacity of people at the grassroots level to improve their health status and has worked on gender issues for many years within the context of its key programme areas.

Pakistan



The Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR) seeks to address gender violence and to use the media to educate policymakers and the public about pressing gender issues. It began working with HealthBridge in late 2006. Based in Islamabad,

SAMAR undertakes research about the role of the media in society and promotes the use of alternative media to focus on people-centred issues (health, water, gender, education, and sanitation) that are traditionally neglected by the mainstream media in favour of high-profile, political issues.

1.2 Goals and Objectives

The Gender Programme's overriding goal was *to improve gender equality, particularly by increasing the involvement of men in reproductive and sexual health (RSH) and strengthening women's rights*. The project's specific objectives and expected outcomes were:

Objective 1: (Viet Nam) Increase men's responsibility in RSH, including their use of condoms and vasectomy, and their willingness to support their partners in reproductive decision making.

Expected Outcome 1: *Men's responsibility in reproductive health increased, including their use of condoms and vasectomy, and their willingness to support their partners in reproductive decision making*

Objective 2: (Viet Nam and Bangladesh) Change men's perceptions of masculinity to include positive factors such as taking economic responsibility for the family, supporting others, being an active member of the household, and being a good role model for and being actively involved in raising children.

Expected Outcome 2: *Men's perceptions of masculinity changed to include positive factors*

Objective 3: (All countries) Reduce social acceptability of violence among men, promote more positive ways to resolve conflict, raise perceived worth of females.

Expected Outcome 3: *Social acceptability of violence reduced, more positive ways of resolving conflict promoted, and the perceived worth of girls and women raised*

Objective 4: (Bangladesh) Contribute to the policy debate on women's rights and work to improve the legal situation of women.

Expected Outcome 4: *Policy debate on women's rights influenced and work to improve the legal situation of women undertaken*

Objective 5: (Viet Nam, Bangladesh, and India) Build capacity of local NGOs and government staff to work effectively in gender equality and male responsibility in RSH.

Expected Outcome 5: *Capacity of local NGOs and government officials built to work effectively in the field of gender equality and male responsibility in reproductive health*

Expected Outcome 6: *Other organizations in the target countries and beyond gain insight from the project*

All project activities were designed to meet these goals and objectives. Section 3 of this report provides a detailed description of the project's activities, while Section 4 discusses the progress achieved in realizing the project's anticipated outputs, outcomes, and impact. Before describing the results that were achieved, however, it is important to first understand the context within which this project was designed and implemented; this is provided in Section 2.

1.3 Overview of Key Project Achievements

HealthBridge's Gender Programme undertook groundbreaking work on a number of issues, including:

- Equitable division of domestic responsibilities (including RSH, parenting, household work)
- Benefits to both men and women of gender equality
- Economic and social value of women's unpaid work
- Promotion of positive gender messaging that targets men, rather than negative images which tend to normalize or promote undesirable behaviour

The following key achievements were noted by the end of the project:

- Raised profile of HealthBridge and its partners as international leaders in engaging men in gender activities;
- Increased awareness of what "gender equality" means within project communities;
- Increased media coverage of gender issues in the project countries, including related to male responsibility, violence against women, and the economic value of women;
- Involvement of more NGOs in gender activities through networking;
- Change from "negative" gender messaging to positive messaging;
- Publication of state-of-the-art research results;
- Contribution to improved understanding of the links that exist between economics, environmental issues, transportation issues, legal issues, and gender inequality;
- Demonstration that, even in conservative societies, advances can be made discussing and undertaking family planning;
- Expansion of "new" ideas internationally; and
- Fostered initial changes in attitudes towards the economic value of women's unpaid work.

2 Context and Rationale

2.1 Overview of Gender Equality

Gender and gender equality are terms which are often misunderstood. The term "gender" is often assumed to mean "women", such that gender-based programming is expected to exclusively address women's issues. Likewise, the term "gender equality" has sometimes been viewed as meaning the elimination of all distinctions between the sexes, whereby both men and women will have exactly the same rights and obligations and face the same expectations. These misunderstandings are, however, contrary to the nature and intent of gender-focused work. In reality, "gender" refers to the socially-construed, as opposed to biological, differences between men and women. While it is important to address women's issues where such issues have long been ignored and where women are frequently oppressed, gender programming is meant to address stereotypes and cultural perceptions about both sexes—thus affecting men as well as women. For example, "gender in media" could address negative portrayals of both sexes, not just women; "gender in agriculture" could look at more rational divisions of labour, not simply the inclusion of women.

Similarly, "gender equality" refers not to the elimination of all differences between the sexes, but

rather to the attempt to ensure that people of both sexes experience equal opportunities. Thus, gender equality programming should look at access to education, jobs, and health care, as well as inheritance of land, safety from violence, representation in court, and so on. While any specific society may never realize full gender equality, the closer a society moves to that ideal, the better the chance that all its members will benefit from the multiple advantages that accrue from women's greater participation in, and thus contribution to, family, society, and the nation.

Like so much of what is valuable in life, gender equality, or any significant strides towards it, is extraordinarily difficult to achieve. Fortunately, it is not necessary to wait until gender equality is achieved to benefit from the attempt to achieve it. Working towards a more gender-equal world will bring many benefits along the way.

2.2 Gender in South and South-East Asia

Gender inequality remains one of the most serious barriers to development, as well as the source of untold misery to millions of women throughout the world. Gender inequality leads to violence against women, HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy, high rates of maternal mortality, and a range of other problems. Gender inequality results in low rates of girls attending school; uneducated women are less able to provide good care for their children, including feeding them properly and taking them for vaccines, than more educated women. Gender inequality also keeps women out of the workforce and out of politics, hampering economic development.

South and South East Asia rank as among the worst regions in the world on many indicators of gender equality, including social and economic rights, marriage and divorce rights, years of schooling of women compared to men, and female life expectancy compared to male expectancy. In many areas, women are treated as second class citizens, often unable to leave the home without their husband's permission, much less play a full role in decision-making in the home and community. In Viet Nam and India, gender inequality manifests itself even before birth with sex-selective abortions, and in both India and Bangladesh, girls receive less medical care and are far less likely to attend school than boys. The problems continue throughout life, with women being frequent victims of violence and suffering disproportionately from poverty.

In **Bangladesh**, although the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition and former Prime Minister were both women at the time the Gender Programme began, women actually have very little power or voice politically. At one point, 10% of the 300 seats in the National Parliament were reserved for women by constitutional amendment, but that amendment expired in May 2001 and was not renewed. The government at that time was a coalition government which contained two Islamic parties that were not friendly to gender concerns.

Women have little decision making power in the home. Many women are not free to leave their home without their husband's permission, and women are generally considered to be the property of their father until marriage, then of their husband, and finally of their son if they become widowed. Although it is illegal to pay dowry, most men still insist on receiving it, and dowry-related violence remains a significant problem. The issue of marital rape is generally unrecognized, with reluctance by the government to delve into the "private" realm of the household. An estimated 50% of Bangladeshi women are beaten by their husbands. With Bangladesh's patrilocal system, whereby the wife moves to her husband's family's home, and

dowries, daughters are considered to have little worth for the family and thus investment in them is often considered unnecessary or even wasteful.

Significant progress has, however, been made in two fields: women's access to credit through the world-famous programs of Grameen Bank and other NGOs with women's groups, rather than land, being used as collateral; and government's policy of paying families to send their daughters to school, which has greatly increased rates of girls' schooling. However, much remains to be done in virtually every other area of gender rights and issues.

The situation in **India** is similar to Bangladesh, but includes the well-publicized issue of millions of "missing girls". Despite the significant strides achieved in gender equality among the elite, the majority of women still suffer from extreme inequalities, leading to ill health, violence, and early death. While many NGOs in India seek to address gender issues, few if any portray men in a positive light, or have succeeded in demonstrating the high value that should be attached to the traditionally female work of caring for the home and for family members.

Although **Viet Nam** has less extreme gender inequality than do either Bangladesh or India, strong gender stereotypes contribute to domestic violence, a very high abortion rate, and low representation of women in politics and in major household decisions. The major brunt of the official policy of having no more than two children is borne by women, who are expected by their husbands to use contraception (mostly the IUD) or have an abortion if an unwanted or unintended pregnancy occurs. The official retirement age is lower for women than for men, so that it is difficult for women to gain top management positions in the public and private sectors. Men perceive that they should be responsible for "major" tasks while virtually all the "trivial" work of maintaining the home and looking after the family members falls on women.

2.3 Key Opportunities and Constraints to Addressing Gender

As the Gender Programme was being developed, HealthBridge identified a number of key opportunities which informed the project's objectives and expected outcomes. In India, the rising HIV/AIDS prevalence rates had created an environment more conducive to encouraging male involvement in reproductive health than had existed previously. In Viet Nam, the Government was attempting to promote gender equality and a number of programs and institutions had begun working towards this goal. Bangladesh, India, and Viet Nam had all ratified the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), although with reservations; as a result, all three governments had stated their commitment to working on gender equality (although their actions were still quite limited). At the same time, as the governments of all three countries were attempting to maintain or increase economic growth, it was believed that an argument for further involvement of women in the marketplace to promote development would be welcome, as would the argument that more women in politics could reduce corruption.

HealthBridge and its partners were well placed to have an impact on gender inequality due to the recognition and respect they had gained through other projects and through their involvement in a wide range of networks (including close relationships with NGOs, government, and the media). They had also gained a significant level of working experience in research, material development, networking, media work, and advocacy that would be directly applicable to this project.

At the same time, HealthBridge identified a number of constraints that had to be considered. Gender equality is a sensitive issue, particularly in India and Bangladesh, and the project team expected to face resistance to certain activities from civil society or government partners; for that reason, the project would avoid targeting gender equality directly in India, focusing instead on increasing male responsibility in reproductive health. Political and economic upheavals in the project countries were common, and often reversed progress. To lessen the extent of possible harm from such upheavals, and to benefit from the opportunities created by other social changes (such as more women entering the workplace), the project team expected to take as flexible and iterative an approach as possible.

No country in the world has achieved true gender equality, and two of the three initial project countries scored extremely low on gender equality indicators². However, this was seen to represent an opportunity – there is much room for improvement, and the lessons learned through this project would be particularly valuable given the paucity of available information on how to change gender stereotypes.

2.4 Rationale for the Gender Programme

While the problem of gender inequality worldwide is manifold, and the reasons for it embedded in culture, politics, economics, and even geography, a few common factors emerge. First, women's contributions to their families, communities, and nations are generally under- or unvalued and therefore policymakers tend to see programs aimed at women as charity, rather than as a small return on the very large contributions women actually do make to the economy and their communities through their daily work. Secondly, men tend not to be engaged in programs aimed at improving gender equality.

The rationale behind this particular Gender Programme was therefore to address these two inter-related factors head-on: by increasing the perceived value of women and by engaging men in gender equality programmes.

Women make major contributions to families, communities, nations, and economies throughout the world. There are highly-educated, competent women playing important roles in many countries as Prime Ministers, doctors, teachers, mothers, and housewives. However, women's *unpaid work* (including domestic and farm work as well as activities undertaken in the informal labour market) is almost universally undervalued or unvalued. As a result, women are often not seen as important contributors to a nation's economy. The result of this perceived lack of worth is often violence, discrimination, lack of opportunity, and sometimes even death.

² For example, in Bangladesh, the sex ratio at birth is 1.06 male(s)/female, but changes to 1.17 male(s)/female over age 65 even though the infant mortality rate is lower in females (64.88 deaths/1,000 live births) than in males (67.21). Overall life expectancy is 61.33 years, but is higher in men (61.46 years) than in women (61.2 years). The estimated literacy rate in 2003 was 53.9% for males but only 31.8% for females. Similarly in India, the sex ratio is highly uneven and increases up to age 65, indicating higher mortality rates among girls and women. The problem of "missing" women due to sex-selective abortion, preferential treatment of boys, and low status of women is well-documented. The literacy rate of Indian males is 70.2%, but only 48.3% in females. These skewed sex ratios, lower life expectancies for women (if gender equality existed, life expectancy would be higher among women), and lower literacy rates are evidence of gender inequality.

Of critical importance in the quest for greater gender equality is the need to engage men in finding and implementing solutions. Unfortunately the majority of programs aimed at greater gender equality address the most vulnerable only, the women. As men are more often in decision-making positions and usually represent the upper hand of the power imbalance, involving them in the process of change, through positive messages and engagement, is critical to long-term and lasting impact. Unfortunately men have often not been presented with appropriate role models for their treatment of women or of themselves. While the negative role of men in gender dynamics is often lamented, messages aimed at encouraging men to play a positive role in their families are few in number. Gender-based programs generally tend to portray men in a negative light, rather than making explicit what is desired or expected of them. Negative messages may actually reinforce gender stereotypes by picturing men as violent, abusive, and wasteful of money, rather than promoting greater equality by presenting positive role models for men to emulate.

HealthBridge recognized the opportunities that addressing these factors in particular provided – especially in terms of the huge gaps in existing programming and knowledge that would be tackled. As such, the programme was designed to identify ways to encourage positive male involvement in and responsibility for family-related matters in India and Viet Nam, specifically related to reproductive and sexual health, but also to parenting, economic decision-making, and household work, and to increase men’s involvement in efforts to reduce violence against women in Bangladesh. The reason for designing a three-country program was to allow for sharing of experiences, methods and materials among the three countries. The fact that HealthBridge was already working closely with partners in those countries on tobacco control enabled frequent communication, both by e-mail and in person, as communication networks had already been built and lessons learned which informed the communications around gender equality issues. This in turn allowed for many opportunities to learn in detail from each other’s project implementation. This was seen to be a more efficient approach and one likely to prove more effective, than trying out one or two approaches in one country, then attempting to adapt them to the other countries. Different but complementary approaches enacted in a similar time period would therefore allow for greater learning and sharing.

3 Overview of the Gender Programme

3.1 Introduction

HealthBridge’s Gender Programme was designed to build local capacity for the development, implementation, and analysis of local initiatives that identified ways to encourage positive male involvement in and responsibility for matters which have typically been regarded as the “female’s domain”, including reproductive and sexual health, parenting, household economic decision-making, and household-related work. A parallel goal of the Gender Programme was to increase men’s involvement in efforts to reduce violence against women, particularly by increasing the perceived value of women. The partner countries³ are geographically,

³ The project began in Bangladesh and Viet Nam (CIDA-funded) and India (HealthBridge-funded). In the project’s last year, research activities were added in Nepal and Pakistan.

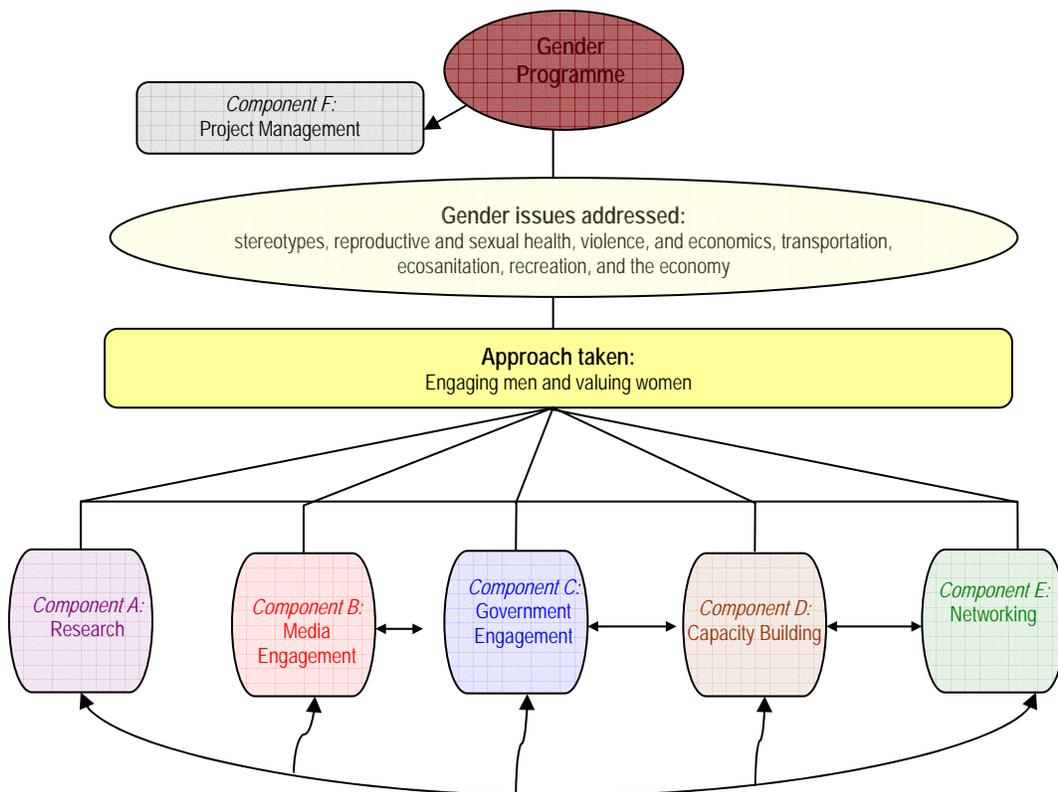
linguistically, politically, and culturally diverse, but also had certain key points in common before the project began: the perceived worth of women was lower than that of men; as such, the involvement of men in so-called “family matters” was minimal and yet women had limited ability and power to make decisions about their and/or their family’s well-being. The Gender Programme built on years of collaboration with most of the partners, and with more than three years of guaranteed support, also sought to build and expand networks in each country to address gender issues.

The Gender Programme addressed a wide range of gender-related **issues**, including gender stereotypes, reproductive and sexual health, violence, transportation, ecosanitation, recreation, and the economy. Not all of the issues were addressed in each country; rather, priority areas were identified by each local partner based on the cultural and political contexts. The Gender Programme’s main **activity groups** were divided into six distinct yet complementary, inter-dependent, and often concurrent components, each of which contributed to the achievement of the project’s anticipated outputs and outcomes: A) Research; B) Media Engagement; C) Government Engagement; D) Capacity Building; E) Networking; and F) Project Management (Figure 2). The overall **approach** taken across all activity components to address each of the issues was “*engaging men and valuing women.*”

The sub-sections below highlight the specific activities related to each issue undertaken within the project’s components. As the project’s activities in many cases cut across the project’s outcomes, the sub-sections below are not tied to specific outcomes but rather are organized by component. The section on “Results: Goal Achievement” (Section 4) discusses how these components have resulted in the achievement of the planned outcomes and impacts. Also included in Section 4 is a timeline of key successes and results achieved.

During its support for and implementation of each project component, HealthBridge utilized an approach that focused on working directly with key local partners who have strong skills, and providing them with modest but steady technical and financial support. The security of established funding for operational costs allowed these experts to focus their efforts on the work itself, rather than on constantly seeking funding or carrying out tangential projects that may have covered core expenses. Being able to access technical and financial support for research and advocacy, and media and government engagement, in a timely and flexible manner, has allowed HealthBridge’s partners to act when action is needed, and therefore to have a meaningful impact in their countries.

Appendix A reflects the CPB Project Planning Sheet and provides a summary of the planned activities outlined in the Gender Programme proposal and how they related to the proposed outputs, outcomes and impacts of the project. As noted in the sections that follow, the project’s implementation followed the proposed plan quite closely, with additional activities being added as opportunities were presented. For example, the original proposal contained no plans for supporting activities in countries beyond the original three; however, as the project progressed it became evident that this would be extremely beneficial in achieving the goals and objectives of the project on a broader scale and, with CIDA support, was therefore incorporated into the project activities.

Figure 2: Overview of Gender Programme Components

3.2 Component A: Research

While research already exists on a range of gender issues, this research has not necessarily been directed at achieving changes to, or creating, gender-sensitive policies. Research for advocacy, on the other hand, seeks to provide specific evidence of the need for a certain policy or programme, or to demonstrate that a certain government action will prove popular. While existing research results can often be used for advocacy purposes, in cases such as gender, country-specific research that is culturally-sensitive is often required to convince a particular government of the need for change. Similarly, where arguments against policy change are symbolic rather than legitimate, the need is not necessarily for information that will change people's minds, but rather for a convincing document that will challenge false arguments.

Therefore, in order to design a programme that would be relevant to addressing the gender issues in each country, HealthBridge and its partners began their work with research focused on reproductive and sexual health in India and Viet Nam, and on male violence towards their spouses in Bangladesh. The research was designed to gain an understanding of the key issues people face and the way people feel or talk about them, both negative and positive, in order to feed into programming and messages.

In Bangladesh, a research report on husband-wife relations (in Bengali and English) was produced and disseminated under the title "The Role of Men in Improving Husband-Wife Relations." The report was disseminated to more than 450 organizations. In Viet Nam, qualitative

and quantitative research reports on the roles and responsibilities of men in family life (including discussions on male stereotypes of masculinity) were produced and disseminated in both



Vietnamese and English. Similar research was undertaken and will be published in India. An English-language summary report (*Promoting Male Responsibility for Gender Equality: Summary Report of Research from Bangladesh, India and Vietnam*) was printed and disseminated at AIDS 2006, among other venues. In addition, a paper summarizing the research is currently being considered for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Additional research then followed and was published, first in Bangladesh and later in Viet Nam, Nepal, and Pakistan, about the economic contribution of women's unpaid work. Research in India on the same topic began as the project was drawing to an end, but will be completed with HealthBridge funding.

3.3 Component B: Media Engagement

The media is an extremely powerful tool for reaching governments and the general public to work for change. Government officials watch TV, listen to the radio, and read the newspapers. Media helps government officials understand what issues are “hot” and need to be addressed. Media coverage also encourages the general public to recognize important issues. The media therefore plays a vital role in raising awareness of gender issues among both policymakers and the general public.

At the same time, however, media itself is often responsible for propagating many negative stereotypes about gender. Images of the sexes in media are more exaggerated than those in the popular imagination. For instance, media portrayals of violence, promiscuous sexual behaviour, drinking and smoking, and exaggerated female (and male) body types are out of proportion with rates of such events in the general population. At the same time, stereotyped (often negative) behaviours of men and women abound in television programmes and in advertising. For instance, a series of ads for a skin whitening cream in Bangladesh shows how women obtain success—and thus happiness—not through hard work and study, but rather through “improvements” in their physical appearance. Likewise, newspaper articles about politics and important current events in many countries typically feature men, while women may be mainly relegated to the entertainment and culture pages. Even when covering gender issues, newspapers can serve to promote rather than reduce gender problems by portraying women as victims, normalizing offensive male behaviour, and downplaying the possibility of remedies to the manifold problems caused by gender inequality.

Given that media can both resolve and exacerbate gender problems, HealthBridge and its partners considered two approaches to media: utilizing its advantages and countering the problems that it creates. That is, the media-focused activities sought both to utilize media to disseminate positive messages about gender issues, and to engage it in a campaign to stop undermining the value of women in direct and indirect ways.

At the same time, HealthBridge and its partners utilized the previously-published book⁴ *Using Media and Research for Advocacy: Low Cost Ways to Increase Success* as a guide. This revised guide, based on two previous HealthBridge guides that focused exclusively on tobacco control, incorporated lessons learned from a variety of HealthBridge programmes, including car control and promotion of fuel-free transport, gender, human rights, and the environment. Given that many people working internationally are not native English speakers, HealthBridge prepared the popular guide using plain, simple language and offered colourful illustrations from throughout the world of low-budget, successful activities.

3.3.1 Bangladesh: Using the media to change gender stereotypes

In Bangladesh, media work focused on radio and newspapers, although TV coverage also ensued. WBB regularly created scripts for radio talk shows and organized speakers; the shows were taped in the WBB office, and later aired by the national radio station, Betar Bangladesh. The length of the talk shows, about 15-18 minutes, allowed for the treatment of serious subjects in-depth. Different speakers brought different perspectives, and “on-the-street” interviews (recruiting local college students or other “non-experts” to express their opinions) made the talk shows informal, interesting, and lively. Issues discussed included dowry, inheritance, and the role of men in promoting women’s rights.

In terms of print media, WBB regularly provided information to journalists and wrote newspaper articles and letters to the editor. Work with the print media was facilitated in Bangladesh by the fact that local staff included former and current journalists, who both understood journalistic writing and had good connections with other journalists and editors. WBB was pleased to see the shift in coverage from a focus on negative gender issues (prevalence of violence, women’s lack of power) to positive messages in the local media about the way things should (and could) be, following its media sensitization work.

WBB also organized a special event for International Family Day, which falls on 15 May. WBB felt that it would be interesting to invite journalists to a discussion in which women talked about the help they received from their husbands. WBB selected two couples to discuss the role of men in their families: one family in which the wife is often busy operating her own NGO, and one which has a young daughter and twin sons, where the father is often responsible for their care to lessen the burden on the mother. To WBB’s surprise and the journalists’ amusement and illumination, the discussion became contentious, as the women in both couples claimed that their husbands do little or nothing to help and that the lion(ess)’s share of the family burden was on them. The men reacted defensively and heated discussion ensued, with female journalists in particular asking pointed questions. Rather than considering the event a failure, WBB staff members were delighted with the openness of the discussion that took place and the level of interest among the journalists.

The highest level of media attention achieved by WBB was following the publication of the research on the economic value of women’s work. The research was covered by more than 20 newspapers, including some front page coverage and editorials. In addition to the news coverage

⁴ This guide, written and published by HealthBridge staff, was produced through the CIDA-funded South to South for International Tobacco Control Project.

that appeared immediately after each press conference or seminar, newspapers occasionally printed articles on the issue of gender at other times, using information that they had received from WBB.

WBB also addressed the issue of graphic violence in newspapers, writing to government officials to protest the publication of photos of dead bodies in newspapers. The government called for a stop to the activity. WBB became a member of the Gender in Media Forum, allowing it to join in activities with other NGOs to promote a more positive media presence around gender issues.

3.3.2 Viet Nam: working with the mass media to raise awareness

In Viet Nam, HealthBridge worked with the mass media in a number of different ways to both educate media personnel about gender issues and to raise public awareness about and change public perceptions of the role of men in the family.

The Department of Culture and Ideology periodically organizes workshops to orient members of the press on upcoming government priorities in media. HealthBridge, in collaboration with the Department, organized a two-day training workshop for journalists and editors. Of particular relevance were sessions that addressed the coverage of gender issues in news magazines, TV, and radio advertisements/shows, including the strength and weakness of this coverage, and what issues need to be covered in the future.

In addition to its collaboration with the Department of Culture and Ideology to reach journalists, HealthBridge itself produced media messages. Different means of communication were utilized to target different audiences, taking into account reach, cost, and the type of message possible (for example, a 3-minute loudspeaker message, 30-second TV spots, one-hour drama performance, and 2-column newspaper article all have different potential in terms of the amount of information they can convey and the audiences they will reach). Drama performances were of great interest due to a lack of available entertainment in rural areas, and billboards containing brief slogans and careful design led to high retention of messages. The messages used, reinforced across different media, included “when sharing housework amongst the couple, the family will be happier” and the importance of male responsibility in housework and reproductive and sexual health.

The project team coordinated with the Voice of Viet Nam (a national radio station) to design and air seven broadcasts that addressed different gender equality topics, including:

- *“The participation of both wife and husband in making household’s economics to avoid poverty, building family happiness”*. The objective of this broadcast was to change the perception that men were breadwinners and to promote the idea that a family’s economic situation would be improved when the wife works together with the husband (i.e., decision-making) and is able to hold a wage-earning job outside the home.
- *“Perceptions about the role of men and women: what are reasons of gender inequality?”* The objective of this broadcast was to counter prevailing perceptions of the roles of men and women that lead to gender inequality: men are breadwinners, men are responsible for important work/issues, women can undertake only odd jobs and are responsible mainly for housework and taking care of children, and women are the ones who should be responsible for family planning.
- *“Men’s share in using family planning methods, reproductive health care for women”*. The objective of this broadcast was to strengthen public knowledge about reproductive health

care and to encourage men to actively use family planning methods such as condoms. The broadcast also addressed the benefits that could be achieved when men were actively involved in reproductive health care and family planning.

- *“Men share housework, encourage and take advantage for their wives participating in social activities”*. The objectives of this broadcast were to encourage men to share housework with their wives, and to take advantage for their wives participating in social activities in order to develop their full potential.
- *“Communication between wife and husband”*. The objective of this broadcast was to promote understanding between husbands and wives and to encourage communication for a better relationship, particularly related to reproductive and sexual health.
- *“Introduction to Gender Equality Law”*. The objective of this broadcast was to increase public awareness of the new Gender Equality Law and disseminate the main content of this law.
- *“Introduction to the current gender project, Promoting Male Responsibility towards Greater Gender Equality”*. The objective of this broadcast was to introduce the Gender project and its activities that were implemented by HealthBridge and local partners.

The project team also worked closely with VTV2 (Viet Nam Television, channel 2) to develop one 60-second TV spot that was telecast nationally over a three-month period. The objective of the TV spot was to present the model of a happy family with the involvement of husband, wife and children in daily domestic activities such as cooking, taking care for and teaching children, and cleaning house. The spot was developed with well-known actors and actresses, and its humorous approach made it audience-friendly.

Finally, the Viet Nam project team also worked with local partners to design and produce drama performances, through which local audiences were treated to live performances that addressed gender issues. The drama performances were provided for 49 nights in 14 communes and wards; more than 30,000 persons attended the performances.

3.3.3 India: Raising gender issues through the media

In India, HealthBridge’s partners developed pictorial mass media materials related to men’s responsibility in reproductive health. They also worked with broad circulation newspapers to improve and increase coverage of sensitive gender issues, including contraception and family planning. In doing so, they discovered that the local media was eager for information and happy to print as much as the partners could supply. For example, HealthBridge’s partner organization ESAF wrote articles about gender issues such as dowry, child marriage, and “missing girls” which the newspaper published. The research undertaken by ESAF was also published in a local newspaper, with special focus on the lack of

doctors able to perform vasectomies.

ESAF explored the possibility of making linkages with women journalists who had participated in a five-day tour of various European cities as part of an exchange program between India and the European Union (to show the participants how media outlets and unions in Europe deal with gender



issues). The tour was organized by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the EU in cooperation with the All-India Newspaper Employees Federation and the Bangalore Newspaper Employees Union (BNEU). Thanks to ESAF's efforts, All India Radio broadcast a special episode on gender issues, with a script supplied by ESAF.

ESAF also produced a message which was telecast on a local TV channel to nearly 35,000 houses. While local TV may often be dismissed as unimportant, it can be extremely inexpensive and easy to access, and when compared to the reach of a pamphlet, its impact can be considerable. As a result of these activities, public enquiries about gender issues increased, the Urban Family Welfare Department requested gender articles and messages to develop its own IEC materials, Bhuj Municipality took immediate action to provide basic facilities to the Sanjay Nagar community where the program took place and to provide birth certificates for children, and the print media took the initiative to focus on gender-related news and articles.

3.4 Component C: Government Engagement

The extent to which gender equality exists in any country depends to a large extent on national laws—which in turn may depend in great part on the existing gender situation and cultural and religious norms. In spite of the challenges that doing so poses, it is generally easier to change laws and policies than cultural norms (although of course the implementation and enforcement of those laws and policies poses a different set of challenges). In addition to legal and policy issues, government practices have significant effects on women's and men's lives and on relations between the sexes. For instance, agriculture extension that targets only men may fail to provide needed information to the women actually involved in much agricultural work, whereas loan programs that target only women often fail to take into consideration cultural norms about who within a household makes decisions about how money is spent. Likewise, reproductive health programs that target only women can *provide* much-needed services to women, but excluding men may actually impede women's *access* to those services where men make decisions.

However, legal and policy responses to gender issues can have their negative sides, so caution is needed. For example, in Bangladesh, a law meant to punish violent offenders for crimes against women and children includes such harsh penalties that judges have, to date, been extremely reluctant to punish offenders and even the slightest shadow of a doubt seems sufficient reason to avoid sentencing.

HealthBridge partners addressed the issue of working with governments in different ways, in response to specific local contexts. Of particular note was the development of collaboration between government and HealthBridge's local partners – all of which were non-governmental agencies. In some situations a natural conflict appears to exist between governmental and non-governmental organizations, yet positive working relationships can and do exist. Governments have many responsibilities, and in spite of signing on to international agreements and covenants meant to accord greater equality to women, government staff can only afford limited effort in the field of gender without significant support from outside the government. The Gender Programme provided opportunities for local partners to engage government officials, to build their knowledge about gender equality, and to provide ongoing support to discussions about addressing gender inequalities.

3.4.1 Viet Nam: Working with government mass organizations

In Viet Nam, HealthBridge partnered with mass government organizations which play key roles in promoting gender equality, such as the Viet Nam Women's Union (which has branches throughout the country and millions of members), the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW), and the Farmers' Union. Activities included designing and conducting training workshops, the main objectives of which were to impart different approaches for promoting gender equality and experiences and lessons learned in integrating gender equality in specific working areas, and to provide updates on newly-approved legislation related to gender equality. The workshops also sought to encourage partners to promote positive social norms regarding gender roles, masculinity, gender stereotypes, and gender equality.

In Bac Ninh province, HealthBridge cooperated with the provincial-level Women's Union and Farmers' Union to conduct training workshops for key communicators on gender equality issues. In addition, the training promoted approaches to encourage improved communication between spouses as a way to increase the involvement of men in sharing domestic work and reproductive health. The Women's Union then conducted follow-up training workshops for members at district and commune levels and incorporated the training plan into its annual action plan.

At the national level, the project team supported the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) to strengthen its capacity to integrate gender issues into planning processes and the implementation of action plans. The project also supported policy formulation and implementation at different ministries and in different cities through training workshops.

The training workshops came about in response to an observation by NCFAW that some secretaries in CFAW had retired and others had just recently been assigned to the post, so that new people did not have the opportunity to update their knowledge about gender, how to mainstream gender into an action plan, how to formulate and implement policy, and techniques for working towards the advancement of women. Many participants reported that following the trainings, they understood more clearly the meaning of gender mainstreaming and felt more confident to discuss gender mainstreaming with the agencies in charge of developing plans.

The training workshops provided an important opportunity for legislators and gender advocates to meet and dialogue. During the explanation on the law-making process, the advocates learned that sometimes a law failed to be passed because the parliament did not receive enough evidence to support the law. This provided the advocates with crucial information about how to present support for gender laws and policies, while also providing the legislators with key contacts for future proposed policies, legislation, or programming. Following the training courses, some participants contacted HealthBridge project staff to request information on the research previously carried out and shared during the training. Some participants also arranged meetings with HealthBridge staff to discuss opportunities for collaboration. Finally, the training resulted in a useful list of contacts of those working as a focal point on gender at all levels of government.

In addition to the training activities, HealthBridge partnered with NCFAW to develop television spots (see section below on public education), which enabled it to access the national Vietnamese television station at a much lower cost and to broadcast in a much more lucrative time slot. This was due to the fact that by working through NCFAW, as a governmental organization, censorship was lessened and procedures eased.

3.4.2 India: Coordinating reproductive health programmes

In one district in India, HealthBridge's partner ESAF sought to work closely with existing government efforts, rather than establishing separate and possibly competing programs. In partnership with governmental sectors at provincial and national levels, ESAF conducted a series of awareness raising and capacity building activities for governmental staff and media workers. ESAF also successfully lobbied various officials to recruit male health workers or animators to improve the ability of reproductive health programming to reach men.

Thanks to ESAF's efforts, Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) officials took the initiative to influence fathers about gender issues through child care centres. As a result of these activities, the local government now plans to involve male community workers in rural areas in reproductive and child health, the district TB department has promoted schemes to involve male volunteers, the District IEC department has increased its promotion of non-surgical vasectomy through NGOs, the District Hospital has regularized health check-up camps in urban areas with the support of ICDS, the government started taking the initiative to stop sex determination (sex-selective abortions to ensure giving birth to a boy), and ICDS workers are reaching more people with gender messages.

3.5 Component D: Capacity Building

Capacity building activities are essential for ensuring that local partners have the required skills to implement the project's activities and to apply these skills to other work, as well as to ensure an active and positive attitude towards the work. The issues of capacity building, local ownership, and networking are all inter-connected. The basis is a development approach which focuses on strengthening the capacity of local agencies and reducing reliance on outside experts or external agents.

In order to increase the effectiveness of the work of local organizations and government officials on gender-related issues, the Gender Programme partners sought to share, and learn from, international lessons learned in gender, in terms of what works and what does not, as well as to develop new best practices. Capacity building of key individuals and organizations to carry out effective work was thus a critical part of HealthBridge's work.

Also included in capacity building is local public awareness building. Providing materials about gender issues helps to raise public interest and awareness, foster discussion of the issues, and build capacity for promoting change at the individual, family, and community levels.

3.5.1 Bangladesh: Skills building for research and for WBB staff

Capacity building in Bangladesh was mainly focused on two areas: research skills and overall understanding of gender issues. In terms of research, capacity building focused on building the research and reporting skills of local NGOs who worked together on two research projects, with a local NGO taking charge of the data collection and write-up for its area, following training by WBB staff. In addition, much work was done to encourage NGOs from a wide spectrum of interests to frame their messages to men in a more positive light.

Capacity building of WBB staff members occurred mainly through a series of in-house presentations on different gender and management issues, often gathered from books on different subjects. Topics included gender economics, logical framework analysis, project management,

report writing, public speaking, and the integration of gender into diverse issues such as urban planning, transport policy, ecosanitation, and recreation.

3.5.2 Viet Nam: Building skills and building awareness

The Gender Programme represented the first time that the Bac Ninh Center for Health Education and Communication, the local partner of the project in Viet Nam, was involved in the management and implementation of a project. By participating in the training courses organized by HealthBridge and being actively involved in the project's activities, Center staff not only gained knowledge on gender and reproductive health, but also on working methods. After producing a series of IEC materials for the project and publishing them for local people, the Bac Ninh Center for Health Education and Communication has become well-known for its ability to design and produce high-quality IEC materials. They have since been given the responsibility by other government departments and agencies to produce IEC materials, including for the national targeted program on protecting the environment and the program on preventing lung disease and tuberculosis.

The Viet Nam project team developed a manual on gender equality and reproductive health for trainers. The objective of the training facilitated through this manual is to promote men's role and responsibility in the family in RSH care, and to promote understanding and sharing between the wife and the husband. The Viet Nam team also produced a 2008 calendar that included twelve gender messages, one for each month of the year. The gender messages were developed based on the results of the qualitative and quantitative research studies conducted by HealthBridge and on recommendations for gender priority issues in Viet Nam made by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The content of the messages focused on promoting men's participation in reproductive health care, doing housework, enhancing women's power and the benefits to be gained by both sexes when gender equality was achieved. Eight thousand copies of the calendar were distributed to households in the project sites. In addition, 29,000 leaflets were produced and distributed to participating households; priority was given to those households with men aged 18 years or older. Finally, twenty-seven billboards were produced with the messages "*Spouses share housework to make family happier*" and "*He is very manly, he always cares for his family*" and hung in the seventeen participating communes.

Viet Nam project staff also benefited from local and regional workshops and trainings on reproductive and sexual health, which allowed them to further develop their skills and strengthen their networks.

Table 1: Summary of capacity building activities in Viet Nam

| Capacity building activity | Number of people trained |
|---|--|
| Training skills on gender and reproductive health care for stakeholders at the provincial, district, and commune levels (Course 1 for provincial & district staff members, 3 days per course; Courses 2 & 3 for commune staff members, 4 days per course) | 101 trained participants (3 courses), 100% of the participants passed the courses and received certificates. |
| Training for trainers of Provincial Women's Union on gender, reproductive health care, and communication skills in the family (2 courses, 3 days per course) | 79 people were trained to become core trainers. |
| Training on composing drama scripts and performing drama for communicators, who would be communicating using dramatization (2 courses, 5 days per course) | 96 communicators from 16 communes (6 persons per commune) were trained and subsequently performed 2 dramas |

3.5.3 India: Community-based training for awareness raising

In India, training workshops were organized on the subjects of family planning, sterilization, awareness of gender bias in the family life, immunization, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS. Initial training/information sessions were held during the daytime, which resulted in only female participation. Subsequent sessions were organized during other community events to ensure broader participation.

Community events in India included discussions held with core group members about gender stereotypes in the way children are raised and household chores divided. (While the work in general focused on men, it is important to note that women, as the main rearers of children, play an important role in implanting and reinforcing gender stereotypes in the young.) Acknowledgement of the unfairness of raising male and female children differently was achieved, with some women pledging to make changes. The importance of the value and contribution of women's household work



was also stressed and awareness of the practice of female infanticide increased. As one participant commented, "If this practice [female infanticide] continues, there will be no wives for our sons to marry." Training programs were also developed for community health workers, particularly on the subject of gender, sex, and social inequalities. As well, internal staff training on gender issues was conducted to enhance the capacity of ESAF staff to lead the project and to identify and design appropriate activities.

3.6 Component E: Networking

Working alone can sometimes be the easiest approach, as it saves the time and challenges involved in trying to coordinate with others who may have different ideas and approaches. However, working in isolation is also likely to prove less effective than working with other organizations. Previous experience with multi-country and multi-partner projects has demonstrated to HealthBridge and its partners the great value of network building. An organization standing alone gains far less credibility than a group of organizations speaking together. Creativity, access to resources, and the likely success of activities are all enhanced when different people from varying backgrounds come together. Work that is difficult and exhausting when done alone can become easier and more fulfilling when undertaken with others, and the fruits of success usually compensate for any difficulties encountered. An important distinction in coalition building is between collaboration and cooperation, or more simply, between sharing ideas (cooperating) and trying to work jointly on programs (collaborating). Simply sharing ideas is often far easier to manage than undertaking joint activities and may be the most sensible goal. Meanwhile, some joint activities can be conducted, when kept simple.

At the same time, centrally-based organizations generally have difficulties extending their programmes throughout the country without forming partnerships with other local NGOs based in other areas. For any activity, large portions of the country may be neglected if strong national

networks do not exist to support decentralization of the work. One aspect of the Gender Programme was the creation and maintenance of such networks.

3.6.1 Bangladesh: Pros and cons of working through a network

In Bangladesh, building a *new* network proved challenging and the process was not free of mistakes, but progress was made. Perhaps the biggest mistake was to begin by funding other groups who then were less interested in continuing the work when further funding was not available. A decision was made to conduct the initial research on gender issues (particularly violence) with local NGOs, but the amount of training they required was under-estimated and the quality of the research (particularly the analysis and write-up that occurred locally) suffered somewhat as a result.

Efforts to bring the team together were often unsuccessful but some individual members of the network maintained close contact with WBB. (A plus and minus of the network was that many members were already part of WBB's tobacco control network; the advantages included an existing close relationship and opportunistic meetings when partners attended tobacco control-related events or dropped into the WBB office for other reasons; the disadvantage was over-commitment to various tasks resulting in insufficient concentration on any single one.)

More successful networking occurred when the results of the second research study, on the value of women's unpaid work, were presented. A seminar was jointly organized with Unnayan Shamanay, an NGO led by a well-known economist active in, among other issues, gender economics. The collaboration led to a higher acceptability of the research report than if it had been released by WBB alone, and as Unnayan Shamanay already has an excellent network among gender NGOs as well as with government, its involvement proved to be crucial to widely sharing the research results.

In addition, WBB worked closely with two already existing networks: the Girls Child Advocacy Forum and the Gender in Media Forum. WBB was able to have a significant influence on the activities of the former, by designing materials for it and speaking up at large meetings about the importance of positive messages to engage men. While WBB joined the second forum later in the project, a similar outcome is anticipated.

3.6.2 Viet Nam: Networking with networks

In Viet Nam, the primary focus of networking was on involving government partners more closely in the work. Sharing with other NGOs also occurred, mainly through existing interest group meetings coordinated by the NGO Resource Center in Hanoi. Project staff also participated in quarterly meetings of the Gender Action Partnership Network and worked with other NGOs to strengthen the Reproductive Health Network. By actively participating in these groups, the project team had many opportunities to share information about project activities, to demonstrate to others how to approach gender issues from a male perspective instead of only from the female perspective. Furthermore, these meetings provided opportunities for HealthBridge's Viet Nam team to learn about the activities of member organizations and to collect new information about gender and reproductive health more broadly.

3.6.3 India: Community networking

Networking can include outreach to communities as well as organizations. In India for instance,

linkages were successfully made with nearby communities that had, through local community empowerment, made a commitment to change their own long-accepted norms of female harassment and killings for monetary gain (i.e. dowry deaths).

3.6.4 International networking



One of the most significant networking successes in the project has been the sharing of experiences, lessons learned, and more specifically of research protocol (data collection and analysis) across countries. The bringing together of staff from Bangladesh, India, Viet Nam, and latterly Nepal and Pakistan, over the course of the project, was of great value to the individual countries, and increased the overall quality of the project as a whole.

3.7 Component F: Project Management

Successful management of the Gender Programme included a close working relationship between the Ottawa- and Dhaka-based HealthBridge teams, its offices in Viet Nam and India, and local partner organizations in Bangladesh, Viet Nam, Nepal, and Pakistan. The HealthBridge team completed several activities related to improving the local management of the programme, including conducting administrative audits of some programme offices, providing training in budgeting and forecasting, and technical assistance in financial management and reporting. An internal evaluation of the programme was undertaken towards the end.

3.7.1 Management Structure

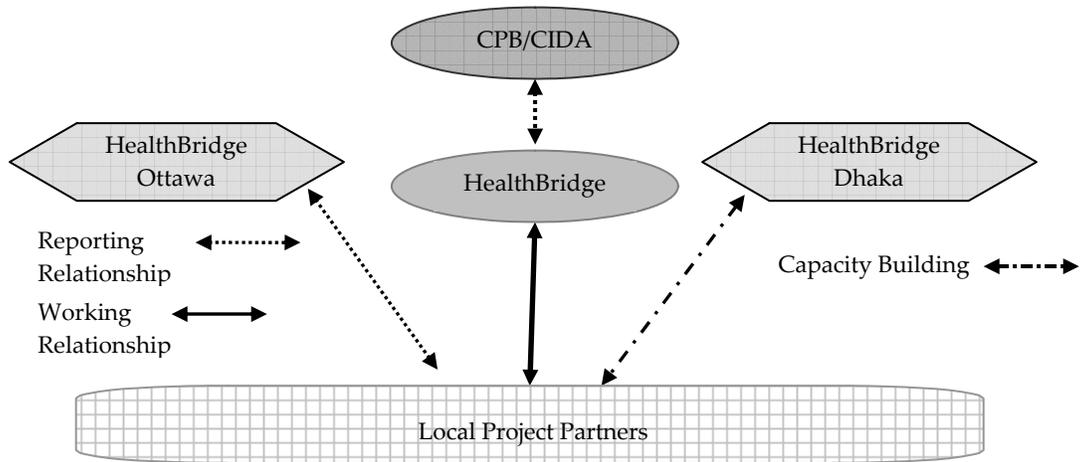
The Gender Programme was managed cooperatively at two levels. The HealthBridge team in Ottawa was responsible for overall quality control and management of the project, particularly in planning, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating, and implementation of the project's activities. This was strengthened by the presence of HealthBridge staff in the field (Bangladesh, Viet Nam and India). At the second level, the Gender Programme partners managed their own programmes and reported to Ottawa regularly (see Section 8 below).

In Ottawa, the Gender Programme was overseen by the HealthBridge Executive Director (Sian FitzGerald). The project activities were co-managed by a part-time Project Director (Lori Jones) who had responsibility for narrative and financial reporting as well as some partner capacity building, and by a Regional Director based in Dhaka (Debra Efroymsen), who had responsibility for conceptual development and providing technical assistance to the local partners. A Programme Manager in India, Shoba John, supported the initial India program by providing technical assistance to ESAF and MPC. In Viet Nam, the Country Director provided technical and management assistance to the Vietnamese project team.

3.7.2 Interns

Chinh Nguyen, Andrew Liu, Joe Gamble, Brian Johnston, and Kristen Allerton all served as interns in either HealthBridge's Viet Nam office or at WBB during the implementation of the Gender Programme.

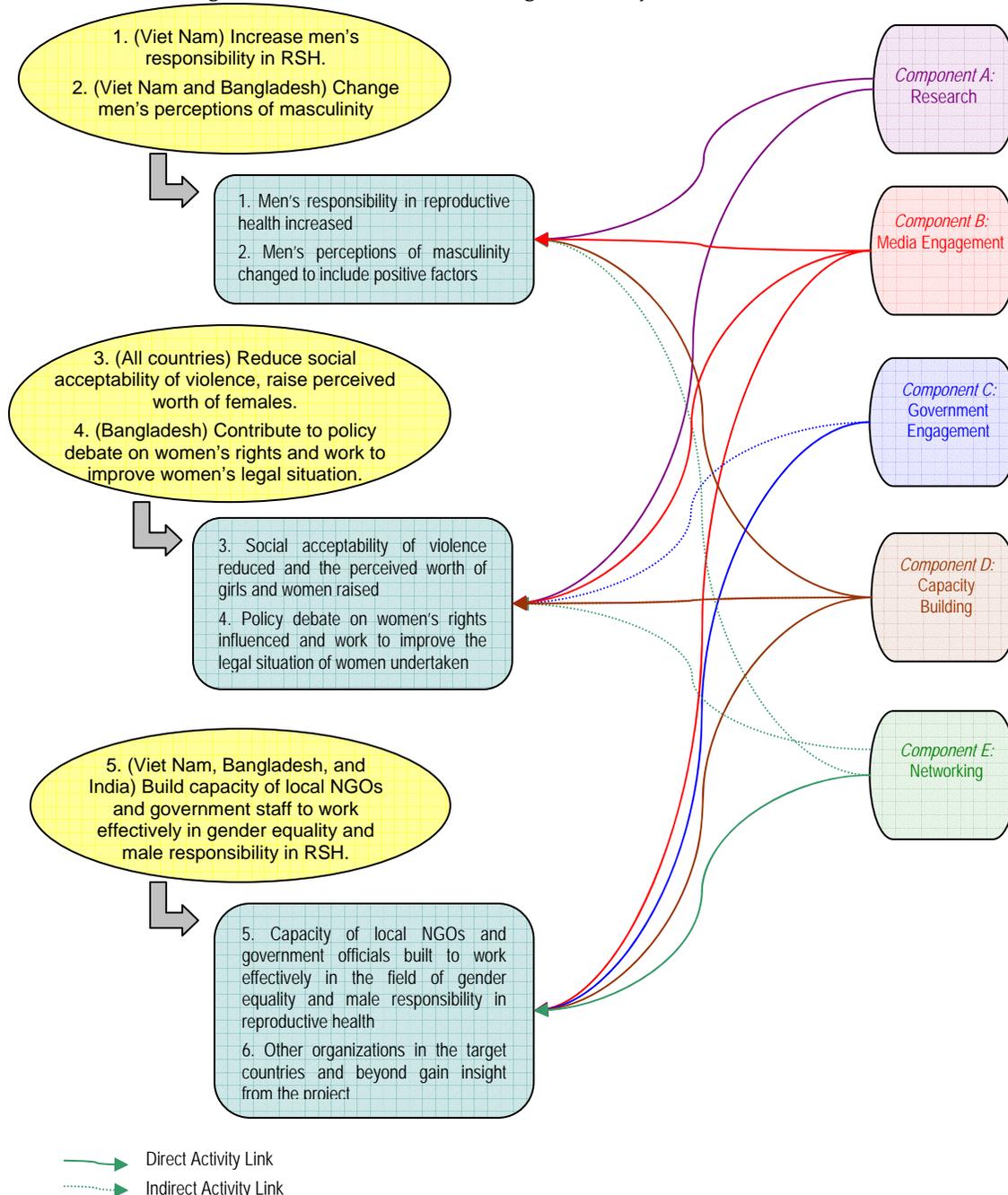
Figure 3: Project Management Structure



4 Results: Goal Achievement

The successful completion of the many activities in the Gender Programme’s six components fed into the achievement of its six primary outcomes, and ultimately of its overall goal. This section will detail the contribution of the project’s activities to the achievement of its planned results. Objectives and expected outcomes are grouped together in Figure 4 (see below) by broader theme to focus the discussion which follows.

Figure 4: Overview of Gender Programme Objectives and Planned Outcomes



The details below refer to the CPB Project Planning Sheet, which is found in Appendix 1. In

addition, Table 5 below provides a summary of Output and Outcome Indicators.

4.1 Assessment of Outcomes 1 and 2

Tied to Objectives 1 and 2, Outcomes 1 and 2 primarily sought “Increased men’s responsibility in reproductive health” and “Men’s perceptions of masculinity changed to include positive factors⁵.” These outcomes were achieved primarily through Research (Component A), Media Engagement (Component B) and Capacity Building (Component D). In addition, Networking (Component E) contributed to their achievement.

Success is evident in these two outcomes, especially in India and Vietnam, particularly related to

| Table 2: Achieving Outcomes 1 and 2 | |
|--|--|
| | Outputs |
| .1. Identification of specific constraints to men’s increased involvement in reproductive health, and of specific strategies to overcome those constraints; more NGOs actively involved in this area; increased media coverage of the issue; hundreds of thousands of people reached through grassroots programs; increased involvement of men in reproductive health decisions. | 1. Viet Nam: A report documenting research findings about men’s role in reproductive health; mass media messages identified or created, tested, and aired. |
| 2. Change in men’s understanding of masculinity; more NGOs actively involved in this area; increased media coverage of the issue | 2. Bangladesh & Viet Nam: A paper outlining men’s ideas of masculinity and recommendations using local culture to improve the perception; positive messages identified or created, tested, and aired |

changing perceptions of masculinity and men’s roles in the family and to sexual and reproductive health. In all of the project countries, HealthBridge’s partners worked collaboratively with local NGOs and government officials (at one level or another). Each has also developed a leadership role in undertaking new approaches to gender equality – that is, engaging men.

4.1.1 Bangladesh

It was not possible within the span of the program to change men’s perceptions of masculinity in Bangladesh, which is a staunchly conservative country. However, WBB was successful at convincing other NGOs to reconsider their approach to some gender messaging, specifically in terms of convincing them to utilize positive images of men rather than negative ones. For example, when the Girls Child Advocacy

Forum was discussing the design of materials for Girl Child Day, the original design showed a man involved in housework. Group members opposed the design as “unrealistic”, but when a staff of WBB countered, the group agreed to use a positive message. If this change carries through into the future, it could have a wide impact on how male role models are presented.

A similar change was witnessed in the media, which at first felt that gender reporting should only portray women as victims of harmful male behaviour, but which quickly responded to the possibility of portraying women as economically productive and strong, and men as solving (not just causing) problems.

⁵ The wording of the outcomes in the narrative text is changed slightly from the original CPB Planning Sheet and the Tables that follow, simply owing to considerations of shortened wording and emphasis, but the intention behind each remains the same. These two outcomes are grouped together as both targeted men and changing behaviours.

4.1.2 *India*

The Indian component of the Gender Programme, implemented primarily by the Evangelical Social Action Forum⁶, sought to improve gender equality in the locality of Bhuj (Gujarat State), particularly by increasing the involvement of men in reproductive health concerns and by strengthening women's rights. As a result of the formation of men's and women's core groups for increasing awareness of "positive male involvement" in the families through group discussion, counselling, video and poster shows, and the creation and management of a community-based condom bank, men started helping in household chores, some began considering vasectomy and condoms as family planning options, and more men became involved in RSH discussions.

ESAF's work with four newspapers resulted in the publication of a number of articles about gender issues such as dowry, child marriage, and "missing girls," which in turn led to an increase in discussion about and awareness of the problems these traditions cause for women. The All India Radio broadcasted a gender issue episode, with a script supplied by ESAF. As a result of these and other "IEC" activities, public enquiries about gender issues increased, the Urban Family Welfare Department requested gender articles and messages to develop their IEC materials, Bhuj Municipality took immediate action to provide basic medical facilities to Sanjay Nagar and to provide birth certificates for children, and the print media took the initiative to focus on gender-related news and articles.

ESAF also lobbied government officials to recruit male health workers or animators to improve male-focused reproductive health services. As a result, the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) officials took the initiative to influence fathers about the gender issues through child care centres. At the end of 2006, the local government was planning to involve male community workers in rural areas in reproductive and child health, the district TB department had promoted schemes to involve male volunteers, the District IEC department had increased its promotion of non-surgical vasectomy through NGOs, the District Hospital had regularized health check-up camps in urban areas with the support of ICDS, the government had started taking the initiative to stop sex determination, and ICDS workers were reaching more people with gender messages.

4.1.3 *Viet Nam*

As the Gender Programme began, HealthBridge staff undertook a quick assessment of existing gender programming in Viet Nam; the result was the recognition that gender projects in Viet Nam concentrated almost exclusively on policy/advocacy or/and integrating gender into other projects, which made opportunities for collaboration more challenging but also more rewarding. HealthBridge was able to work closely with the Gender Action Partnership Network and the Reproductive Health Network to improve the capacity of local NGOs to work on gender and reproductive health issues while incorporating the "engaging men" approach. Local chapters of the Youth, Farmer's and Women's Unions were also actively involved in the design and implementation of the project in Viet Nam.

Viet Nam is, in many ways, still a traditional society in which men are expected to be "masculine" and women are expected to be "feminine" – with each of those stereotypes defined in fairly negative terms. HealthBridge's research on gender roles (see Section 3.2 for more information on

⁶ While MPC was involved in the project in the early days, it decided for administrative reasons not to continue.

the research undertaken) highlighted the generally-held beliefs that housework is women's responsibility, not something to be shared evenly among the household residents. When a man helped around the house, he was "volunteering" to do something for his family or "sacrificing" his free time simply to stay at home. Relatedly, sexuality was part of a man's character, and to participate in "sexual and reproductive health", particularly for that of a woman, was seen by many to be emasculating.

In addition to contributing to a better understanding of perceptions of gender equality in Viet Nam, the research studies also served another purpose: they highlighted these stereotypes to the persons participating in the interviews, and enabled the project team to develop interventions and messages (IEC materials, TV-spots, radio programmes, dramas, etc.) that were appropriate to the needs of local people and which countered the stereotypes that were the most negative. The training programmes that were developed based on the research results also contributed significantly to raising public awareness and initiating a change in public attitudes. Although the attributable impact of the project in the context of rapid social economic development is somewhat difficult to measure, the project's activities that addressed men, decisions about reproductive health, decisions about having boys or girls, and using contraceptive methods were appreciated by the local population as having contributed to a better understanding and desire for greater gender equality. The degree to which public attitudes were affected in three different communities (Suoi Hoa (SH), Que Vo (QV), and Dai Xuan (DX), Bac Ninh province) are noted below in Table 3⁷.

Table 3: Achievement of Outcomes 1 and 2 in Viet Nam

| <i>Gender equality issue</i> | <i>Pre-Gender Programme - 2004</i> | <i>Post-Gender Programme - 2008</i> | <i>Attribution</i> |
|---|--|---|--|
| Condom usage and men taking responsibility for sexual and reproductive health | SH: No one went to the local health station to ask about using or purchasing condoms. | SH: Men began asking for condoms and also asked questions about other contraceptive methods. | Men noted that their change in attitude was due to the project's activities and the information provided. |
| Opinion of having boy or girl children | All communities: Few people accepted having only a girl child(ren). The majority of couples tried to have at least one boy, at any cost (even at risk of the mother's death). Requiring boys to maintain the continuity of a family line led to a high birth rate. | SH: About 25% of couples interviewed indicated that they may accept to have girl(s) only, and would not try to have more babies in the hope of having a boy QV: Nowadays, it is not absolutely necessary to have a boy, provided that children are successful and well-educated. However, male chauvinism still exists in some families. | This change in attitude was partially due to the information disseminated and training provided through the project. It was also due to social-economic development and the recognition that having too many children (in the hopes of having a boy child) contributed to poverty. |

⁷ The information in this table was provided in an external evaluation of the project in Viet Nam. See Appendix E for the Evaluation Reports from Bangladesh and Vietnam.

| <i>Gender equality issue</i> | <i>Pre-Gender Programme - 2004</i> | <i>Post-Gender Programme - 2008</i> | <i>Attribution</i> |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | | DX: Many couples with only girls accepted to stop having more babies. | |
| Husband participates in pregnancy | Men rarely participated in any aspect of their wife's/girl friend's pregnancy (other than getting her pregnant). They did not attend medical check ups nor did they attend the delivery. Some men felt shame/embarrassment when their wives were delivering the baby and made a point of being "elsewhere." | Many husbands now take their wives to a health clinic for pregnant check-ups and even attend the delivery. They no longer feel "shame." | This change in attitude was partially due to the information disseminated and training provided through the project. Other social development activities also contributed to this change in attitude. |
| Sharing domestic tasks | All communities: The general opinion was that men were to be the primary breadwinners, while domestic tasks were solely a woman's duty. For example, when men laundered, they felt shame and were afraid of being seen doing this work by other people. | SH: Men are involved in doing housework more frequently. They do not feel shame when they do laundry, even laundering wives' clothes (!) QV: Every one shoulders responsibility for family affairs. Men can cook and do laundry. And, now, discussions between partners are conducted before decisions are made. DX: Sharing domestic work is more common, giving women more free time to participate in their communities. | The information disseminated through the project played a primary role in effecting this change in attitude and behaviour. |
| Family harmony and violence issues | All communities: Family violence was fairly common and many families were patriarchal. | SH: There have been many changes. There has been one case of familial violence in the village. Alcohol abuse is also declining. QV: Stories of domestic violence still exist but they occur less often. DX: Discussions between husbands and wives more common, while divorce less common. | The drama performances produced through the project proved to be a very effective method of bringing violence issues to light and promoting harmony in the family. |

While the changes listed above were specifically noted in only three communities, they reflect the tide of change that was affected by the project across all participating communities. The Gender Programme contributed to changes in the general perceptions of local populations and commune leaders related to the roles of men and their responsibilities in family life. Changes are evident: more men are involved in sharing housework and in providing opportunities for women to participate in social and community activities, family violence has been reduced, and families are better able to work as a team, rather than as individual members. At the same time,

After participating in the gender equality training, I personally changed remarkably. I found that it is necessary and I have helped my wife with everything, including family activities. Especially, the perception of people in community improved which helps me to change my behavior. Before, I was shamed by my friends as I helped my wife to do the housework. However, it is opposite nowadays in that I would get people's criticism if I showed gender inequality. In the other hand, the husband could do every thing for his wife without being afraid of "losing male face" like before. A husband who participated in a training course

the responsibility of men in family planning has been improved. Men living in participating communes are more regularly using contraception (rather than expecting their wives/girlfriends to do so), and participate more fully in their wives' pregnancy. Acceptance of only girl-children has increased, and the rate of third or subsequent children has declined⁸.

HealthBridge's continued efforts to raise awareness of issues related to male responsibility in the family, particularly related to sexual and reproductive health, also resulted in increased media coverage of gender issues – including TV, radio, and newspaper. After the training of media personnel, some of the participants called the HealthBridge office to request information to publish in their newspapers, and some journalists have since maintained regular contact with HealthBridge staff, and regularly ask for new information or seek technical support for specific gender issues such as gender-based violence in the family and sex-selective abortion. In turn, HealthBridge now has a list of journalists and editors of national newspapers in charge of gender and family issues with whom news and important information can be shared. Messages about gender equality generally, and about HealthBridge's Gender Programme more specifically, gained significantly more coverage after media orientations.

After only a few days of showing the TV spots broadcasted through VTV1 and 2, colleagues from other NGOs and government agencies phoned HealthBridge staff to ask for copies to show at their events, including a violence prevention program in Nghe An province. This facilitated a far wider dissemination of the Gender Programme's messages than had been initially anticipated.

In terms of *Outcomes 1 and 2*, therefore, progress was made in each of the project countries to improve male involvement in family issues and/or to improve the way that male role models are promoted. HealthBridge's project partners have also enhanced their capacity to act as leaders in gender equality both within their own countries and regionally.

4.2 Assessment of Outcomes 3 and 4

Tied to Objectives 3 and 4, Outcomes 3 and 4 sought *"reduced social acceptability of violence reduced*

⁸ A significant side-effect of this has also been a reduced abortion rate in participating communities: abortion has typically been used in Viet Nam as a form of birth control and sex selection.

and increased perceived worth of girls and women” and “contribution to the policy debate on women’s rights and improvements in the legal situation of women.” This outcome was achieved primarily through Research (Component A), Media Engagement (Component B) and Capacity Building (Component D). In addition, Government Engagement (Component C) and Networking (Component E) contributed to the achievement of this outcome.

Table 4: Achieving Outcomes 3 and 4

| Table 4: Achieving Outcomes 3 and 4 | |
|---|--|
| | Outputs |
| 3. Change in the social acceptability of violence towards women and children; identification of the reasons men resort to violence; recommendations, based on local culture, to counter that acceptability and improve the perceived value of women; increased media coverage of the issue; change in perception of the value of women. | 3. Papers on the social acceptability of violence towards women and on the perception on the value of women; mass media messages identified or created, tested, and aired. |
| 4. WBB is actively networked on gender and violence prevention; more NGOs are involved in the issue; increased media coverage of specific legal measures needed to improve women’s rights; politicians more engaged in work to improve women’s rights. | 4. Bangladesh: WBB becomes active member of strong networks on law and policy regarding women’s rights. |

As with Outcomes 1 and 2, tremendous success was evidenced in some aspects of Outcomes 3 and 4. Of particular note was the research that was undertaken and published in each of the partner countries. The impetus behind this research was the realization in Bangladesh that one of the key driving forces behind domestic violence is a perception that women have little or no value. This led to WBB undertaking research on the economic contribution of women’s unpaid work – and to the calculation that women’s unpaid work, if counted, would double or triple the country’s GDP. The research was then adapted to Viet Nam, Nepal, Pakistan, and India, with similar results being realized. Some of the final research reports were produced in time to include in this report, and are found in the Appendices.

4.2.1 Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, it became clear early on that addressing the acceptability of violence must include women as well as men, as mothers-in-law may often play an important role in violence towards their son’s wives. Rather than focus on attitudinal change which may or may not lead to behavior change, or on conflict resolution (important though that is), the Gender team focused on raising the perceived worth of girls and women. The program was quite successful in this area, producing a highly valuable research report and conducting programs that received much attention by NGOs and the media. WBB hopes and believes that raising the perceived value of females will in itself lead to reductions of violence.

While it was not possible to determine if changes have been made to men’s actual beliefs about the value of women, it is clear that there is now increased awareness of the issue as a result of the research undertaken and the results disseminated. This is particularly true of the NGOs and other partner organizations involved in similar work. Interestingly, when WBB performed the research on the economic value of women, interviewees would initially respond with disparaging comments about women, but when they had spent a long time discussing all the different work women do, interviewees would then say that women’s work is quite important. This suggests that pointing out the various roles of women will help raise their value.

Preliminary work was undertaken to improve media coverage on the issue of violence against women, in particular to show that such violence is not the norm; an increase was also noted in the number of radio programs and newspaper articles being published about a wide range of issues affecting women, including the environment, economics, and violence. That said, while WBB did gain much media attention (both electronic and print) through its work, it put more emphasis on convincing other NGOs and networks, such as the Girls Child Advocacy Forum, to focus on positive images of men in their work, for a greater reach than by working alone.

WBB had not been active in gender work prior to participating in the Gender programme, but is now a highly valued member of two networks, as well as achieving recognition by many NGOs long working on gender issues. New NGOs have become involved, and attention was gained towards the need to improve women's inheritance rights. A significant and somewhat unexpected outcome is the great importance women have assumed in the 2008 government budget, with various advantages given to women.

Other indications of achievement include an invitation by a major NGO to speak at the opening of its gender workshop; receptivity of many NGOs to the idea of valuing women's work and putting forth positive images of men; an increase in the number of radio programs and newspaper articles being published about a wide range of issues affecting women, including the environment, economics, and violence; and a greater understanding among some media outlets/personnel of the links that exist between economics, environmental issues, transportation issues, and violence against women.

WBB continues to play a leadership role in identifying gender-related issues, researching them, and providing information to other organizations. WBB repeatedly finds that its message of emphasizing positive roles of men is very well-received; positive reactions include from the many NGOs participating in the Girl Child Advocacy Forum.

In addition, some advances were made in engaging the government in making changes to perceptions of gender equality. Following the production of WBB's research report on the economic contribution of women's unpaid work, the Deputy Director of the Department of Social Welfare contacted WBB to express his interest in the issue of calculating a value for women's unpaid work. He asked for more information, asked about the possibilities in Bangladesh, and where in the world women's work is included in GDP. This result is a key reflection of the changes of attitudes towards the economic value of women following work done by project partners.

Addressing women's rights in Bangladesh proved to be overly ambitious in one sense, given the great complexity and political and religious sensitivity of the issue. However, the research report on the unpaid work of women should contribute substantially to the policy debate, and the information should be of great value to others in the field working to improve the legal situation of women. WBB also engaged in a number of advocacy campaigns and worked to involve NGOs throughout the country in those campaigns. While not able to make significant progress in addressing the issue directly, WBB is thus likely to have contributed a valuable tool towards this work in the form of its research, which will facilitate the efforts of other NGOs working on women's rights.

4.2.2 Viet Nam

In addition to the attitudinal and behavioural changes made related to men's role in the family and sexual and reproductive health, the activities in Vietnam also led to reduced levels of family violence in the participating communes. Before the project began in 2004, many families were patriarchal in nature and family violence was fairly common. By 2008, however, many changes were evident. In Suoi Hoa, only one case of familial violence was reported in the village, and alcohol abuse was reported to be on the decline. In Que Vo, stories of domestic violence still exist but they occur less often. In Dai Xuan, discussions between husbands and wives about a wide range of issues had become more common while divorce was becoming less common. These changes were attributed to the drama performances that were produced through the project, which proved to be a very effective method of bringing violence issues to light and promoting harmony in the family.

In terms of *Outcomes 3 and 4* therefore, the most significant result achieved was the multi-country research on the economic contribution of women's unpaid work, which will contribute to high level discussions on the value of women and the need for governments to stop seeing women-focused programmes as a drain on the economy.

4.3 Assessment of Outcomes 5 and 6

Tied to Objective 5, Outcomes 5 and 6 sought *"increased capacity of staff in local NGOs and government related to gender equality-related work"* and *"increased insight among other organizations in the target countries and beyond."*

This outcome was achieved through Media Engagement (Component B), Government Engagement (Component C), Capacity Building (Component D), and Networking (Component E).

Vietnam, Nepal, and Pakistan all replicated the Bangladesh research on the economic value of women's unpaid work, India has begun the research, and researchers in Malaysia are expressing an interest in doing so, all utilizing adapted versions of the Bangladeshi protocol. This is a very important outcome, as it had not been done previously in these countries and the research teams were told by local partners on more than once occasion that it was not possible. Showing how the research can be conducted and analyzed was a major contribution of WBB. The publication of the gender Lessons Learned book will contribute to international learning and sharing.

4.3.1 Bangladesh

While WBB achieved less than it had hoped in building the capacity of local NGOs to work

Table 5: Achieving Outcomes 5 and 6

| Table 5: Achieving Outcomes 5 and 6 | |
|---|---|
| | Outputs |
| 5. Staff of local NGOs and government officers acquire new skills in gender equality-related work; local NGOs are better equipped to seek funds to continue their activities; improved organizational policy among NGOs on gender equality; expressed government commitment in gender equality. | 5. Bangladesh & Viet Nam: Informal reports and evaluations on capacity building workshops with NGOs and government officers. |
| 6. Other organizations in the target countries and beyond gain insight from the project | 6. Bangladesh & Viet Nam: Reports disseminated among NGOs, international organizations, and governments; lessons learned and experience shared globally via website, conferences and other means. |

effectively in the field of gender equality and male responsibility in reproductive health, it was successful at bringing some new NGOs into the work and at raising the capacity of others, particularly in terms of gaining a new and enhanced understanding of gender work. Most NGOs working on gender issues in the country focus on very limited issues, such as teaching women their rights, without addressing the obstacles women face when trying to gain respect for their rights. Through their work with WBB, several NGOs now understand that gender work must often also include men, that promoting positive images rather than challenging negative ones of men is vital, and that the important contributions of women who do not work for pay must be recognized. WBB was also successful in building the capacity of its own staff, thereby laying a significant foundation for future work on gender.

4.3.2 Viet Nam

In Viet Nam, both the community-level interventions and the capacity-building activities were designed based upon the results of the preliminary quantitative and qualitative research studies on the roles and responsibilities of men in the family and reproductive health care.

The project was implemented at two levels: national and provincial. At the national level, HealthBridge worked in collaboration with the Magazine on Women's Science, the Institute of Sociology, the Institute of Social Development Studies, the National Committee on Ideology and Culture, and Vietnam Television. At the provincial level, HealthBridge collaborated with the Bac Ninh Center for Health Education and Communication (an agency of the Bac Ninh Department of Health). In addition, the Bac Ninh Women's Union participated in training workshops at the provincial, district and commune levels. The project team has also coordinated with Bac Ninh Farmer's Union to conduct a series of training on strengthening knowledge on gender and reproductive health.

The capacity of staff members of the provincial Women's Union in particular was improved significantly, related to their ability to provide guidance to Union members about gender equality issues. These women participated in training workshops that imparted knowledge and basic skills in gender equality communication around the role of men in family planning and sharing domestic work. Many participants were invited to take part in drama performances and other related activities because they showed good knowledge and skills that could benefit their community members. People trained as "communicators" expressed and demonstrated greater confidence to talk about gender issues.

Because the objective of the project was to build capacity, to develop resources, and teach TOT (training for trainers), it was different from other activities...After this project, our staff will act as key trainers conducting short training courses in communes and villages. We integrated these training courses into the Union's activities in order to promote gender equality and bring benefits to women themselves. Vice Chairwomen of Bac Ninh Women's Union.

After becoming trainers, and under the direction of the province and district, the trained women (heads of village-level Women's Unions) actively organized themselves to disseminate information about gender equality within their respective networks. They integrated this information

dissemination into other local activities, thereby ensuring that gender equality became a cross-cutting theme in agriculture, health, and other issues. This demonstrated an extremely positive project impact and will contribute to longer-term sustainability.

Members of the Bac Ninh Women’s Union and the local government bodies (from the provincial to commune levels) were trained on gender issues. Staff at the Bac Ninh Center for Health Education and Communication and leaders in participating communes in three districts gained skills in project management, developing IEC materials, and conducting research, in addition to improving their understanding about gender equality and gender issues.

At national level, the project team provided training courses for two groups that play important roles in promoting and strengthening gender equality in Vietnam: the media and NCFAW (National Committee for the Advancement of Women). Enhancing perceptions about gender equality among newspaper reporters was an extremely practical intervention that had both micro and macro impacts on improving gender issues in Vietnam. In addition, all secretaries of Committees for Advancement of Women in all cities and provinces, ministries and branches attended a 3-day training course on gender equality and the new gender equality law that had just been approved.

Gender training using the TOT model was very effective to help the Women’s Union promote activities on gender equality. We organized two training courses for women who are responsible for women’s issues at the provincial and district levels and in some communes. Before, we only attended gender training that provided gender and sex concepts for leaders. These trainings now are more advanced and include communication skills in the family, gender in reproductive health, role of men. We especially like 2-way training method. Before, in training with old method, participants were sleepy or left early. However, the way that the project implemented training courses on gender with lecturers from Hanoi is impressive, having role play and participants were happy...After these training courses, districts made plans and sought further training. The content is new so women like them very much. After these training courses, members of women’s unions, from provincial level to district and commune level, become active communicators. Summary of interview with Vice Chairwomen of Bac Ninh Women’s Union.

Prior to this project, the knowledge and skills of these key secretaries about gender equality were limited. The project provided a good opportunity for the committee to strengthen capacity, which in turn improved its ability to implement its mandate.

The project also contributed to the broader dialogue on gender equality in Vietnam, particularly in Bac Ninh. During the baseline survey, it became clear that many people seemed to be unfamiliar with this phrase; in addition the term gender equality appeared to be particularly threatening to men, who thought that “gender equality” would only give benefits to women and that once gender equality was achieved, their position would be weakened. However, in-depth interviews conducted with people after the project’s implementation demonstrated a much greater understanding of the term and recognition that gender equality benefits men and women.

In addition to these results, the Vietnamese project team participated in regional training workshops in Thailand, thereby ensuring a broader dissemination of the approaches and lessons learned of this project.

In terms of *Outcomes 5 and 6* therefore, significant advances were made in both Bangladesh and Viet Nam in raising the capacity of local NGOs and other organizations to engage in gender equality work. In addition, the expansion of HealthBridge’s Gender programme to Nepal and Pakistan resulted from the interest of organizations in those countries in replicating the research on the economic contribution of women’s unpaid work in order to set the basis for future work to increase the perceived value of women. The results of this research will be disseminated nationally, regionally, and internationally.

4.4 Assessment of Impact

The overall goal of the Gender programme was *“To improve gender equality, particularly by increasing the involvement of men in RSH and strengthening women’s rights.”* While an examination of the achievement of the programme’s outcomes indicates that it has definitely strengthened local capacity to engage in gender equality work and improved male involvement in family issues and/or to improve the way that male role models are promoted, measuring any impact beyond that would not be feasible within the timeframe and resources of the programme. Significant progress has been made, in particular, in raising public interest in the value of women, which will hopefully lead to reduced rates of violence and improved programmes for women in the future.

4.5 Assessment of Variances

There were no significant shortfalls between outputs/outcomes planned and achieved. In fact, there were a number of positive variances between outputs/outcomes planned and achieved (i.e., the research on the economic contribution of women’s unpaid work had not been planned and yet contributed significantly to the results achieved by the project) as a result of the evolution of the programme’s activities to respond to existing conditions, without losing sight of the original project framework and objectives.

Another significant area in which HealthBridge achieved more than it had planned was in the addition of support to countries not included in the original proposal. The additional activities contributed to strengthening research capacity in those countries (Pakistan and Nepal), and also to increased international lessons learned through sharing with them.

Some anticipated results proved to be more difficult to achieve than originally conceived, particularly in Bangladesh. However, this did not prove to be a negative experience, as it enabled the WBB team to regroup and take the project in a different direction while still respecting the programme’s objectives.

5 Risks and Assumptions

5.1 Assumptions

HealthBridge’s main assumption when the Gender Programme was developed was that it would be possible to change men’s and women’s thoughts and behaviours regarding “gender equality” through grassroots messages and mass media work. The assumption had already been shown to be at least partially true through evaluated programs such as Soul City in South Africa; however, HealthBridge and its partners were proposing to try new approaches; two effective programme strategies proved to be “engaging men” and “valuing women” as outlined above.

5.2 Output Level Risks

At the Output level, the main risk identified was that language barriers and cultural differences among the various Gender partners would hinder effective networking and sharing of lessons learned. The Gender partners were mostly non-native English speakers, and the cultural social norms around gender were very different between Bangladesh, India, and Viet Nam (and later in the sharing of research approaches and lessons with Pakistan and Nepal). The Gender Programme Team addressed, and mitigated, this risk directly through a number of means.

HealthBridge's Regional Director speaks both Bengali and Vietnamese, which facilitated the sharing of information and ideas that were not easily expressed by the local partners in English. It was interesting to note, though, that the language problems nearly disappeared during direct interpersonal encounters; the excitement of sharing experiences overcame any language challenges. The benefits of including different cultures and perspectives in the network far outweighed any disadvantages – it enabled the partners to better appreciate the challenges that were faced by colleagues in other countries and helped them to look at their own issues from different angles. One example of this was the difficulty that colleagues from South Asia had in understanding certain aspects of the political situation in Vietnam (lack of right to demonstrate), and similarly of the Vietnamese colleagues in understanding the prevalent situation in South Asia (the way that women are treated). Realizing how very different countries within the same overall region are helps to force people to re-examine their existing beliefs and prejudices, and discover new approaches and possibilities.

5.3 Outcome Level Risks

At the Outcome level, the main risk identified was that *gender issues are sensitive, and even project partners may find it difficult to accept new concepts of gender*. Many of the men in the project's target audience, and even the women, may have felt challenged and threatened by new approaches to looking at gender. HealthBridge lessened these problems by emphasizing the positive aspects of change, that is, how men and women would benefit from changes in men's behavior. By studying lessons learned from projects in other countries, by conducting sufficient research and evaluation, HealthBridge increased its chance of success.

5.4 Impact Level Risks

At the Impact level, the main risk identified was *the lack of political commitment to gender equality* in any or all of the partner countries. Although this was a potentially serious risk, it was mitigated by working with governments and also at the community level to effect changes in attitudes and behaviours. As noted in Sections 3 and 4 above, some project activities focused on engaging the government, by providing capacity building, knowledge sharing, and technical assistance, in order to build political commitment to gender equality. That is, the Gender Programme Team's primary mitigation strategy to deal with this risk was Component C (Government Engagement) and Component D (Capacity Building). As mentioned elsewhere in this report, all partners achieved significant success in increasing government engagement in gender equality.

6 Gender Equality

This entire programme addressed gender equality.

7 Public Engagement

A key aspect of HealthBridge's project work in Canada is information dissemination activities and advocacy about international health and development issues, including gender. HealthBridge sees public engagement as a means to provide education and information to the Canadian public and to international audiences, particularly those working directly and indirectly in the health and related sectors, about the key issues and research results generated through its projects and programmes. The goal of HealthBridge's public engagement is to share experiences and

knowledge, to build awareness, and to increase public interest and involvement in the development and implementation of health and development activities that could provide benefit to the populations of developing countries.

HealthBridge used several different venues to disseminate information about the Gender Programme to the Canadian public. A programme brochure was developed and disseminated through Canadian and international conferences and HealthBridge's website. The initial country-level research reports on the roles and responsibilities of men in Bangladesh and Viet Nam were published and disseminated. The research reports on the economic contribution of women's work are currently being completed and will also be disseminated through HealthBridge's website, at conferences, and in meetings.

Presentations about the programme were made at the 2007 Canadian Conference on International Health (CCIH), which attracts approximately 500 participants. HealthBridge's website provides an additional forum for the dissemination of information to the general public. A project-specific page was developed and maintained, as has been done for HealthBridge's other projects. A video documenting the project was also produced. HealthBridge Programme staff participated in conferences, workshops, and seminars on topics relevant to this project as an opportunity to promote the programme and its results. A book on lessons learned from the program was written based on the work of the different countries, and widely disseminated. Finally, HealthBridge was contacted by the Population Council to participate in a global survey of organizations involved in gender and HIV/AIDS programming. In particular the survey was examining the strategic direction such programmes were taking in selecting beneficiary groups. Although HealthBridge's gender programme is not directly related to HIV/AIDS, it was encouraged to participate. Following the interview, HealthBridge's work was included in the overall report, with the notation that *"The programs you and your colleagues are working on are really tackling difficult issues that a lot of other programs skirt."*

At a more personal level, the Gender Programme hosted several young Canadian professional interns, who often had their first experiences with international development. According to their end-of-internship reports, each was profoundly affected by his/her time working on the programme, and had a much greater appreciation for the international development community. They each learned about gender equality issues, which in many cases was new to them, as well as about local politics.

8 Shared Responsibility and Accountability

HealthBridge's approach to project management emphasizes the active participation of local partners, which supports an integrated approach to capacity building using participatory planning and evaluation practices. A formal partnership agreement between HealthBridge and each of the local partners was developed at the beginning of the programme to detail each partner's specific roles and responsibilities; how the team would work together, including guidelines and procedures for financial reporting, decision-making, and logistics. Ultimate accountability, however, rested with HealthBridge, as the Contribution Agreement Signatory.

HealthBridge assumed overall project management and financial responsibility for the Gender Programme, including the provision of technical assistance, identifying and recruiting interns,

project monitoring, control, management of financial risk, and reporting to CIDA. This management also included conducting several project review missions. In addition, HealthBridge was responsible for Canadian public engagement and information dissemination activities. It also provided capacity building in project management to the local partners, through regular correspondence and specific skill-building workshops.

Each of the local partners was responsible for the design and implementation of its own activities. They also represented the programme to international audiences whenever the opportunity presented itself, providing a local “face” to the programme. Some of the local partners hosted Canadian interns, providing mentoring to them. The local partners worked with HealthBridge to develop semi-annual work plans and quarterly budgets, and provided monthly narrative reports on activities, outputs, outcomes, and related expenses. These reports were rolled up into HealthBridge’s reports to CIDA.

In terms of the specific activities, HealthBridge was responsible for providing conceptual input, which was then adapted to the local contexts by the partners, with HealthBridge oversight. However, the overall program direction in each country was shaped by the local partner, utilizing its expertise and knowledge of its local conditions and ever-changing political situation⁹. This combination of support and advice from Canada, with local expertise and independence, was critical for programmatic flexibility that allowed the individual successes unique to each country.

9 Sustainability

HealthBridge sought to increase the capacity of local NGOs and build a strong international network among them to address gender equality issues. By taking an approach that focused on “engaging men” and “valuing women”, the Gender programme team found a niche in the area of gender which has since raised much interest. The capacity building provided to local officials in the programme countries will facilitate the achievement of results far into the future.

In Vietnam, in particular, the activities undertaken enabled leaders at the commune, provincial, and national levels to better lead and sustain gender equality activities: *“Compared to other projects, this project has been very effective. Gender inequality is a big problem, so the intervention is necessary in Bac Ninh. The project was appropriate to local needs so almost all communes have contributed their own resources to implement project’s activities. After finishing project, some integrated activities could be sustained by local partners and project-supported collaborators/communicators could be still functioning. There is a general guidance and the participation of commune people’s committees and related stakeholders. Due to enthusiasm for the project, there was a lot of creativity during the project implementation that will achieve the best effectiveness for promoting gender equality in our province”* Comment taken from a participant in a focus group discussion in Que Vo, Bac Ninh.

Ownership of the programme, and of the Gender network through participatory approaches in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the programme, will also contribute to longer term sustainability. Collaboration and sharing of information, lessons learned, and methodologies with

⁹ This included the transformation to a military government in Bangladesh, declaration of a State of Emergency in both Bangladesh and Pakistan (lasting for over 18 months in Bangladesh), and the usual vagaries of South Asian politics, not to mention the ever-present natural disasters, including a disastrous cyclone in Bangladesh.

other local organizations, international agencies and other funders further enhances the potential long-term reach and effect of the programme.

HealthBridge has developed a concept note for a larger Gender programme that will enable it to continue supporting local partners and to follow the momentum that has been generated. It is currently seeking funding for this programme.

10 Lessons Learned

Due to the overwhelming success of this program, and the desire to share some of the keys to that success with international partners, HealthBridge has prepared a public engagement document about the lessons learned through the implementation of the Gender Project, entitled “*Promoting Male Responsibility towards Greater Gender Equality: Lessons Learned*”. The document is included separately with this report, and a summary of the lessons learned is presented below.

Gender Issues

A number of themes and issues emerged through the implementation of this Gender Project, and lessons were learned about each.

Gender stereotypes: From infancy, people are subjected to continual reinforcement of gender stereotypes—what it means to be a boy or girl, man or woman—based not on biological but rather on cultural differences between the sexes. These stereotypes affect all areas of our lives, are often accepted without question, and may cause tremendous, albeit unintentional, harm. The primary lessons learned related to gender stereotypes were:

- It is helpful to remember that gender equality involves men as well as women and that antagonizing men is unlikely to lead to significant progress towards gender equality. In order to attain positive involvement of men, we need to encourage, not attack, them. That is, rather than portraying women as victims and men as perpetrators of negative acts, it is important to remember the positive contributions that many men make and the positive role they can play within the family and to model positive behaviour.
- Some of the people and organizations working on gender issues accept gender stereotypes as cultural absolutes that cannot be changed. Yet culture obviously is very fluid and *does* change frequently; witness the rapid influx and acceptance of television, cars, computers, mobile phones, and so on, into otherwise “traditional” cultures and the significant changes those inventions have brought. Rather than accept gender stereotypes as inevitable or feel that it is culturally insensitive to change them, we should all be aware of the harms caused by many of those stereotypes and work together to achieve positive change. We have discovered through our work that many of those working on gender issues are open to change as long as they are approached in a friendly, cooperative (non-aggressive) way.

Gender and reproductive and sexual health: Reproductive and sexual health (RSH) programs typically target women. This occurs for a number of reasons, including the fact that it is women who get pregnant and are thus more motivated to use contraception. Whether as a result of this fact or due to biology, most contraceptives currently available are only for use by women. In addition, women are generally “easier to reach” than men; that is, more likely to come to meetings or clinics. But women also tend to have far less decision-making power in the family,

even with regards to their own health. Therefore, women's desire to practice family planning may not actually result in their safety from unwanted pregnancy or disease. The primary lessons learned related to gender and reproductive and sexual health were:

- Low condoms usage rates in some countries or communities may have less to do with culture than expected, and may thus be relatively easy to address. For instance, the usual source of condoms may be inappropriate (e.g. wrong hours, location, or unfriendly attitude of staff).¹⁰ Simply by establishing a "condom bank" in a slum community in India, condoms became locally available at convenient times and locations, making their use far more likely despite existing conservative attitudes.
- While addressing sexuality is a sensitive and difficult matter, it may not be as difficult as many believe. Research in Viet Nam confirmed that many people are eager to discuss the intimate details of their relations and that greater communication could lead to happier marriages. Following that research, the Viet Nam program created a manual for use by those working at the community level to address RSH which includes activities to encourage open discussion of sexual issues between husbands and wives.
- Despite cultural norms for men's sexual behaviour, many men are in fact willing and able to participate more fully in RSH issues such as family planning. What has been lacking for these men is a "comfort zone" within which they are given the opportunity to do so. That is, the main issue preventing men from assuming more responsibility for their and their partner's RSH may not be mainly cultural or personal, but simply the lack of encouraging and enabling environments.

Gender, violence, and economics: While men are more often the victims of some forms of violence than women (for instance, homicide and "arbitrary" imprisonment, such as for politics or drug possession), men are often the greatest perpetrators of violence in the family. WBB's program in Bangladesh looked specifically at the issue of male violence against their wives. In addition to the emotional harm caused, violence is also a serious health issue and can represent major costs to governments in terms of health care, reduced productivity, and psychological problems. The primary lessons learned related to gender, violence, and economics were:

- Women's economic dependence on men, due to lower earning opportunities and lack of full inheritance rights, makes it difficult for them to escape violent situations or to stand up for themselves in violent conflicts. Therefore, two of the many approaches needed to reduce violence against women may be a) to demonstrate the socio-economic value of women and b) to lessen women's economic dependence on men by increasing women's rights to inheritance, property, and a decent wage. While such areas may seem more difficult to approach than promoting messages about the unacceptability of violence, they may reach closer to the core reasons behind the violence.
- In terms of messages about violence, it is important to understand how men *and* women view violence against women. That is, they may differentiate needless, senseless violence

¹⁰ Research in the United States by young people indicated that in many pharmacies, condoms are so placed that it is necessary to ask for them, rather than simply taking them to the counter. While the reason is obviously to avoid theft, the result is that many shy young people avoid purchasing condoms.

(such as the husband being in a drunken rage and beating his wife for no reason) from “discipline”, where the violence is used “appropriately” to teach the wife a lesson. Vague messages may be of little good if they do not take into account the way people view violence.

- ❑ Women, particularly mothers-in-law, can play a role in perpetuating violence. (For many women, the first time they assume a position of power is when their sons marry, and power is itself a necessary precondition for committing violent acts). It is important to remember that women are being socialized in the same system as men and are learning the same lessons about the low value of women and the acceptability of violence in certain situations. That is, in some sense, women *and* men are both victims of the socialization which teaches both sexes to accept and act on negative ideas about gender roles. Liberation of both sexes from the most oppressive gender stereotypes may be needed to escape negative views which encourage violence rather than family harmony.
- ❑ Not all men are violent; we have much to learn from those men who stand up against violence and we should recruit them to work with us. Further, violence may fruitfully be viewed as a community rather than an individual issue; communities that resist violence are more likely to harbour non-violent families. Recognizing that the positive exists, at the individual and community level, allows us to seek it out and to promote those attitudes and values that encourage non-violence.

Women and transport: A major issue facing women in South Asia is mobility. For various social and cultural reasons, women’s mobility is often quite limited. This has direct effects on the lives of women themselves and on those dependent on women, particularly children and the elderly. Women and dependents’ access to education, health care, healthy foods, recreation, and other opportunities are all limited or even non-existent when women’s mobility is hampered. We know that women’s own education improves children’s welfare and family planning; yet we may forget that children’s access to health care and education often depends on women’s mobility. The primary lessons learned related to gender and transportation were:

- ❑ Women have different needs and face different problems than men in terms of mobility. The concerns and needs of women must be integrated into transport policy for the benefit of all. Women have more to gain or lose from changes in the transport system as they are more affected by bad options. Finally, women’s transport needs *can* and *must* be taken into account in transport and urban planning.
- ❑ Transport and urban planners often unconsciously plan for healthy, young, active men, and tend to forget that others exist—women, children, the elderly, the disabled, and so on. It is important to share information and ideas, reminding planners that different people have different needs.
- ❑ Those who suffer from being excluded from transport planning are often not in the position to complain about their exclusion, nor do they necessarily realize how they would benefit from different planning. More outspoken women may also be reluctant to speak about the specific problems faced by women, as they wish to show that women are not weak and that women can adapt to a system designed for men. This can mean that those most in the position to speak out on behalf of women may not do so.
- ❑ The problems faced by women in transport are not simply based on physical differences or

different abilities, but on the different schedules and thus travel needs of women—more frequent, shorter trips, often accompanying children or the elderly.

Gender and ecosanitation: Sanitation is, of course, not exclusively a women’s issue—but like many other gender issues, it is an area in which women are affected differently than men and for which their specific needs are often neglected. For instance, women tend to be those responsible for keeping toilets clean, for carrying water, and for looking after family members who have fallen ill. Since women and children often have less access to food than men, they are weaker and more likely to become ill as a result of poor sanitation. Women can also become victims of violence when travelling alone to an outdoor latrine at night; the fear of such attacks can hamper their quality of life and cause them to drink too little water, which in itself causes health problems. Further, women working outdoors in cities are affected by the shortage and poor condition of public toilets, which again can prevent them from drinking during the day and lead to kidney infections and other ailments. The primary lessons learned related to gender and ecosanitation were:

- Traditional gender programs tend to focus on a certain limited set of issues, thereby neglecting many other important areas that greatly affect women’s lives or that further contribute to inequity in health and other markers between women and men. Conventional sanitation solutions have serious limitations and thus may contribute to the unequal burden on women in terms of disease and water collection.
- Ecosanitation offers an exciting opportunity to reduce burdens on women, improve sanitation, reduce disease, increase productivity, and improve environmental conditions.

Women and the economy: Economic issues are some of the most pressing in women’s lives. Women are more likely than men to be poor and to become poor after a divorce or separation. Women earn lower wages than men for equal work and women are more likely than men to be employed in jobs that pay little, that offer few opportunities for advancement, or that fail to provide decent benefits packages. When women do obtain high-paying positions, they are more likely than men to face excessive demands in balancing work and family. The primary lessons learned related to gender and the economy were:

- Where women are not valued, a major reason may be that much of what they do is given no monetary value. Therefore, to change the perceived value of women, it may be necessary to count the uncountable, or assign economic value to the work women do without pay.
- While many gender-based NGOs address various issues of economic rights, most do not appear to address the fundamental basis of some forms of economic justice in terms of the systematic devaluing of women in measures of national wealth. Yet for those willing to take the lead, the information uncovered is likely to be of great interest and use to others.
- The struggle for greater gender equality may assume more relevance to people when placed within a larger struggle for a society which values caring for others in addition to earning an income. While it may seem ironic to use economic terms in order to question the value of placing a monetary value on everything, it is sometimes necessary to fight within existing systems. In any case, the key issue may be one of raising questions about what is valued and what is not—and the effects of such value judgments.

Gender and recreation: Recreation and play are vital to physical and mental health. People need

opportunities to be physically active, to interact with others in safe environments, and to relax and enjoy themselves. In the past, cities were designed with the recreational needs of the inhabitants in mind, with each section of the city having its own open spaces and parks for people of all ages to enjoy. Unfortunately, with population pressures, rising real estate prices, and a focus on commercial opportunities over public interest, such places are rapidly disappearing and are not being planned in new city areas. The primary lessons learned related to gender and recreation were:

- It is easy to underestimate—and even to forget—the recreational needs of urban populations. When few people, especially women and girls, engage in outdoor recreation, we may believe that they consider such activities inappropriate or that society frowns on them. Yet when such opportunities are created, we may be surprised at the number of women and girls enjoying them. While addressing more apparently serious gender issues, it is important not to neglect recreation, with the understanding that another benefit of outdoor social opportunities for women is that they provide a place where women can discuss their issues and begin to work together on solutions.
- Movement towards gender equality requires more understanding between the sexes. Public social interactions allow the sexes to learn more about each other and for youth of different sexes to interact in a safe environment. Research in Viet Nam on gender stereotyping revealed the extent to which women and men fail to understand each other. While providing places for both sexes to interact is rarely on the gender agenda, it could contribute to harmony and mutual understanding, and improved sexual and reproductive health.
- Women tend to have very little leisure time and thus would benefit from a proliferation of recreational possibilities close to home and available at all hours, involving no expenses and little travel. This is an issue rarely if ever addressed by gender programs but one that could have an enormous impact on improving women's lives—and expanding women's opportunities to seek social support for the problems they face.

Gender Methodology

For many years, HealthBridge and its partners have worked on tobacco control. Efforts have focused on obtaining changes in policy that will eventually lead to substantial reductions in tobacco use and thus in the problems caused by tobacco. In seeking to bring about policy change—and through many successes along the way—Health Bridge and its partners have learned much about advocacy. Fortunately, much of what was learned is also relevant to the work of creating enabling environments for positive change in a range of gender issues. Just as tobacco use is a societal as well as an individual issue—but one where making change at the societal level is likely to have far greater effect than addressing individuals alone—so with gender. People are greatly influenced by their environment and changes in that environment are likely to bring about significant change in how men and women relate to each other and the degree to which we can make significant strides towards gender equality. It is clearly not enough to grasp the issues and have ideas about how to beget positive change; one must also know how to “work the system” and obtain results.

Working with governments: The extent to which gender equality exists in any country depends in great part on national laws—which in turn may depend in great part on the existing gender situation and cultural norms. While it may seem difficult to determine where to begin, it is often

easier to change laws and policies than cultural norms—and cultural changes may flow naturally from policy changes, while waiting for culture to change may be a slow, difficult, and often seemingly impossible process. The primary lessons learned related to working with governments were:

- Involving government officials in a training workshop can be an excellent way of broadening a network to include new people to engage government partners on key policy issues, and to promote the work of one's own organization. This is also true for NGO and media representatives.
- Although it is easy to criticize government for being inefficient or ineffective, it is far more difficult to work cooperatively with government officials to improve their approach. Yet it is obviously far more constructive to work on improvements rather than limit oneself to criticisms. Although partners in all countries faced challenges in developing constructive relationships with government officials, in each country positive developments did occur. This underscores the importance of treating government as an important potential partner, even while continuing advocacy efforts aimed at changing policies and practices.
- One of the many benefits of partnering with governmental agencies is that they can help facilitate and reduce the cost of implementation. With only one state television agency in Viet Nam, accessing it to launching a TV spot is difficult as well as important for reaching large audiences. After working with Viet Nam TV on a TV spot promoting male involvement in housework, HealthBridge learned that if it involved a governmental organization such as NCFW from the beginning and demonstrated to the TV station that the work being broadcast was that of the government agency and not of an international NGO, then complicated procedures for launching the TV spot would become far easier. Further, in some cases a spot made by a governmental agency may be subjected to less censorship than one made by an NGO.

Working with the media: The media can play a vital role in raising awareness of gender issues among both policymakers and the general public. At the same time, media itself is often responsible for propagating many of the negative stereotypes about gender. This is of course a two-way street: media is both influenced by, and itself influences, gender stereotypes, but often images of the sexes in media are more exaggerated than those in the popular imagination. The primary lessons learned related to working with the media were:

- Lack of positive reporting in the media may be due more to ignorance or lack of quality information and articles than to any active resistance. For instance, WBB had excellent experience in getting its articles published. Similarly, ESAF in India found it harder to keep up with the demand for information than to get its articles published. This indicates a great interest by media in gender-related topics, particularly if a fresh approach is taken (in this case, including positive messages rather than only focusing on problems). That is, by providing something “new” and addressing positive approaches, one can often achieve significant coverage.
- As with journalists, so with public figures. While civil society leaders may be in the habit of complaining about the problems women face and of talking about the evil men do, they may be convinced by logic to take a more positive approach. In the regular radio talk shows that WBB organizes, the staff discovered that it was possible to attract well-known, high-

level people (such as lawyers and NGO leaders) to be speakers and to convince them to focus on the need to show positive images of men and to highlight the value of women's work. So rather than lament that people often take a negative approach, it may be effective to convince them of the importance of a positive one.

- Even TV may be more accessible than we think. While commercial rates for airing TV spots can be extremely high, there are other, low- and no-cost ways to gain airtime. For instance, WBB sent out a letter to TV reporters and followed up with phone calls, explaining the importance of the issues and the potential for interesting programming. With a little effort, and essentially no expense, it was possible to generate two lengthy TV interviews (one of 7 minutes!) on air, with WBB choosing the speakers. Rather than dismissing TV as too expensive, it may be worth the effort of seeking ways to access it for free.
- As the Viet Nam team found, billboard messages can resonate in people's minds; a combination of different media and varying messages are more likely to have an effect than one single media or repeating the same message.
- Exposure can have a multiplier effect: one of Bangladesh's largest NGOs, upon reading an article in the newspaper about WBB employees being allowed to take their babies to the office, contacted WBB to learn more about the policy; an NGO participating in a WBB-organized press conference on its research later asked the WBB gender project officer to be a speaker at the opening of a very large workshop.

Promoting positive images of men: Among the main forms of influence on peoples' behaviour are family, peers, and media. People learn to behave in part by what they observe around them, in person or via television. Gender-stereotyped behaviour thus takes very different forms in different societies, depending on what people accept as normative and learn from others or from media. It would then seem to make sense that, in trying to make changes for the better, we should examine the role models to which people are exposed. The primary lessons learned related to promoting positive images of men were:

- When faced with the alternative of using positive rather than negative images of men in their media campaigns and other messages, most NGOs respond positively. "We never thought of that" sums up their response, as they switch from attacking to encouraging men.
- Those working on gender issues are by no means free of gender stereotypes and sometimes may think of and portray women as victims and men as perpetrators. This can lead them to be reluctant to portray men in a positive light. But people can be receptive to reasoning, and just as with the general population, so those working on gender can be convinced to change their way of thinking, and to promote positive rather than negative images of masculinity (and more empowered images of femininity). It is important not to assume that those working on gender issues are themselves free from such stereotypes or that those stereotypes will not affect our work. An important first step in gender programming can thus be to challenge our own beliefs and views before reaching out to a wider audience. This could help to reduce the negative portrayal of men in many messages.

Networking: Working alone can sometimes be the easiest approach, as it saves the time and hassle involved in trying to collaborate with others who may have different ideas and approaches. However, working in isolation is also likely to prove less effective than coordinating with others. An important lesson in coalition building is the difference between collaboration and

cooperation, or more simply, between sharing ideas (cooperating) and trying to work jointly on programs (collaborating). The primary lessons learned related to networking were:

- In order to increase ownership among local project implementation partners, it can be helpful to have partner organizations themselves organize workshops. As a result, local organizations become more meaningfully involved in promoting gender equality in *true* partnership with HealthBridge. Further, such an approach increases the likelihood that the needs of local partners will be met. The local partners considered activities carried out in cooperation with HealthBridge as “their work” and were enthusiastic and responsible in multiplying the trainings to all levels in their networks.
- It can sometimes be easier to attract small rather than large NGOs to join new networks and to absorb new ideas. When forming networks, it also helps to be realistic in terms of what to expect from the members. In many cases, due to heavy workloads, geographic distance, and competing interests, active involvement in the network may be minimal but such involvement can be fruitful when focused on specific campaigns, such as encouraging everyone to write letters to policymakers or the local media on a certain issue. Rather than focusing on attracting the biggest NGOs and expecting a large amount of work from them, it can help to think small—but in a targeted and effective way.
- When establishing a network, certain “social” or “psychological” issues may be more important than the work itself and may determine whether or not the network thrives or rapidly dissolves into infighting. Treating all members as equally important and valuable, ensuring that members feel a sense of ownership in the work (by organizing workshops themselves, as in the case of Viet Nam, or conducting research, as in Bangladesh), giving everyone the opportunity to share their ideas and experiences through meetings and via newsletters, and maintaining friendly communication can all be vital to the sustainability of a network.
- In the case of the international network created through the HealthBridge gender program, HealthBridge realized that communication across countries—particularly where no personal relationship pre-exists—can be difficult to sustain. However, it can lead to interesting and important lessons and experience exchanged. E-mail enabled some communication among partners while the chance to meet face-to-face at annual workshops was particularly helpful for sharing information and ideas and for providing moral support.

Capacity building: Capacity building activities are essential for ensuring that local partners have the required skills to implement the project’s activities and to apply these skills to other work, as well as to ensure an active and positive attitude towards the work. The issues of capacity building, local ownership, and networking are all inter-connected. The basis is a development approach which focuses on strengthening the capacity of local agencies and reducing reliance on outside experts or external agents. The primary lessons learned related to capacity building were:

- Building the capacity of an organization in one field of work can often have multiplier effects in other areas, as was the case in Bac Ninh. This fact increases the efficiency of capacity building, as support to any single program can lead to benefits across other areas.
- In India, capacity building of government relied on first building positive, mutually-respectful relationships. Without such relationships, ESAF as an NGO new to the area

would not have been trusted and would have little or no impact on government activities.

- The importance of capacity building of local staff should not be understated. Gender issues are sensitive, and those working on them are often themselves susceptible to strong beliefs and prejudices about gender roles, including the division of labour. Those working on gender should be invited and challenged to question their own views, and understand how their personal perceptions affect their work. Only if we are honest with ourselves and begin to question our own beliefs are we likely to be effective in changing attitudes and practices.

Research: In order to design a program that would be relevant in addressing the gender issues in each country, HealthBridge and its partners began their work with research focused on reproductive and sexual health in India and Viet Nam, and on male violence towards their spouses in Bangladesh. The research was designed to gain understanding of the key issues people face and the way people feel or talk about them, both negative and positive, in order to feed into programming and messages. The primary lessons learned related to research were:

- For those prepared to engage in a novel approach, it is vital to allocate sufficient time for research—and to extend deadlines if necessary as preliminary results indicate a change is needed to the research questions. On the other hand, a balance is needed between the resources going into the research, the usefulness of the findings, and the ability to put the findings into action. The key questions need to be identified, and where there is no defined method, such as in determining the value of women’s unpaid work (accurate figures do not exist for defining the value), identifying reasonable approximations can be more useful and less resource-intensive. There needs to be a compromise between the level of detail of the research and the applicability of the results.
- Combining research with capacity building, involving local NGOs, may reduce the strength of the quantitative aspects of research, but it will strengthen the engagement of local organizations and increase the chances of the research results being used, and it will broaden the scope and understanding of the issues being researched.
- Carefully designed research can provide key insights to understanding the local context, coming up with appropriate messages, and influencing policy change. When trying to bring other NGOs, media, and government officials on board, it can be important to have evidence; research results indicate that there is indeed a basis for the assumptions.

Taking a flexible approach: Flexibility is critical to success in all aspects of development. A startling new piece of information, or a revealing research finding, may lead to a different track—but that new information can actually lead to something far more useful than the original plans. In seeking to solve a problem, it is more important to focus on the problem and respond to what is learned, rather than following the original program design. The primary lessons learned related to flexibility were:

- While targeted interventions are necessary to have an impact, ignoring people’s felt needs is unlikely to lead to success. The flexibility to help people solve their *perceived* pressing problems can gain support for a program that would otherwise be very difficult or impossible to implement.
- Unanticipated disasters, major changes in the political system, and other such changes in the working environment do happen, and flexibility may prove to be the saving grace of the program.

Project Management

There were also a number of lessons learned through the implementation of this project which related, to one degree or another, to how HealthBridge managed the programme. These include:

- ▣ **Managing difficult political situations** – Ideally, stable political environments facilitate gender work. However, in many cases, HealthBridge’s partners must work in unstable environments where frequently changing political leaders, political clashes, and even shut-downs make the work extremely difficult. It is possible to adapt working methods to adjust to the difficulties created by politics, ensuring that the work continues despite external problems. *The best-laid plans can go awry when political problems make planned work impossible. A flexible approach can help local partners ride out such difficult periods, laying the groundwork by conducting in-house work for which they otherwise have little time, or shifting their attention to less political arenas while waiting for the situation to resolve.*
- ▣ **Publications for international use** – It is wasteful to expect NGOs in each country to “reinvent the wheel” in terms of learning strategies to deal effectively with the obstacles faced in addressing gender issues. By sharing strategies and successes through the publication documents and can be shared internationally, HealthBridge’s local partners greatly increased the effectiveness of their work. Even though it is a significant amount of work to prepare and disseminate such documents, it is essential for international cooperation, sharing, and progress. *Efforts should be made to develop publications that can be used internationally, to share strategies and working methods. This will increase the chances of achieving positive policy change and appropriate implementation. Since many people working in gender are not native speakers of English, such documents should be written in simple, straightforward language, be clear and to the point, and where possible, be translated into other languages.*
- ▣ **Importance of on-going, long-term, and flexible funding** – Gender activists should have the freedom and flexibility to focus on their work and create long-term plans, rather than always worrying about how to pay next month’s office rent and salaries. While seed grants and other short-term, small projects can be of great importance, major changes in policy and enforcement will be unlikely to occur without longer-term, sustained funding that allows activists to carry out sustained advocacy campaigns. *Much advocacy work consists of communicating with other NGOs and with government officials, and the main costs involved are thus office space, communications, and salaries. Overhead support for these costs is vital to the effectiveness of the work, and grants to support gender activities should include and possibly even prioritize such “unglamorous” recurrent costs, as opposed to focusing on specific, short-term, but possibly less effective projects.*
- ▣ **Importance of supporting sustained activities, not just capacity building/workshops** – While capacity building is vital, it is not the only element needed to achieve success in tobacco control. Capacity building should complement, rather than supersede, the long-term, day-to-day activities that create policy change. *Much expertise already exists in gender, and funding should focus on assisting existing, skilled activists to carry out their daily work, rather than focusing on high-cost, short-term workshops which may in the end achieve little, due to the lack of sustained funding for the participants in their home countries.*

- ▣ **Importance of supporting highly skilled local activists and NGOs rather than just “fly in the expert” approach** – Local expertise should be recognized and acknowledged, rather than always assuming that external experts are needed. As with capacity building, international experts should complement rather than supersede local activists. Useful as the injections of knowledge can be, they need to be injected into existing programmes with sufficient funding to ensure that activists can achieve their goals. *Attention should be given to supporting local activists and NGOs, and ensuring that international experts complement rather than supersede in-country programmes.*

11 Assessment of Environmental Results

This project was not required to undertake an environmental assessment.

12 Project Evaluation

This project was not evaluated by CIDA.

13 Goods Purchased for the Project

The following list identifies major goods purchased with project funds. All items purchased remain with the local partners for whom they were purchased. All major purchases were undertaken following CIDA procurement policy.

- Laptop computer (2)
- Desktop computers (3)
- Printer (1)

Appendix A: CPB Planning Sheet

Table 6: CPB Project Planning Sheet

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Programme Title: Promoting Male Responsibility Towards Greater Gender Equality | | | |
| CPB Partner: HealthBridge | | CIDA Officer: Denise Labelle | |
| Programme-Project #: S062683 | | | |
| Start: November 2004 End: June 2008 | Priorities: Gender Equality, Basic human needs | Branch results: Capacity building in developing countries, building partnerships, south-to-south collaboration, leverage, and sound project management and administration | Countries: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Viet Nam (Bangladesh and Viet Nam original CIDA-funded countries) |
| Total Budget: \$718,729 CIDA Contribution: \$399,989 | | Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (Viet Nam) Increase men’s responsibility in RSH, including use of condoms and vasectomy, and willingness to support their partners in reproductive decision-making; 2. (Viet Nam and Bangladesh) Change men’s perceptions of masculinity to include positive factors such as taking economic responsibility for the family, supporting others, being an active member of the household, and being a good role model for and being actively involved in the raising of children. 3. (All countries) Reduce social acceptability of violence among men, promote more positive ways of resolving conflict, and raise the perceived worth of females. 4. (Bangladesh) Contribute to the policy debate on women’s rights and work to improve the legal situation of women. 5. (All countries) Build capacity of local NGOs and government staff to work effectively in gender equality and male responsibility in RSH. | Goal: <i>Overall goal:</i> To improve gender equality, particularly by increasing the involvement of men in RSH and strengthening women’s rights. |

| ACTIVITIES | OUTPUTS | OUTCOMES | IMPACT |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (In India and Viet Nam) Study men's existing role in reproductive health and conduct grassroots and media activities to increase their role. 2. (In Bangladesh and Viet Nam) Study men's existing understanding of masculinity and conduct media activities to encourage more positive views. 3. (In Bangladesh) Study acceptability of violence towards women and perception of worth of females, and conduct media activities to increase value of women and promote non-violent behavior. 4. (In Bangladesh) Work with other NGOs on law and policy regarding women's rights. 5. (In all countries) Conduct capacity-building activities for local NGOs and government officers. 6. (In all countries) Share our research results and experiences. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Viet Nam: A report documenting research findings about men's role in reproductive health; mass media messages identified or created, tested, and aired. 2. Bangladesh & Viet Nam: A paper outlining men's ideas of masculinity and recommendations using local culture to improve the perception; positive messages identified or created, tested, and aired. 3. Bangladesh: A paper on the social acceptability of violence towards women and on the perception on the value of women; mass media messages identified or created, tested, and aired. 4. Bangladesh: WBB becomes active member of strong networks on law and policy regarding women's rights. 5. Bangladesh & Viet Nam: Informal reports and evaluations on capacity building workshops with NGOs and government officers. 6. Bangladesh & Viet Nam: Reports disseminated among NGOs, international organizations, and | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of specific constraints to men's increased involvement in reproductive health, and of specific strategies to overcome those constraints; more NGOs actively involved in this area; increased media coverage of the issue; hundreds of thousands of people reached through grassroots programs; increased involvement of men in reproductive health decisions. 2. Change in men's understanding of masculinity; more NGOs actively involved in this area; increased media coverage of the issue. 3. Change in the social acceptability of violence towards women and children; identification of the reasons men resort to violence; recommendations, based on local culture, to counter that acceptability and improve the perceived value of women; increased media coverage of the issue; change in perception of the value of women. 4. WBB is actively networked on gender and violence prevention; more NGOs are involved in the issue; increased media coverage of specific legal measures needed to | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased involvement of men in reproductive health. 2. Integrated positive ideas into self-definition as men. 3. Increased social reaction against violence. 4. Better implementation of (CEDAW). 5. Overall improvement in gender equality. 6. Improvements in programming on gender equality issues internationally. |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | <p>governments; lessons learned and experience shared globally via website, conferences and other means.</p> | <p>improve women’s rights; politicians more engaged in work to improve women’s rights.</p> <p>5. Staff of local NGOs and government officers acquire new skills in gender equality-related work; local NGOs are better equipped to seek funds to continue their activities; improved organizational policy among NGOs on gender equality; expressed government commitment in gender equality.</p> <p>6. Other organizations in the target countries and beyond gain insight from the project.</p> | |
| PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | | | |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research reports printed and distributed; mass media material produced. 2. Papers written and distributed; mass media material produced. 3. Papers written and distributed; mass media material produced. 4. Number of meetings attended by WBB on women’s rights; significant decisions/outputs from the meetings. 5. Number of capacity building workshops/other activities conducted and number of participants in each country; informal reports and evaluations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men indicating that men should play a significant role in reproductive health; men indicating positive feelings about condoms/vasectomy; improved media coverage; more NGOs involved. 2. Change in men’s positive beliefs about masculinity; improved media coverage; more NGOs involved. 3. Change in men’s valuing of women; improvement in media coverage. 4. WBB’s increased role in gender rights; increased involvement of | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changes in behavior as measured by condom sales/vasectomy rates/abortions/other data. 2. Increase in media (which reflects public opinion) of positive discussions of masculinity. 3. Decrease in violent crimes against women; increase in media of public outcry against violence. 4. Women increase their number of seats in government; changes in |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | <p>produced.</p> <p>6. Number of reports printed in English; number and list of international recipients; regular updating of websites.</p> | <p>NGOs; improved media coverage.</p> <p>5. NGO and government activity and policy on gender issues.</p> <p>6. International communication expressing appreciation of HealthBridge reports</p> | <p>laws and policies regarding women.</p> <p>5. More women in positions of power; more media coverage of women as political figures, not sex objects.</p> <p>6. NGOs report integrating HB lessons into their programs; program members invited as speakers in workshops for other projects</p> |
| REACH | | | |
| <p>Because most of this project will involve national-level changes, it is difficult to quantify beneficiaries. The main beneficiaries are anticipated to be women, who will benefit both from improvements in legal rights (due to advocacy efforts in Bangladesh), decreased acceptability of violence (in Bangladesh), increased responsibility by men in reproductive health (in India and Viet Nam), and improved behavior by men on a range of aspects (in Bangladesh and Viet Nam).</p> | | | |
| RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS | | | |
| <p>Assumptions: It is possible to change men's thoughts and behaviors through grassroots messages and mass media work. By studying lessons learned from projects in other countries, by conducting sufficient research and evaluation, we will increase our chance of success.</p> <p>Risks: Gender issues are sensitive, and even project partners may find it difficult to accept new concepts of gender. Many of the men in the target audience and even women may feel challenged and threatened by new approaches to looking at gender.</p> | | | |
| SUMMARY OF TARGETS AND/OR INFORMATION ON CROSS-CUTTING THEMES | | | |
| <p>CPB Partner: HealthBridge. Overseas Partner Organizations: Work for a Better Bangladesh (WBB), HealthBridge Viet Nam, Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF), Resource Center for Primary Health Care (RECPHEC), Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR)</p> | | | |
| WID&GE | This entire program is focused on women in development | | |
| ENVIRONMENT | No adverse environmental effects are anticipated in this proposed project. | | |
| PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation at Canadian conferences on our experiences in the field. 2. Development of a slide show on gender inequality in the three countries and approaches to improve the situation, to be shown at Canadian universities, conferences, and other venues. 3. Printing of pamphlets and postcards to describe the program and disseminate key messages that will be distributed to Canadian universities and NGOs. 4. Regular updating of the HealthBridge website with program information, updates, and highlights. | | |

Appendix B: CIDA Declaration Documents

Appendix C: Promoting Male Responsibility towards Greater Gender Equality: Lessons Learned

This booklet has been included as a separate document.

Appendix D: Evaluation Reports

Promoting Male Responsibility Towards Greater Gender Equality

Bangladesh Final Evaluation Report

WBB Trust, June 2008

Introduction

HealthBridge and partners began the CIDA-funded program “Promoting male responsibility towards greater gender equality” in October 2004, continuing with a no-cost extension through May 2008. The program initially involved three countries (Bangladesh, Vietnam, and India), with a later expansion to include research in Nepal and Pakistan. The overall goal of the program was to improve gender equality in three countries, particularly by increasing the involvement of men in reproductive health, and by strengthening women’s rights. HealthBridge’s partner in Bangladesh was WBB Trust (Work for a Better Bangladesh), an NGO founded in 1998 and best known for its work in tobacco control.

While the gender program overall also addressed men’s involvement in reproductive health, that objective was not addressed in Bangladesh, which focused instead on reducing violence against women, women’s rights issues, and capacity building of NGOs. As noted below, there were some changes to the original objectives over the course of the program, based on experiences gained in the work.

This report is divided into two sections. Part One covers an overview of progress towards the objectives, outcomes, and impacts as outlined in the program proposal. Part Two covers an overview of activities, with a substantial list of activities carried out over the course of the program by the Bangladeshi partner, WBB Trust.

Despite WBB being new to work on gender issues, and various obstacles caused by the sensitivity and difficulty of addressing gender issues in a conservative country such as Bangladesh, the program made significant progress. Flexibility and adaptation to changing circumstances, including a major change in government (including a state of emergency lasting for well over a year) were key to success. The program has laid an excellent groundwork for ongoing contribution to innovative work in gender, and has been successful at addressing key gaps in the field: specifically the need to involve men and value women.

PART ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

Progress towards meeting the objectives

The Bangladesh objectives were the following:

1. Change men’s perceptions of masculinity to include positive factors such as taking economic responsibility for the family, supporting others, being an active member of the household, and being a good role model for and being actively involved in the raising of children.

Comments: It was not possible within the span of the program to change men’s perceptions of masculinity. However, WBB was successful at convincing NGOs to reconsider their approach to some gender messaging, specifically in terms of convincing them to utilize positive images of men rather than negative ones.

When the Girls Child Advocacy Forum was discussing the design of materials for Girl Child Day, the original design showed a man involved in housework. Group members opposed the design as “unrealistic”, but when a staff of WBB countered, the group agreed to use a positive message. If this change carries through into the future, it could have a wide impact.

2. Reduce the social acceptability of violence among men, promote more positive ways of resolving conflict, and raise the perceived worth of girls and women.

Comments: During the program, it became clear that addressing the acceptability of violence must include women as well as men, as mothers-in-law may often play an important role in violence towards their son's wives. Rather than focus on attitudinal change which may or may not lead to behavior change, or on conflict resolution (important though WBB feels that to be), the program focused on the last point: raising the perceived worth of girls and women. The program was quite successful in this area, producing a highly valuable research report and conducting programs that received much attention by NGOs and the media. WBB hopes and believes that raising the perceived value of females will in itself lead to reductions of violence.

3. Contribute to the policy debate on women's rights and work to improve the legal situation of women.

Comments: This objective proved overly ambitious in one sense, given the great complexity and political and religious sensitivity of the issue. However, the research report on the unpaid work of women should contribute substantially to the policy debate, and the information should be of great value to others in the field working to improve the legal situation of women. WBB also engaged in a number of advocacy campaigns, outlined in Part Two, and worked to involve NGOs throughout the country in those campaigns. While not able to make significant progress in addressing the issue directly, WBB is thus likely to have contributed a valuable tool towards this work in the form of its research, which will facilitate the efforts of other NGOs working on women's rights.

4. Build the capacity of local NGOs to work effectively in the field of gender equality and male responsibility in reproductive health.

Comments: While WBB achieved less than it had hoped in this area, it was successful at bringing some new NGOs into the work and at raising to some degree the capacity of others, particularly in terms of gaining a new and enhanced understanding of gender work. Most NGOs working on gender issues focus on very limited issues, such as teaching women their rights, without addressing the obstacles women face when trying to gain respect for their rights. Through their work with WBB, several NGOs now understand that gender work must often also include men, that promoting positive images rather than challenging negative ones of men is vital, and that the important contributions of women who do not work for pay must be recognized.

Completion of planned activities/outputs

Planned activities

1. Study men's existing understanding of masculinity and conduct media activities to encourage more positive views.

Comments: There was a change in focus from men's understanding of masculinity to issues about husband-wife relationships and the causes of domestic violence, and led to a research report on the subject that was printed in Bengali, along with a summary in English (of the research from Bangladesh, India and Vietnam) and widely disseminated.

In terms of media activities, there was again a pragmatic change to the plan. While WBB did gain much media attention (both electronic and print) through its project, it focused more on convincing other NGOs and networks, such as the Girls Child Advocacy Forum, to focus on positive images of men in their work, in order to have a greater reach than by working alone.

2. Study acceptability of violence towards women and perception of worth of females, and conduct media activities to increase value of women and promote non-violent behavior.

Comments: As mentioned above, WBB engaged in research on the acceptability of violence towards women, in collaboration with eleven NGOs, which was printed as a research report. WBB also conducted a major study, in collaboration with ten NGOs, on the value of women's unpaid work. That second research was printed separately in Bengali and English, and various activities were organized around its release which attracted much media attention to the issue. Due to the research-based belief that the main issue with violence is lack of valuation of women, WBB did not address the issue of promoting non-violent behavior.

3. Work with other NGOs on law and policy regarding women's rights.

Comments: WBB is active in two networks addressing women's rights: the Girls Child Advocacy Forum and the Gender in Media Forum. In addition, WBB engaged in a lengthy study specifically on inheritance rights. The study revealed that the situation is extremely complex and tricky. For instance, national law is usually trumped (illegally) by religious law, with each religion having its own complicated system for inheritance. Further, women often voluntarily surrender their inheritance in order to maintain a good relationship with their brothers, on whom they are dependent for a living and protection, so that resolving legal issues would only partially resolve the problem. As a result of the complexities, WBB decided not to pursue the issue, and rather to try to support other NGOs in their policy work. WBB did however engage in various advocacy campaigns, as outlined in Part Two of this report.

4. Conduct capacity-building activities for local NGOs and government officers.

Comments: WBB was not able to address the issue of capacity building for government officers, though it did provide information and indirect contact through media, as well as occasional meetings with government officials. WBB did engage directly in capacity building of NGOs largely through its research, in which it trained NGO partners on research methods and involved them directly as research partners on two separate studies. Various meetings with NGOs also led to greater understanding on their part of WBB's (and HealthBridge's) approach to gender issues, particularly the importance of involving men and valuing women.

5. Share our research results and experiences.

Comments: As mentioned above, WBB produced two research reports, which were printed/disseminated in both English and Bengali. Dissemination included sending of the printed copy to NGOs, government officials, UN agencies, funders, media, libraries, organizations in other countries, and via the Web.

Planned outputs

1. A paper outlining men's ideas of masculinity and recommendations using local culture to improve the perception; positive messages identified or created, tested, and aired: One research paper printed and disseminated in English and Bengali; media messages were not created or aired, though print and electronic media was earned and used substantially during the project to air our messages.
2. A paper on the social acceptability of violence towards women and on the perception on the value of women; mass media messages identified or created, tested, and aired: A research paper on the value of women's unpaid work was printed and disseminated in English and Bengali;

seminars were organized to disseminate the results; significant earned media (electronic and print) were gained.

3. WBB becomes active member of strong networks on law and policy regarding women's rights: Although WBB's role in this area is limited, it does play a role in two networks, and most significantly, its research on women's unpaid work is being used by NGOs active in gender budgeting.
4. Informal reports and evaluations on capacity building workshops with NGOs and government officers: As mentioned, no direct capacity building of government officers occurred, but there were trainings of NGOs and informal reports in Bengali do exist. The most significant output here is the involvement of NGOs in two research studies.
5. Reports disseminated among NGOs, international organizations, and governments; lessons learned and experience shared globally via website, conferences and other means: Two reports, each in both English and Bengali, were widely disseminated in Bangladesh and internationally. Lessons learned were shared via a report on *Lessons Learned* and a video about the entire (multi-country) gender program.

Achievement of outcomes and impacts

Planned outcomes

Overall note: The program was too short to allow for much progress towards outcomes and impacts; however, some success is noted.

1. Change in men's understanding of masculinity; more NGOs actively involved in this area; increased media coverage of the issue: While men's understanding of masculinity probably did not change, we did involve some new NGOs and convince others to take a more positive approach towards involving men, and achieved good media coverage of our issues. Importantly, we also succeeded in demonstrating that media coverage can be positive, not always treating women as victims and men as offenders, but rather offering positive models and inducements for change.
2. Change in the social acceptability of violence towards women and children; identification of the reasons men resort to violence; recommendations, based on local culture, to counter that acceptability and improve the perceived value of women; increased media coverage of the issue; change in perception of the value of women: Again, it was not possible within the time frame of the program to change the social acceptability of violence. However, research did identify likely reasons for violence to be accepted, and recommendations were developed based on that research. Significant progress was made in increasing the perceived value of women, through research on the topic which has now been replicated in three other countries in the region. The research gained good media coverage, and should lead to changes in the perception of the value of women by policymakers and, eventually (as the results are widely disseminated and messages developed and aired on the topic), the general public.
3. WBB is actively networked on gender and violence prevention; more NGOs are involved in the issue; increased media coverage of specific legal measures needed to improve women's rights; politicians more engaged in work to improve women's rights: WBB had not been active in gender work prior to this program, and is now a highly valued member of two networks, as well as achieving recognition by many NGOs long working on gender issues. New NGOs have become involved, and attention was gained towards the need to improve women's inheritance

rights. A significant and somewhat unexpected outcome is the great importance women have assumed in the 2008 government budget, with various advantages given to women.

Other outcomes/indications of achievement include an invitation by a major NGO to speak at the opening of their gender workshop; receptivity of many NGOs to idea of valuing women's work and putting forth positive images of men; an increase in the number of radio programs and newspaper articles being published about a wide range of issues affecting women, including the environment, economics, and violence; and a greater understanding among some media outlets/personnel of the links that exist between economics, environmental issues, transportation issues, and violence against women.

Through this project, WBB has become better acquainted with other local NGOs involved in gender and violence work, and its staff are becoming more aware of, and recognized for their work on the issues around gender. WBB continues to play a leadership role in identifying gender-related issues, researching them, and providing information to other organizations. WBB repeatedly finds that its message of emphasizing positive roles of men is very well-received; positive reactions include from the many NGOs participating in the Girl Child Advocacy Forum.

4. Staff of local NGOs and government officers acquire new skills in gender equality-related work; local NGOs are better equipped to seek funds to continue their activities; improved organizational policy among NGOs on gender equality; expressed government commitment in gender equality: As mentioned, the program did not address capacity building of government officers, but some NGO staff did gain new skills, and one partner NGO did succeed in gaining funds from a local funder to continue their work. Organizational policy may not have changed, but one NGO expressed an interest in WBB's policy to allow new mothers to bring their babies to work, and others expressed interest in utilizing positive rather than negative messaging. As mentioned above, government commitment is manifest in a pro-woman budget for 2008.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics was positive about the idea of giving an economic value to women's labor, and there is now increased awareness of the issue as a result of the research undertaken and the results disseminated. This is particularly true of the NGOs and other partner organizations involved in similar work. Interestingly, when WBB performed the research on the economic value of women, interviewees would initially respond with disparaging comments about women, but when they had spent a long time discussing all the different work women do, interviewees would then say that women's work is quite important. This suggests that pointing out the various roles of women can help improve the perception of women's worth and thus the aversion to violence against women.

5. Other organizations in the target countries and beyond gain insight from the project: Vietnam, Nepal, and Pakistan all replicated the Bangladesh research on the economic value of women's unpaid work, and India has begun the research, with researchers in Malaysia expressing an interest, all utilizing adapted versions of the Bangladeshi protocol. This is a very important outcome, as the research was either not conceived of, or generally considered impossible due to statistical difficulties. Showing how the research can be conducted and analyzed was a major contribution of WBB. In addition, publication of the gender *Lessons Learned* book, which contains much information from the Bangladesh program, will contribute to international learning and sharing.

Outcomes

Planned impacts

1. Boys and men will integrate positive ideas into their self-definition as men, resulting in more respectful and equitable behavior towards women and children.
2. Increased social reaction against violence; more widespread perception that violence is unacceptable; more men resolve their problems peaceably rather than through violence.
3. Better implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); women enjoy more equal rights in society and more of a voice in the household, community, and national decision making.
4. Overall improvement in gender equality, as a result of increased understanding and improved policies among NGOs and government officers involved in the issue.
5. Improvements in programming on gender equality issues internationally.

Comments: As impacts are long-term, none were anticipated in the course of this single program. Nevertheless, progress towards impacts has been made, particularly in terms of contributing a much-needed research protocol to calculate the economic value of women's unpaid work, to promoting the positive involvement of men in gender programming, and sharing of lessons learned.

PART TWO: AN OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

This section provides a fairly comprehensive list of the activities carried out by WBB Trust over the course of the gender program, divided into the following headings: media, publications, capacity building, other activities, and public engagement.

Media work

A program for family day, 15 May 2006, on the subject "Development of family Relationship through Male Participation in Household Work", involving journalists.

Organized a seminar on "the importance of assigning an economic value to women's work". The event was covered in 11 newspapers.

September 2006, Saifuddin Ahmed gave a lengthy TV interview on the rights of the girl child for Girl Child Day.

Extensive newspaper coverage of our issues, including by writing articles directly for newspapers on such issues as the economic value of women's work, giving information to journalists, and organizing events. For example, WBB arranged a press conference on 27th February 2006 on "Men's role in reducing domestic violence". The press conference was held at National Press club, Dhaka, Bangladesh. More than forty journalists from different daily newspapers attended the conference. The news was covered in at least six newspapers and gave good coverage.

An article written by WBB and published in a newspaper on the importance of mothers bringing their babies to the office received positive attention, including one NGO wanting to learn more to try to replicate the policy in their office.

Radio talk shows developed and aired on a variety of subjects, including:

- The role of youth in preventing violence against women
- Avoiding dowry, as a violence prevention measure

- Village eco-social development: the role of women
- The role of young women in the country's economic development
- The need for women to have a greater voice in decision making
- The right of the girl child to a proper education
- The importance of women's inheritance rights to prevent violence against women
- Rights of the girl child
- Women's equality and rights and the economic contribution of women
- The role of youth to promote women participation in decision making
- Family's role in children's mental development
- Gender and eco-sanitation.
- Public toilets, problems and what to do. (This is a serious issue for women who work outdoors all day, as many develop kidney infections and other health problems due to lack of access to a toilet.)
- The importance of equal inheritance rights for girls and women.

Publications written/designed, printed and disseminated

- Research report on husband-wife relations (in Bengali and English). Bangladeshi report "The Role of Men in Improving Husband-Wife Relations" produced and disseminated to over 450 organizations; English summary report ("*Promoting Male Responsibility for Gender Equality: Summary Report of Research from Bangladesh, India and Vietnam*") printed and disseminated at AIDS 2006, among other venues. Full research reports made available on HealthBridge website.
- Research report on the economic contribution of women through their domestic work (in Bengali and English); English title: "*The Economic Contribution of Women in Bangladesh Through their Unpaid Labour*".
- A report on TV and children, on how TV has a negative influence on children, gender issues in TV programming, and the need for free outdoor recreational opportunities for children, especially girls.
- A booklet on ecosanitation.
- Report on walking as an essential right, and its importance as a safe mode of transportation for women.
- Report on transport highlighting rickshaws and the suffering of women from the rickshaw ban.
- A paper on women, environment and economics (not printed but disseminated via the website).
- A leaflet on the role of men in reducing violence against women.
- A leaflet on women and the environment in national accounting (printed and distributed in Bengali, with some photocopies distributed in English).
- Handbill on issue of women and transportation.
- 1,000 leaflets on gender and eco-sanitation for distribution at the Environment
- A folder, with a double-sided fact sheet (Bengali and English) and other information, on the Contribution of Women through their Unpaid Work.
- 14,400 stickers with the message, "Mutual respect in the family brings happiness".
- A sticker on the importance of respecting the inheritance rights of women and girls, printed in the names of 69 local NGOs.
- Two stickers on the issue of women's transport.
- Calendars with messages about gender equality (valuing women's work, respecting the inheritance rights of women and girls).
- Regular articles in the WBB quarterly Bengali newsletter, *For the Country*, including on the need to include women's unpaid work in GDP

Dissemination

- On 14 January 2008, organized a roundtable on “The negative effects of TV and our children”, at which our publication on the subject was released. At the roundtable, 35 organizations working on children’s issues attended. In addition, a representative from the Ministry of Women’s and Children’s Affairs attended. The issue was covered in nine newspapers, and two papers later wrote editorials on the need for outdoor recreational opportunities for children. In addition, the Childs’ Rights Advocacy Forum sent a letter to WBB expressing an interest in working with us on the issue. (This is a gender issue because while boys often manage to find a place to play, many girls are stuck indoors and suffer greatly from lack of social and recreational opportunities.)
- On 27 February 2008, co-organized with Unnayan Shamanay (a prestigious NGO headed by a famous economist) a roundtable on our research on the economic contribution of women through their unpaid work. On the day following the event, 24 newspapers covered the event, including one editorial, front page (3), economics page (2). Four more newspapers later covered the event (including the same newspaper covering it on two days), including the leading Bengali paper. Four TV channels also attended and covered it. All the coverage was positive. A research officer at Unnayan Shamanay informed WBB that for years people have been talking about the need for such a research, to have a figure to show to government, and how delighted people will be at the results. On the day after the event, UNDP called to request the papers, as they are doing similar work.
- On 10 March, jointly organized in Chittagong, with the local NGO Young Power in Social Action (YPSA), a roundtable on the economic contribution of women through their unpaid work. Engaged in various activities for the organization. The roundtable went well, and was covered in four local and one national newspaper.
- In April, jointly organized with SCOPE (a local NGO in Barisal) a roundtable on the economic contribution of women through their unpaid work.

Advocacy

- Conducted a letter campaign to stop publication of graphic photos of violence in newspapers, following which the photos halted for a time.
- Conducted a nationwide letter campaign on the need to value women's unpaid work.
- Drafted a letter for use by its member organizations to campaign for women’s inheritance rights. Several NGOs sent the letter to government officials.
- Sent a letter to a local government official in Pabna on the issue of gender and waste management, sewerage, and water.
- Participated in a Human Chain protesting violence against women organized by Girl Child Advocacy Forum.
- Visited the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and met with the Deputy Directors of the Industry and Labour Wing and the GDP Wing to discuss the issue of women’s unpaid work. They expressed much interest; the DD of the Industry and Labour wing explained that the government collects information on women’s unpaid work and assigns it a (low) value, but then rejects the information because the women aren’t paid.

The Deputy Director of the Department of Social Welfare contacted WBB to express his interest in the issue of calculating a value for women's unpaid work. He asked for more information, asked about the possibilities in Bangladesh, and where in the world women's work is included in GDP. This result is a key reflection of the changes of attitudes towards the economic value of women following work done by project partners.

- Cycle rally organized to demand reduction on tax on bicycles
- Contributed to a signature campaign to protest an extension of rickshaw bans, resulting in the ban withdrawal
- Sent a letter to several ministries of the Government of Bangladesh, addressing the Economic Contribution of Women through their Unpaid Labour, and sought to sensitize government officials about women's contribution.

Capacity building of other NGOs

- 15-16 May 2005, workshop with eleven local NGOs on planned research on husband-wife relations and WBB's overall approach to gender issues
- 1-3 February 2006, workshop with twelve local NGOs on protocols for conducting research on economic contribution of women through their unpaid work, and on dissemination and use of earlier research
- Supported local NGOs to carry out programs in their locales on husband-wife relations and on the value of women's unpaid work
- Project Management: Work Plan and Forecasting

BICD, WBB's network partner in Rajshahi, sought assistance to respond to a negative antiviolence poster which portrayed a man beating his wife. Following WBB's advice, BICD organized a small letter campaign targeting the producers of the poster and government officials.

- Assisted a network member to organize a meeting on Laws to Prevent Dowry and Violence against Women

Capacity building of WBB staff

WBB staff attended in-house capacity building on a range of subjects, including:

- Women, economics and national accounting systems
- Logical framework analysis; Report writing and editing
- The historical gender situation in Europe and its relationship to the current situation in Bangladesh
- Learning from European social policies: issues of working families
- Research methods
- Ecosanitation
- Several classes on various transportation and urban planning issues

WBB staff also attended other seminars and courses, and was involved in various events, including:

- A seminar for the International Day against Violence, organized by Nagorik Uddyog, which focused on violence against women. WBB suggested the importance of involving men in violence prevention.
- Participated in a seminar on the National Women Development Act 1997.
- Participated in a day-long workshop on alternative dispute resolution (shalish).
- Attended a seminar on environment and gender at Dhaka University.
- Attended a seminar on political empowerment of women organized by the Girl Child Advocacy Forum.
- Attended two-day national workshop on women and health in Dhaka, organized by Nari Gronto Prabantana and Ubiniq.
- Participated in an Advance Course on Research Methodology on Gender Studies.
- Attended a roundtable on poverty and equity and the State's response.

- Attended the Global Youth Meet (GYM) in Delhi and Agra, India, where gender and other issues were addressed.
- Attended Ecosanitation training in India.

Other activities

Transport and urban planning, transport issues

- Work highlighting the need for transport planning to address needs of women and girls, including integrating this topic into WBB reports and a national workshop, highlighting how cycle rickshaws are a valuable form of transport for females, how women often travel by foot and improvement of conditions for pedestrians will thus greatly benefit women, and on the need to give women and girls the opportunity to learn to cycle.
- Twice weekly organize free cycle classes to encourage women and girls to cycle.
- Attended a program co-organized by WBB and the Urban and Regional Planning department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, on rights of pedestrians.
- Presented on women's mobility and recreation at Regional Science conference. The conference was organized by the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET)'s Urban and Regional Planning Department.
- Presentation on the relationship of gender and transportation prepared and presented at national workshop on transport and development.
- On 27 March, WBB organized a program with the Chittagong Development Authority, at their request, on urban policy issues, including creating a more safe and amenable environment for women's mobility. WBB staff prepared the presentation and paper, organized a guest speaker from BUET, and traveled to Chittagong to participate in the program.

Ecosanitation

- Work on ecosanitation, and how improved sanitation that is better for the environment and more sustainable will also have a disproportionately large benefit for women.
- Prepared paper on gender and eco-sanitation for BUET Regional Science conference; presented the paper at the conference.
- Created a video on the situation of public toilets in Dhaka, including interviews with women and other users.
- On 23 February 2008, Bangladesh Environment Movement (POBA) organized a roundtable discussion on the role of public toilets in public health and the environment. WBB provided all back-up support for the event including preparing and editing papers, and contacted the guests and newspapers. Key issues included the need to increase the number of toilets, how to create toilets that can be used comfortably by women, and the possibility of public composting toilets. One city corporation official attended and took notes on the status of public toilets throughout the city. The event was well-covered, in 15 newspapers. Two TV channels also attended (we don't know if they showed it). Wrote a letter to accompany the clippings, sent to various ministries.

Other

- PRIP Trust, a well-known local NGO active on gender issues, organized a workshop on addressing the importance of women's work in the countries' PRSP. WBB provided information about its research results.
- Supported the Girl Child Advocacy Forum in creating its annual year plan. It also participated in the planning of International Women's Day (8 March) celebrations each year.

- Drafted and edited a leaflet for the Girl Child Advocacy Forum highlighting women's issues, including strengthening women's inheritance rights in law; and ratifying the two points in CEDAW that the government did not ratify.

Public engagement plans:

1. Presentation at Canadian and international conferences on our experiences in the field.
2. Development of a slide show on gender inequality in the three countries and our approaches to improve the situation, to be shown at Canadian universities, Canadian and international conferences, and other venues.
3. Printing of pamphlets and postcards to describe the program and disseminate key messages that will be distributed to Canadian universities and NGOs.
4. Regular updating of the HealthBridge website with program information, updates, and highlights.
5. Canadians learn about our program and the importance of work in this area.
6. Canadians learn more about the problem of gender inequality in South/Southeast Asia and Canadian programming to improve the situation.
7. Canadians exposed to messages about our program and the need for work in gender equality internationally.
8. Canadians gain deeper understanding of our programming and approaches to improving gender inequality.
9. Canadians more invested in the issue of gender equality in Asia; more Canadians supportive of efforts to improve gender equality and interested in participating in this area.

Comment: WBB actively contributed to public engagement in the following ways:

- Production and dissemination of a video on the entire multi-country gender program (where only a slide show was planned);
- Production and dissemination of a leaflet on the need to include women's unpaid work in calculations of national wealth;
- Contributions to the Lessons Learned book on the entire gender program;
- Presentation of a poster on the issue of gender economics at the Canadian Conference on International Health 2007;
- Regular updating of the WBB website and contribution to the HealthBridge website.

**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
PROJECT
“Promoting Male responsibility towards greater gender equality in Vietnam”**

Type of project: Research and Intervention project

Duration: June 2004 to March, 2008

Executing Agency: HealthBridge Canada

Implementing Partners: Bac Ninh Center for Health Education and Communication, National Committee on Advancement of Women (NCFAW), National Committee of Ideology and Culture, the Voice of Vietnam, Vietnam Television, Science Magazine of Women, Institute of Social Research and Development.

Evaluator: Nguyen Van Hung, MD, PhD, Independent Consultant.

Evaluation time: February and March, 2008

Hanoi, March, 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To implement and complete this evaluation, I would especially like to thank:

Ms. Le Thi Thu, Project manager and Dr. Nguyen Van Tung, Project manager of HealthBridge Canada, who organized, coordinated and supported me during the whole evaluation process.

Dr. Nguyen Dinh Tam, Deputy Director of Bac Ninh Department of Health, Dr. Nguyen Van Lang, Director of Bac Ninh Center for health education and communication, who organized, coordinated and supported me during field visits in Bac Ninh.

Ms. Nguyen Minh Qui, Office Manager and Ms. Vu Ngoc Thuy, Head of planning department of National Committee for Advancement of Women, Ms. Nguyen Thi Lan- Vice Director of Bac Ninh Women's Union, and other related staffs, who spent time on sharing opinion, precious experience that help us a lot to complete this report.

Staffs and people at communes, wards, districts of project location who contributed precious idea, who were opened and help me to collect necessary information to complete field visit evaluation and contributed to suggested messages and recommendations shown in this report.

Independent consultant

Nguyen Van Hung, MD, PhD.

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Goal | 5 |
| Specific objectives: | 5 |
| Reach and Beneficiaries: | 6 |
| Section 2: Evaluation objectives and methodology | 6 |
| 1. Objectives of final evaluation | 6 |
| 2. Methodology | 6 |
| Section 3: Evaluation results | 7 |
| I. Summary of project activities and reported results | 7 |
| II. Findings | 10 |
| Section 4: Appendix | 24 |

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| AIDS: | Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| HIV: | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| RSH: | Reproductive and sexual health |
| FP: | Family planning |
| RH: | Reproductive health |
| NCFAW: | National Committee for Advancement of Women |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Promoting male responsibility towards greater gender equality in Vietnam” project was conducted by HealthBridge Canada from June, 2004 to March, 2008. At the national level, in collaboration with Magazine on Women Science, Institute of Sociology, Institute of Social Development Studies, National Committee of Ideology and Culture, National Committee for Advancement of Women, The Voice of Vietnam, Vietnam Television, the project focused on (i) carrying out research studies aimed at finding the KAP of respondent about SRH and housework and quantifying the value of women’s domestic unpaid work, and (ii) conducting training workshops, (iii) conducting media campaigns. At the provincial level, in collaboration with Bac Ninh Department of Health, Center for Health Education and Communication, project was implemented focusing on Que Vo district, Tien Du district and Bac Ninh City. The goal of the project was to improve gender equality, particularly by increasing the involvement of men in RSH, household sharing and by strengthening women’s rights.

The overall objective of the evaluation seeks to answer the question *“Did the project begin to build the foundation for improving gender equality in the future?”*

The following specific questions will be answered during the final evaluation of the project:

- a) Did the base premise make senses?
- b) Did the material/activities are in synch with the objectives?
- c) Did the IEC material reach targeted audiences?
- d) Did the skills needed for future gender work in those receiving trainings is increased?
- e) Did the trainings target appropriate audiences?
- f) Did the project contribute anything new/useful to dialogue on gender equality?

Qualitative methods were applied including reviewing available documents, in-depth interview, and focus group discussions with related partners at national level. In addition, field study conducted using observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussion with stakeholders and beneficiaries in project location.

Findings on positive results of the project are as following: Project has been implemented successfully and its expected objectives were achieved contributing to strengthening capacity for project partners, achieving greater gender equality in Vietnam and Bac Ninh, obviously presented through:

- ***Strengthening capacity for partners:*** Capacity of secretary system of Committee for advancement of women in cities and provinces, and ministries and branches was improved significantly. Members of Bac Ninh Women’s Union and the local government bodies from the provincial to commune level were trained on gender and gender equality has been contributing to the success and sustainability of the project. The staffs of Bac Ninh Center for Health Education and Communication and in project communes in three districts have been built capacity in managing project, developing IEC material, conducting research; and gender equality, gender issues in reproductive health, and in household labour division. Key stakeholders in communes have been built capacity to act as gender educators working directly with people at grassroots level.

- ***Project has made positive and appropriate changes in social perception about role of men and about gender equality in family context.*** Perception of local people and leaders, especially men has obvious changes: men involve in sharing housework, take advantage for women to participate in social activities, domestic violence is reduced, and families are in a better harmony.

- ***Responsibility of men in family planning has been improved.*** Men in project communes positively use male contraceptive methods (condom) and care more about reproductive health, women’s pregnancy. Son preference is not as serious as before, the birth-rate of the third child and abortion rate obviously reduced in project communes.

- ***Strengthening capacity and collaboration ability between stakeholders in health communication and education,*** by performing joint-activities amongst project’s partners at provincial level, and cooperation with local government authorities, local unions (such as Famer’s Union, Women’s Union...) to carry out project interventions.

Project has some areas for improvement as the following:

- Project designed to cooperate with partners at national and provincial level. This is an appropriate strategy. However, collaboration and sharing between national and provincial partners in order to increase the effectiveness of intervention at local level is still limited.

- It is better to design the project interventions in urban and rural areas separately then increase the effectiveness. For example, playing dramas on loudspeaker system is the same for the urban and rural leading to limited effect in urban areas.
- There is a room for improving IEC material. For example, radio dramas were shortened then it would be easier to monitor the whole drama. If integrate the practical information for local people to the leaflet such as income generation guidance, it will attract more their attention.
- Communication activities via provincial mass media such as newspapers, radio, and television were accessed by a certain subjects

Key recommendations

- IEC material design: It is necessary to have different adjustment in contents and type of communications for urban and rural areas so that it would be appropriate to specific subjects/locations, avoiding contents that could reduce the support of certain residential groups.
- Co-ordination of activities between national and provincial level: National partners such as Vietnam VTV, NCFAW, National Committee of Ideology and Culture should share collaboration with intervention activities at local level to reflex the fact, advertising activities in order to increase the project's images and effectiveness.
- Implementation strategy: Participated partners should share project activities. In provincial area, it is necessary to promote integrating gender into regular activities of organizations. Men should be paid more attention on mobilizing their participation in training courses and project activities.
- *Although the project achieved initial results positively, changing perception, particularly behaviour needs a long and continuous process. Therefore, it is necessary to have further activities to maintain current results.* Maintenance and replicating activities that were considered good models: drama performance, trainings, information dissemination...to ensure sustainability of the project is a practical and necessary requirement.

Section 1: Introduction

1. Gender equality

Gender inequality remains one of the most serious barriers to development. Gender inequality leads to violence against women, HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy, high rates of maternal mortality, etc...Gender inequality results in low rates of girls attending school, and uneducated women are less able to provide good care for their children. Finally, gender inequality keeps women out of the workforce and out of politics, hampering economic development and probably contributing to corruption and poor governance.¹

Meanwhile, many organizations have implemented programs aimed at changing gender norms and increasing male responsibility and positive behavior. Evaluation has shown that many of these programs are successful, with grassroots programs changing people's knowledge and behavior, and mass media proving helpful in creating an enabling environment in which men can practice the new behaviors they have learned.²

South Asia was ranked as the worst region in the world on many indicators of gender equality, including social and economic rights, marriage and divorce rights, years of schooling compared to men, and female life expectancy. In India, gender inequality manifests itself even before birth with sex-selective abortions, and in both India and Bangladesh, girls receive less medical care and are far less likely to attend school than boys. The problems continue throughout life, with women being frequent victims of violence and suffering disproportionately from poverty.³

In Vietnam, many women are employed outside the home and most girls attending school. However, the burden of housework and childcare still rests almost entirely on women in Vietnam, and the lack of male participation in the household and in contraceptive decision-making contributes to the extremely high abortion rate.

The three-country program among Vietnam, India and Bangladesh are set up with the aim to improve gender equality in these countries, particularly by increasing the involvement of men in RSH, and by strengthening women's rights.

2. Summary of gender project in Vietnam

Gender project in Vietnam has been implemented at two levels: national and province. At the national level, in collaboration with Magazine on Women Science, Institute of Sociology, Institute of Social Development Studies, National Committee of Ideology and Culture, Vietnam Television, the project focused on (i) carrying out research studies aimed at finding the KAP of respondent about SRH and housework and quantifying the value of women's domestic unpaid work, (ii) conducting training workshops, and (iii) conducting media campaigns.

At the provincial level, training workshops and media intervention campaign were conducted by Bac Ninh Center for Health Education and Communication belonging to Bac Ninh Department of Health, as the main partner. Seventeen communes and wards belong to Que Vo, Tien Du district and Bac Ninh city were selected to implement directly media intervention.

In addition, Bac Ninh Women's Union was invited to participate in the trainings for Union's staff at provincial, district and commune levels. Priorities were given to Women's Union members from 17 selected communes that the project had implemented direct interventions. Training course's objectives were to strengthen gender knowledge, reproductive health care, communication skills and capacity for members of Women's Union at every level.

The project has also coordinated with Bac Ninh Farmer's Union to conduct a series of training on strengthening knowledge on gender and reproductive health, integrating the dissemination of information on technological science advancement for union's cadres and union's members in project communes.

Goal

The project's goal is to improve gender equality in the three countries (Bangladesh, India and Vietnam), particularly by increasing the involvement of men in reproductive and sexual health, and strengthening women's rights.

Specific objectives:

1. Increase men's responsibility in reproductive and sexual health, including their use of condoms and vasectomy, and their willingness to support their partners in reproductive decision making;

2. Change men's perceptions of masculinity to include positive factors such as taking economic responsibility for the family, supporting others, being an active member of the household, and being a good role model for and being actively involved in the raising of children.

3. Build capacity of local NGOs and government staff to work effectively in gender equality and male responsibility in reproductive and sexual health.

Reach and Beneficiaries:

All citizens of project communes benefit from the project. However, the main beneficiaries were women. Local people were provided with information about gender, gender equality, reproductive and sexual health through mass media messages on radio, television, leaflets, billboard and drama performances. From this information, men could involve more in sharing domestic work, reproductive responsibility. They help women to reduce the workload on taking care their children, their families and reproductive decision making. Men in project commune would benefit from this project by learning to change inappropriate perceptions of masculinity, to express masculinity positively and to protect their reproductive and sexual health.

The capacity of stakeholders of related institutions are benefited by being improved knowledge through training courses in gender and reproductive health, media messages in provincial mass media channel. Based on that, they could use achieved knowledge to apply to their current work and families. In the other hand, staffs who participated in developing media message have more experience in communication career. They would know how to develop media messages on gender and RSH effectively and appropriately to their communities.

Section 2: Evaluation objectives and methodology

1. Objectives of final evaluation

The overall objective of the evaluation seeks to answer the question “*Did the project begin to build the foundation for improving gender equality in the future?*”

Specific questions that would be answered during the Final Evaluation of the project are:

1. Did the base premise make sense?
2. Were the materials/activities in synch with the project's objectives?
3. Did the IEC material reach their targeted audiences?
4. Did the skills needed for future gender work increase among those receiving training?
5. Did the trainings target appropriate audiences?
6. Did the project contribute anything new/useful to the dialogue on gender equality in Vietnam?

2. Methodology

Qualitative method was applied to this evaluation

Source of information

- HealthBridge project's staffs
- Representatives from partners at national level: Vietnam Television, National Committee on Advancement of Women
- Representatives from Bac Ninh Department of Health, Bac Ninh Center for Health Education and Communication, Bac Ninh Women's Union, Bac Ninh Farmers' Union
- Representatives from People's Committee, village Women's Union, Health stations at project communes and wards
- Men and women at project communes and wards

Sample size and sampling

All key members from partners were invited for interviews and discussions

One commune/ward in each district/city was randomly selected for field survey

All members of project management board in selected communes were invited for group discussions. One from each group was invited for in-depth-interviewed

Groups of men and women in surveyed communes/ward were selected by the convention. Each focus group discussion included 7-9 people.

Data collection methodology

- In-depth interview (IDIs)
- Small group discussion (GDs)
- Observation
- Collecting and analysing available data: analysing project documents (project design, objectives, activities...); monitoring reports, training reports, media materials, training materials that were built and implemented by project.

2. Data analysis

- Available information was analysed and priority issues for field study were determined
- Determining key words, variables, topics for field evaluation.
- Analysing information related to KAP of men and women, local leaders (communes) and related institutions about gender, sharing household work, family violence, and perception of having a daughter or a son, making decision on contraceptive methods
- Analysing data of effectiveness, the appropriateness of the mode of project intervention: training, communication via mass media, commune loudspeaker, drama performance, leaflets, billboards in local places
- Data analysis was followed the general principles of qualitative research.

3. Limitation of evaluation

Evaluation was conducted during the farming season of project communes. Farmers were busy to transplant rice on time then some of them could not participate in focus group discussion. In order to deal with this situation, evaluation team asked for complement by selecting other participants and conducting field visits at some families in a project commune.

Another limitation of this evaluation is that project activities completed fairly long time ago so people in community did not have a good memory about project activities. It is necessary to note that communication activities (project media messages) were hidden or mixed by other information and other programs related to family planning.

Because of time constrain and project activities at national level were finished, we only conducted interview representatives of NCFAW. Trained reporters, Secretaries of CFAW at Province, City and Ministry, Branch could not be reached.

Section 3: Evaluation results

1. Summary of project activities and reported results

1. Activities at national level

1.1. Coordinate with Voice of Vietnam

Based on theory, experience from nations and research results of HealthBridge, project coordinated with Voice of Vietnam to implement 7 reportages talking about gender equality with contents of the following topics:

Content1: *“The participation of both wife and husband in making household’s economics to avoid poverty, building family happiness”*. The objective was to change the perception that men were breadwinner and family economic would be developed stably when the wife unites with the husband.

Content 2: *“Perceptions about the role of men and women: what are reasons of gender inequality?”* The objective of the report was to change perception of the role of men and women leading to gender inequality: men were breadwinner, men were responsible for big work/issues, women only odd jobs and mainly doing housework, taking care of children and women are persons who usually use family planning methods.

Content 3: “*Men’s share in using family planning method, reproductive health care for women*”. The objective was to strengthen knowledge about reproductive health care and encourage men to use family planning methods actively such as condom, and benefits achieved when men actively involve in reproductive health care and family planning.

Content 4: “*Men share housework, encourage and take advantage for their wives participating in social activities*”. The objectives were to encourage men to share housework with their wives, to take advantage for their wives participating in social activities in order to develop their full potential.

Content 5: “*Communication between wife and husband*”. The objective of this reportage was to promote understanding each other, encourage communication for a better relationship between wife and husband, especially in the field of reproductive and sexual health.

Content 6: “*Introduction to Gender Equality Law*”. The objective was to make people aware of the new law, *Gender Equality Law*, and disseminate main contents of this Law to people.

Content 7: “*Introduction to the current gender project, Promoting Male Responsibility towards Greater Gender Equality*”. The objective was to introduce Gender project, project’s activities that were implemented by HealthBridge and some local partners.

1.2. Project coordinated with VTV2 (Vietnam Television, channel 2) to develop one TV spot with the messages of gender equality in the family and duration of 60 seconds and telecast nationally. The objective of TV spot was to show up a model of a happy family with the involvement of husband, wife and children in daily domestic activities such as cooking, taking care for and teaching children, and cleaning house...in order to encourage men’s participation in above activities. The spot was developed with the well-known actors and actresses, and with the humorous circumstances then make it friendly to the audiences. This TV spot was shown continuously in one month on VTV1 with the frequency of one time a day and two months in VTV2 with the frequency of two-three times a day. The time for telecasting scattered in the day with one time fixed in the prime-time, right before the news program at 19 o’clock.

1.3. Project coordinated with Press Department, Communist Party’s Central Committee on Communication and Education (Before as Central Committee of Ideology and Culture) to organize training on gender in reproductive health care for newspaper reporters and editors. This activity impacted directly on newspaper staffs at national level with the participation of the highest organization of press management. This activity was considered successful firstly by the satisfaction of participants and the number of news and reportages on newspapers written by the participants after attending training.

1.4. Project coordinated with NCFAW to conduct two 3-day training courses on gender equality, mainstreaming gender into the law and policy development, and the process of developing Law of gender equality. Participants were 102 Secretaries of committees for women’s advancement at Cities, Provinces and Ministries, Branches. The main purpose was to train the Secretaries the process of making law and policies and how to mainstream gender into these processes to make sure that the law and policies are developed with gender sensitivity.

1.5. Produced 2008 calendar with 12 gender messages for 12 months of the year. The gender messages were developed based on qualitative and quantitative researches conducted by HealthBridge and recommendations for gender priority issues in Vietnam from World Bank and Asia Development Bank. The content of the messages focused on promoting men’s participation in reproductive health care, doing housework, enhancing women’s power and getting benefit for both sexes when gender equality was achieved.

1.6. Developing manual on gender equality and reproductive health for trainers. The objective was to promote men’s role and responsibility in the family in RSH care, and to promote understanding and sharing between the wife and the husband.

1.7. Project participated in working groups of gender and reproductive health in Vietnam. Actively participating in these groups, the project has opportunities to share information of project activities, approach method from male side instead of female side that HealthBridge have been implementing. Furthermore, it was for sharing information about activities of member organizations and updating new information about gender and reproductive health.

2. Activities in Bac Ninh from October, 2005 to January, 2008

Table 1: Summary of activities and results in Bac Ninh

| | Main activities | Results | Compared to plan |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1 | Research on roles and responsibilities of men in the family and reproductive health care (qualitative and quantitative research) | Studies were reported to stakeholders in Bac Ninh province. | Implemented as planned. However, there was a bit late during the first period (about 3 months) due to HealthBridge staff turnover) |
| 2 | Training skills on gender and reproductive health care for related stakeholders from province to district and commune (course 1 for provincial and district staffs: 3 days per course; course 2 and 3 for commune staffs: 4 days per course) | 101 trained participants (3 courses) | 100% participants passed and received certificates. |
| 3 | Training for trainers of provincial women's union on gender, reproductive health care, and communication skills in the family (2 courses, 3 days per course) | 79 people were trained to become core trainers | Activity was implemented to provide human resource for provincial women's union. |
| 4 | Training on composing drama scripts and performing drama for communicators, who would be communicating using dramatization form (2 courses, 5 days per course) | 96 communicators from 16 communes and wards (6 persons per communes) were trained and practiced playing 2 dramas "Hoán đổi" and "Cái giá phải trả" | All participants were trained as planned. They are capable to perform drama in their communes. |
| 5 | Conducted media campaigns on gender and reproductive health in community: performing dramas | 49 night-show in 14 communes and wards were organized for about 30,000 turns of audiences | It was highly appreciated by local people and stakeholders |
| 6 | Organized mass media campaign | 2 TV reportages and 2 TV spots, news of project's activities were produced and telecasted on provincial television; Radio spot and radio drama were played on provincial, district and commune radio stations; The articles were published on Bac Ninh newspaper such as gender equality and men's responsibility in sharing housework... | Mass media activities were implemented as planned. For telecasting drama on the radio and loudspeaker system, the suggestions were made that if it can be shorten, the local people could hear the whole drama as it was considered as long for radio program (around 30 minutes). |
| 7 | Produced IEC material: Calendar with the message " <i>spouses share housework for a happy family</i> "; Leaflets with the message " <i>men share domestic activities with women; men share responsibility of family planning with women</i> " | 8,000 calendar distributed to households with priorities were given to household with husband went to work far away from home. 29,000 leaflets were produced and distributed to household. Priority was given to those with men from 18 years old or more | 8,000 household in the 17 intervention communes were received calendar 29, 000 households in 17 project commune were received leaflet. |
| 8 | Billboards with 2 contents of communication: 1- Spouses share housework to make family happier; and 2- He is very manly, he always care for family | 17 billboards with topic 1 and 10 billboards with topic 2 were shown in each project commune/ward. | Billboards were built as planned, shown in places where there were a lot passers-by such as at the gate of markets, in front of People's Committee or commune/ward health station. |

II. Findings

1. The appropriateness of project design: objectives, activities, and intervention strategy

Project's objectives were appropriate to the real condition in Vietnam and Bac Ninh province. As evaluated by project's partners, gender inequality, male chauvinism, and patriarchalism in men are still common, particularly in rural areas. There are two issues that the project mentioned are really appropriate not only to local people but also to Vietnam general policy. They are responsibility of men in reproductive health care and sharing housework. Therefore, project was warmly welcome by active participation of partners, especially at village and commune level in Bac Ninh.

Comment from a focus group discussion in a commune in Que Vo, Bac Ninh: *"Compared to other projects, this project is very effective. Gender inequality is a big problem then the intervention is necessary in Bac Ninh. The project is appropriate to local needs so almost all communes have contributed their own resources to implement project's activities. After finishing project, some integrated activities could be sustained by local partners and project supported collaborators/communicators could be still functioning. There is a general guidance and the participation of commune people's committees and related stakeholders. Due to enthusiasm to the project, there are a lot of creative during the project implementation that are applied to achieve the best effectiveness for promoting gender equality in our province"*

Activities and strategy to implement project are appropriate and effective.

In this project, two researches were conducted to find out social opinions about role of men in reproductive health, family planning and doing housework; and to identify the rooted reasons for these opinions. The findings are the social definition of masculinity. Project provided messages to encourage flexible ways towards masculinity and use it as the basics for changes in behaviors of men and women in the intervention areas.

Two main problems that were emphasized in interviews were: i) change in perception of men in sharing domestic works; ii) men's collaboration and sharing in reproductive health care, especially in using family planning methods for men. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews of related partners in Bac Ninh all reflected the same comments as the following: *"Although funding invested for project is small, the project is quite effective. Activities designed after the first study such as training courses, mass media campaign, billboards, leaflets, drama performance were highly appreciated. Local people supported positively. Drama performance attracted many audiences and they were strongly effective. Before, health profession conducted many communication activities of family planning such as using condom but mainly for women. This project has targeted men, changes people's behavior and perception. Instead of communicating condom to women like before, the project now communicate condom focusing on men. Men are the only target subjects that needed to communicate and mobilize"*.

However, there are some points related to intervention strategy of project that need to be considered during the project implementation:

- The project was conducted by HealthBridge along with partners at national level (National Committee of Ideology and Culture, NCFAW, The Voice of Vietnam...), and at Bac Ninh provincial level. However, partners have a little chance to share activities with each other, and there was not clear collaboration between provincial (Bac Ninh communes) and national activities.
- Some activities that were implemented similarly in wards and communes in Bac Ninh hence limited the effectiveness. Drama performance telecasted through ward radio system and ward loudspeakers did not attract much of people's attention. Because the local people who live in the only one ward amongst 17 intervention communes/ward, are mainly the government officer then they seems to stay inside house after working hour.

According to Bac Ninh Department of Health, if the project were re-designed, it would be necessary to complement some other services. Project now only focus on communication and propagation to change behavior. It is necessary to complement some services in order to provide implementation condition: providing condoms, supporting for counseling. In addition, it is necessary to combine and integrate into current activities of reproductive health care and HIV/AIDS prevention. Selected criteria for intervention communes should be emphasized such as high birth rate of the third child and high abortion rate. *"Villages with traditional job are usually richer. However, when they have money, they often have male chauvinism, trying to have a son to the*

better end. Moreover, despite of being rich, people of villages with traditional handicrafts are less likely to care about education information in public. Therefore, the gender project should be implemented in these areas”.

2. Field evaluation results

2.1. Are project activities and interventions in synch with the achieving objectives?

Project interventions at national and provincial level all directed to promoting men’s responsibility in sharing domestic works, making decision on contraceptive methods and on having baby, in order to achieve project objectives. The project conducted initial research to determine the issues and built intervention contents that were appropriate to the needs of local people. Messages were built such as: “spouses share housework to make family happy”, and leaflets: “men share housework to women, men share responsibility in family planning with women”. Dramas, radio and television messages that were built based on the initial research were highly evaluated by local partners. Training contents and documents were built with examples taken from initial research.

It was surprised that even provincial Women’s Union said that information about gender and gender equality were just provided to commune level through these project trainings. Before, the training on gender equality only reached to district level.

Gender training with TOT model is very effective to help Women’s Union promote activities on gender equality for our system. HealthBridge collaborated only with Center for Health Education at the beginning. When there was direct collaboration, we organized two training courses for women which are responsible for women’s issues at province, districts, and provincial units/departments, and some communes (totally 76 people trained, communes with risk were selected: those with high birth rate of the third child and high prevalence of STIs were given priority to participate in training). Before, we attended a gender training that provided gender and sex concepts for leaders with the duration of a morning only. These trainings now are more advanced including communication skills in the family, gender in reproductive health, role of men. We especially like 2-way training method. Before, in training with old method, participants were sleepy or left earlier. However, the way that project implemented training courses on gender with lecturers from Hanoi is impressive, having role play and participants were happy...After these training courses, districts made plan and desired for further training but training courses have not been taken place yet. Moreover, women’s union have training courses on gender but not gender in reproductive health. Contents of project activities and training courses emphasized on gender equality, division of domestic work, having baby, raising children, communication in the family...These contents are new so women like them very much. After these training courses, members of women’s unions, from provincial level to district and commune level, become active communicators. Even though they have not had chances for further training courses, they already know how to communicate to other people about gender, and dissemination information through direct talks”. Summary of interview with Vice Chairwomen of Bac Ninh Women’s Union.

Messages from drama about gender equality promote perception of people about the role of men. *“When watching drama, an elderly woman cried due to sympathy. The elderly people would like to watch in order to teach their children. I witnessed people took leaflets saying that it should be hang for spouses seeing. I have a daughter now, she had a daughter too and she does not desire to have more children. I think project activities have good impacts”.* A female staff of Suoi Hoa ward, Bac Ninh province.

In general impacts of a rapid social economical development, project activities were positively appreciated in creating a greater gender equality through specific activities of men in the family, decisions of reproductive health, decisions of having boys or girls and using contraceptive methods.

Table 2: Summary of focus group discussion of leaders in Suoi Hoa ward

| Gender equality issues | Before | Present | Reason(s) |
|--|--|---|--|
| Learning about condom. Male ask about reproductive health for his wife | Nobody came to health station to ask about condom | Men come to ask for condom and ask about contraceptive methods | Mainly due to project’s activities. Due to increase in general perception and social development also. |
| Opinion of having boy or girl | Few people accepted to have girl only. Majority tried to have boy at any price | About 25% of couples may accept to have girl(s) only, or all girls, and not trying to have more baby. | It was partly due to impact of project. It was also due to social-economical development, general perception, the |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | | | mirror of trying to have a boy that in turn to have a lot of girls and so poor. |
| Husband cares for pregnant check-ups of his wife | Men rarely cared for women's pregnancy, did not take their wives to go to delivery. Some men felt shame when their wives delivered and dodged to another place. | Many husbands take their wives to clinic for pregnant check-ups and delivery. They do not feel "shame". | Project's activities have good effects Impact of social development was about 50%. |
| Sharing domestic activities | General opinion was that cooking was women's duty. When men laundered, they felt shame and were afraid of being seen by other people. | Men involve in doing housework more frequently. They do not feel shame when they do laundry, they even laundered for their wives' clothes | Project plays a main role, and it is the most effective. People who stigmatized against their wives have changed up to 70% |
| Family harmony and violence issues | Family violence was fairly common. There were 1-2 families normally having violence problems in their village | There are a lot of changes. There is maximum 1 case having problem in the village. Alcohol abuse situation has been improved slowly | Drama is the most effective method in promoting harmony in the family. |

2.2. Did communication reach to target subjects? Were its contents and design appropriate?

Target subjects of the project were people at intervention location including both men and women, focusing on reproductive age group particularly. IEC materials are always designed in positive manner. In another word, instead of criticize men, the project choose the approach to encourage them. Based on opinions from stakeholders and field observation, even though the project finished for 6 months as at the evaluation time, it was evidenced that IEC materials and contents reached target subjects through different sources, contributing to promoting people's perception about gender equality:

- Free leaflet provided by project, communication messages such as " the husband should share family activities with the wife in order to protect health and preserve happiness" , " Implementation gender equality would contribute to promote all capacity of men and women, to build a happy family, to develop economic and to a stable society"; " Men should share responsibility in family planning with women" , and contents about " benefits of gender equality", " consequences of abortion"...were delivered to people 's hands in project communes and wards via live source such as Women's Union, Youth's Union and in the local meeting. Although the project finished about 6 months ago, when were asked, women at Phu Lam commune (Tien Du district) still remember some messages in the leaflet. However, lines of big letters, title of leaflets were more likely to be cared for. General comments were to reducing numbers of letters in leaflets. About design, there was idea that pictures of condom was not necessary because people knew how to use. Moreover, these pictures (the pictures give the guide how to use condom properly) were sensitive to some older people. A worthy point is the necessity of integrating contents of leaflet to response to direct benefit of people: "if leaflet had information of technological science such as income generation it would be read by more people, and gender itself attracts less attention". A comment of male group in Dai Xuan commune.
- Dramatization is the most favorite form attracting a lot of people from young to old, particularly in rural area. Evidence from focus group discussions with project's motivators as well as with people, both male and female, showed a highly enthusiastic participation in this activity. Evidences from field study illustrated that communes and wards mobilized participation, contribution of labor and funding to organize drama performance at nights at villages and residential clusters. "Each drama show need to mobilize a lot of people to involve in, following the lead of ward leader and took about 3 millions Vietnamese dong. Project only supported 1.2 millions Vietnamese dong, the rest were from the ward's funding. However, we found that it should be done and people would be benefit from it. In addition to funding, the ward had to prepare many plans such as inviting people to come to watch, keeping the rain out, preparation for equipments to ensure the quality of the shows...". Comment of Vice Chairwomen of Suoi Hoa ward, Bac

Ninh. “Dramatization was highly appreciated by local people. We mobilized to the maximal level the participation of stakeholders. The positive effects of the night shows were easily to recognize by people’s exchange and a significant change in gender perception. We also realized that some contents of family planning (e.g. guideline of using condom) were not so delicate. An old woman left when she was watching this scene. Therefore, it should be better not to provide this information because the audiences were in different classes”. Summary of discussion with a leader of a commune in Tien Du

Table 3: Changes in gender and form of communication (Male group discussion in Que Vo)

| Gender issues | Before project (2005) | Present (2008) | Evaluation forms of communication | Recommended forms of communication |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Preference for boys over girls, wanting to have boys | If a couple did not have a son, they would get trouble when they went to a party, people would annoy them and they would feel unhappy. One of them wanted to have many boys just in case a boy getting a sudden death... | Nowadays, it is not absolutely necessary to have a boy, provided that children are successful and well-educated. However, male chauvinism still exists in some families. | Drama is the most effective form. Male and female adolescents were more attracted than other age groups. Number of male participate in the drama performance seems less than women. Leaflet was likely to be read by the certain group. Bold letters were paid more attention than small letters. Billboards exist stably, having value as people look at them when they have chances, pictures were nice. General speaking, billboard is the good communication method. Loudspeaker is valuable with radio spot, and less valuable with long duration messages. It disturbs some people when they are tired after work. | Integrating short radio drama (about 10 minutes) with songs would attract more audiences. Loudspeaker <i>should not direct to household with small babies</i> . We could comment this to the local authority for their attention. Offices and schools are also the good channel for distributing leaflet. It should be better to integrate communication activities with other activities such as economic development, for a higher effectiveness. |
| Assigning family activities | Men were supposed to do work considered main and great. Women only assist men. | Every one shoulders responsibility for family affairs. Women could plough a field, their income sometimes is higher than that of men. Men can cook and do laundry. Before, work was shared but not much like now, men were decision maker for great matters. For now, discussion with wife is conducted before getting the last decision. | | |
| Family violence | Spouses fought each other, a husband fought against his wife. These stories were common. | A husband gets drunk and hits his wife, a wife shouted at her husband. These stories still exist but they are less likely to occur. | | |
| Position and role of women in the family and society. | If a wife had a higher social position, earned more money, her husband would feel a complex and less power | Each one has his/her work. The husband helps the wife to make progress without complex. | | |

- Communication through loudspeakers was highly appreciated in communes rather than those in wards. Messages were effective because they were integrated into information delivering in “prime hours” and

have positive impacts on community. However, there were different points of view about this form of communication. Firstly, only short message was cared about, radio dramas (about 30 minutes) were long and even persons who organized radio broadcast did not highly appreciate effectiveness of radio drama. “Communication of disease epidemic, health care is effective because people care about it. About gender, it should be better to give little each day, like project’s radio spot. Radio drama was not listened by much of people in the wards (urban areas). Secondly, only in commune there were people highly appreciated radio communication form, this differed from in city. There were people considering it necessary source of information, some people listened, some people did not, but it could be combined. There was a retired officer wanted to listen to, but the quality of loudspeakers was bad, sometimes wind changed its direction.

The note is that the loudspeaker is the government already system and cover 100% of all communes/ward in Vietnam, the project utilized this system for disseminating the project’s information. However, the project can make the comments to the local authority in the project site this comments for better effectiveness.

- **Billboards were a relatively simple form but effective and appropriate when it was put in places with a lot of passers-by.** Observations at communes and wards showed that panels containing gender equality messages were put in the entry-gate of markets, in front of door of commune People’s Committees or in public. The majority of interviewed women said that they read and saw information in these billboards. “*I heard a woman showing to her friend and said that: Look at what people wrote, learn this*”. A woman in Que Vo exchanged. According to evaluation of women in discussion, pictures and information in billboards were nice and gave a good impression.
- **The project also implemented many communication forms via Vietnam Television, the Voice of Vietnam, Bac Ninh newspaper and television.**..However, discussion found that the activity carried out in the national scale did not integrate into local activities. Some ideas showed that if nation newspaper coordinated and delivered information about actual activities in Bac Ninh locations, and informed widely about broadcast schedule, it would bring back a positive effectiveness.
- Generally, with diversity, both direct and indirect, through different sources of information, the project delivered appropriate contents to target subjects, contributing to promote gender equality, making positive changes in intervened locations. The following table summarizes discussion results of 2 groups, men and women, in Dai Xuan commune, Que Vo suburban district, Bac Ninh

Table 4: Changes related to gender equality: Group discussion among men and women in Dai Xuan commune

| Form | 2005 | 2008 | Project’s role |
|---|--|---|---|
| The participation of women in governmental institutions | 20% of staffs were women | 35% are female staffs, 65% of key staffs are female. | Mostly due to general socio-economic development; and attention of the Party. |
| Family violence | 11 cases of husbands hit their wives. | 2 cases of husbands hit their wives. | This is partly impacted by project |
| Opinion of having boy or girl | Male chauvinism is serious. If economic were in difficulty, only boys would be allowed for further study, girls would stop studying earlier. Requiring boys to maintain the continuity of a family line led to a high birth rate of the third child. | Many couples having only 2 girls accepted to stop having more babies. Gender equality is more obvious. Male chauvinism still exists but in minority. Couples know better about contraceptive methods. | Project has a positive impact on changing this perception. |
| Housework | Men left/commended completely housework to their wives. Very few men shared housework with their wives. | Sharing domestic work is clear. Women have more free time. Women participate in village’s meeting more frequently. | Project plays the key role. The effectiveness of project is obviously greatest. |
| Family relationship | There are patriarchal men in some families. Many couples quarreled. | It is more equally, discussion between husband and wife. Divorce | Project partly impacts on this change. |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | | is less likely to occur. | |
| Sources of information about gender equality | There were sources of information such as radio, television, newspaper but they were not direct. Gender equality was heard but it was not clear and vague. | Drama is the richest information source. If technological science information were integrated in the leaflets, it would attract more readers. | Project has provided a lots information. Integrating this gender equality information into technological science advance would attract more people. |

Summary of limitation of communication forms and people's suggestions

- *Leaflet was necessary, complementing information and could reach to some subjects. However, contents should be integrated with information on income generation.* In addition, some images of condom use guideline on leaflets were fairly sensitive to a certain part of residents as the elderly. As some respondents said that condom has existed for a long time, many people know well. Therefore, it is not necessary to draw these images or it should only be given in meetings, in trainings with specific topics for subjects such as women, farmers... If the leaflet gave educational contents of economic development, and raising that were practical to people, a long with gender equality communication, it would be more effective and would attract more care.
- *Drama was the most appreciate. However, some contents should be improved in order to be accepted by all people.* For example, a pregnant man imagine in "hoan doi-Exchange the roles amongst men and women" drama made fun. Nevertheless, it was not completely appropriate to the people who have high education level.
- Information via ward/communes loudspeakers was communication form receiving conflicting ideas. While radio spots were generally highly appreciated in communes, some members at ward level appeared not to support this radio form because few people listened to the loudspeaker. It may due to the ward selected in the intervention sites has its own characteristic that almost its population are government officers then after the working hours in the office they almost stay inside home with the door closed then the opportunity for approaching this communication form are limited. In project communes, except for people participated directly in drama playing, some respondents said that the radio drama was quite long (about 30 minutes) then it effect to listen the whole drama, especially for those are busy. Almost of ideas got agreement on loudspeaker as following: *"It should broadcast only key messages, integrating into regular social economical information on radio. Radio drama should be excluded or shorten less than 10 minutes"*.
- Communication via provincial television was thought to be necessary. In fact, it attracted not much attention of the people who are so busy with the work and if they have an unoccupied time to watch television then the channel of film is more priority.

2.3. Were training courses provided to target subjects?

At national level, the project provided training courses for 2 groups of subjects playing important roles in promoting and strengthening gender equality in Vietnam:

Enhancing perception about gender equality for newspaper reporters was extremely a practical intervention. It has both micro and macro impacts on improving gender issue in Vietnam. In addition, all secretaries of Committees for Advancement of Women in all Cities and Provinces, Ministries and Branches were supported for 3-day training course on gender equality contents and new law of gender equality that was newly approved. Although this activity was newly started, it has particularly important meaning and large impact. According to Ms Qui, Office Manager of NCFAW: "Each province, city, and ministry and branch all has committee for advancement of women with the head is vice president of province or vice minister. Due to the committee's head and members are the holders of several official positions then the committee's work leave to its secretaries. Each city and province, ministry and branch has one secretary who is responsible for gender equality. Regular meetings between NCFAW and secretary system are taken place one time per year but they were usually organized in one day with simple contents. Due to these reasons, knowledge and skills of these key secretaries were limited. The project provided a good chance to the committee to strengthen capacity for its system because the most basic contents were exchanged and shared in three days of training. All participants highly appreciated effectiveness of the training courses. We printed presentations at training courses to distribute to provinces as references for their works".

NCFAW has a great need for strengthening capacity for its system to provincial level in order to address well the requirements of gender equality mission. Although one training course was quite a good start, there has many things needed to be done in order to promote perception and to change behavior of these key staffs themselves.

Trainings for trainers with provincial Women's Union were highly appreciated by participants. *"Before union's staffs at suburban level were trained on gender equality, but it was a quick introduction, short time and not impressive. Participating in this project, we were quite impressive to methods that lecturers applied. It was pleasure, every body shared and involved in, and it did not make sleepy as other training courses. Moreover, we learnt communication skills that helped us to improve our work as well as in the family. Women communicate better with their husbands so it makes families happier. Key staffs of Women's Union, the priority was given to the staffs in project communes, were trained, and I found that was fantastically effective and I want to be trained more..."*. Interviewed the Vice Chairwomen of Bac Ninh provincial Women's Union.

Training courses for communicator groups at commune level on "drama performance" gave the best impression because of the participation of the local authority, mass union. Ninety six communicators were really attracted to project's trainings and that were shown clearly via the interview and discussion at commune. A vice chairman of a commune in Que Vo district, who directly participated in managing drama group in his commune, shared his opinions:

"The project trained us very well, very impressive. We knew more as we participated in and we spent a lot of private time for more practice. The project provided training, and it was appropriate and we found it is necessary then we invested time, labor and additional local funds to make performances more effective".

However, through training activities for NCFAW and Women's Union, the following points should be exchanged for further considerations:

Firstly, trained subjects of women's union were all women (79 women participating in 2 training courses, as the project collaborate with Women Union then all of its members are women).

"If men also involved in these training courses, it would be better. It was afraid of that if men invited, they might not participate in fully, but training for women only was not a good option. Mobilizing men via farmers' union was appropriate. Men are now not cared for as well as for women. Sometimes women could not transmit knowledge to men. If it was not careful, it would be as similar as before, when communicating contraceptive methods including condom use, condoms were provided to women, women were assigned to sell condoms that could not be sold or eaten". Vice Chairwomen of Bac Ninh Women's Union exchanged her ideas.

Secondly, although all communes have committee for advancement of women and vice presidents of communes are leader of these committees, all works related to these committees were implemented by women's union. *"We report annually works of commune committee for advancement of women that I am the leader. We did not do it separately but basically based on activities of women's union. Reports of Women's union are also the reports of communes!"* A Vice Chairwomen of a commune in Que Vo exchanged as above.

"This is problems of uncompleted perception. It is necessary to promote training, communication for NCFAW system to make them clearly understand their functions and missions and make them understand that is not women's work. We just implemented at provincial level. It should be done more from suburban district downwards". Ms Qui, NCFAW told that. This is not the limitation of the project, but it could be considered content needed to be cared for in communication messages during intervention implementation, particularly at communes and wards level.

2.4. Did the skills needed for future gender work increase among those receiving training?

Capacity of staffs was improved significantly in perception and practice about gender that were shown via works at office and in the family. Staffs participated in training received necessary knowledge and basic skills in gender equality communication, role of men in family planning and sharing domestic works. Evidences were shown from interviews with commune and village staffs that were trained to be "communicators" who were confident to talk about gender. Many participants were invited to participate in not only drama performance but also related activities because they showed good knowledge and skills via drama performances.

For provincial women's union, capacity of women was improved obviously:

"Because the objective of the project is to build capacity, to develop resource, and teach TOT (training for trainers), it is different from activities that the project collaborates with Center for Health Education and Communication. After that, our staffs would be key trainers conducting short training courses in communes and villages. We

integrated well into Union's activities in order to promote gender equality and bring benefit for women themselves that were also our missions. However, we would integrate and invite more men to participate in at that time". Vice Chairwomen of Bac Ninh Women's Union commented.

In reality, evaluation groups have noted many activities that were implemented by women who are chairwomen of women's unions in communes and wards. After becoming a trainer, under the direction from province and district, they actively organized to disseminate knowledge of gender equality for their network of the head of village Women's Union. They integrated into local activities. This is an extremely positive impact of the project showing sustainability of interventions. It is because of the fact that although the project finished, activities disseminating knowledge of gender have been conducted by women's union in communes and wards.

President of women's union in Suoi Hoa ward made a comment on training participation: *"Being participated in training course held by the project was luck for my personal and for our work. Listening to gender in family planning was interesting, teaching methods were flexible, every one felt comfortable and happy. Many contents were given by me to union meetings of branches and wards. However, the training subjects were medical staffs and women. Therefore it was not enough. It is necessary to open widely to male and adult subjects. For example, a training course had 50 people, 40 of them were women, only about 10 men (heads of health stations), and if men did not attend, women would hardly communicate to them..."*

Family relationships are better, even to staffs at provincial level in Bac Ninh

Some points that were emphasized by men and women, beneficiaries and community leaders were particular impact of training course to family living. Every one talked about "happy family" as a major impact of project on community as well as on their lives themselves. The director of Center for Health Education and Communication shared immediately: *"Visible and short-term impact is in the family, I see that it is necessary to share more with my wife. Before it was equal, but now, the mean of gender equality could be seen clearer".*

Many men and women said that now they know better to understand role and opinion of each other, and they communicate to each other better. Men said that before they are the only one who made all important decisions, now they discuss with their wives and making decision together. Men are more responsible to their wives in family planning and that contributes to building a better relationship.

Technical activities of communicator group about gender and gender equality were promoted. *"Training was the most important that helps us to have current knowledge of gender, particularly of active methods used in training courses. In other training courses, participants usually felt sleepy, but in this training, participants actively involved in. This training not only improved our knowledge but also communication skills for communicators. We still need further training for being more active later on".* A communicator in Tien Du.

Group discussion with commune leaders (commune Vice Chairman, Women's Union Chairwoman, head of health station, and head of radio station) in a commune in Que Vo showed that training has achieved positive results: *"The way the project trained was very interesting, not boring. Participants understood better that gender equality was not to be the same, but was sharing work. Especially sharing in family planning, before the medical profession wrongly focused on only women. After attending training courses, men realized it was necessary to change. One of examples was that when we learnt model of female reproductive organ and negative impacts of abortion, it was impressive to men and we (men) found more responsible. Men realized before they are "thoughtless" and the need to share to his wife... The times of visisting the community before, the scene that a husband washed clothes for his wife was still seen but rarely, and they were shy to be seen by a stranger and they usually evaded. Nowadays, whatever they do is fine. Trained people also disseminated for other people".*

2.5. Did the project contribute anything new/useful to the dialogue on gender equality in Vietnam?

The project has some new points and created a good foundation for the dialogue on gender equality in Vietnam, particularly in Bac Ninh including:

1- "Gender equality" was understood truly and specifically.

In the baseline survey of the project, people seemed to be unfamiliar to this phrase and it was particularly sensitive to men. They thought that "gender equality" only gives benefit for women and once gender equality were achieved, their role and position would be weaker. However, from in-depth interview with people after implementation of the project, they understood "gender equality" to a certain extent that chances for men and women were similar, or sharing between men and women in different fields, especially, "gender equality" would benefit both men and

women and they supported by changing their behaviors. Through the interviewing of the project steering committee and the local authorities, it was reflected that *“By participating the project, there are changes in our only family, it leads to increase the solidarity and the harmony amongst my wife and I, and due to that benefit both of us not only for women”*

2- Promoting perception of men leading to changing behaviors, from evading domestic works to considering them happiness, a contribution, and responsibility of men include washing clothes...

General speaking, there were basic changes in Bac Ninh compared to before, particularly in project location such as Tien Du, Que Vo, Bac Ninh city. These places were considered to have many “patriarchal” families, less care about women and looked down on women. Women involving in social affairs were generally neglected. Nowadays, men are likely to take advantage for women, the husband is perceptive, and many women are shared especially in heavy works and domestic activities. Many men works far away from their house, women take care for their families and their children. Perception of leaders in the Party were enhanced, many women participated in social work including the secretaries of Youth Union and commune Chairwomen.

A long with the changes in social life and family relationships that were reported by interviewees, spouses and village leaders, evaluation results showed changes in community attitudes. Husbands participating in group discussion at communes told that they wanted to help their wife before but they were afraid of being seen and being laughed by everyone. Washing clothes, cleaning house, cooking, even raising children were traditionally considered responsibility of women. They said that: *“The change that could be seen now is that men feel comfortable when they help their wives, they have nothing to worry about”*.

After participating in gender equality training, I personally change remarkably. I found that it is necessary and I have helped my wife every things including family activities. Especially, perception of people in community improved which helps me to change my behavior. Before, I was shame to my friends as I helped my wife to do the housework. However, it is opposite nowadays that I would get people’s criticism if I showed gender inequality. In the other hand, the husband could do every thing for his wife without being afraid of “losing male face” like before. A husband participated in a training course held by project

Respecting gender equality and making it one of the criteria used for making decisions in community may be the greatest impact of the project on some community leaders. Another significant change was the numbers of women participated in or were voted for leader position in location increased. This changes the community atmosphere. No one think that village meeting is “men’s business any more when vice president or even president of people’s committees are women, or village leader is a woman, and women keep other important positions.

3- Promoting responsibility and enhancing prestige and contribution of medical profession

Gender is cross sectional issues, medical profession involves in an important part, reproductive health. Before, medical profession only focused on family planning and communication focused on women. Nowadays, there is a big change, communications are also for men. Mainstreaming gender in reproductive health and family planning makes people more care while it also utilize the available resources, communication sources and skills of communicators.

Table 5: Changes and limitation in locality (focus group discussion in Que Vo)

| Obvious changes in locality in the past 3 years | Reasons |
|--|---|
| Perception of local people was changed, about 60% of men change perception about gender equality, care more about their families. Before, there were families that couples quarreled due to trivial things. Nowadays, sharing housework frequently leading to be more likely solitary. Argument and divorce still exist but they are less likely to occur. | It is partly due to project. Important factors include: local economic develops fast, local people access to technological science, unions have been established, people have awareness of educating each other in all aspects, gender equality, “ grandparents are good model, descendants are virtuous and gentle” taking advantage for women’s advancement |
| Sharing work between wife and husband. Perception of men has changed a lot, sharing household activities, without differentiation whose work. Women participate in other business more often, economic has been developed | The greatest contribution of the project. This is obviously a result of communication activities. Integrating gender information into social-economical information would attract more people. |
| Men care about women more than usual, care about their wives’ | Perception of men is improved. Project |

| | |
|---|---|
| pregnancy even daughter or son. Nowadays, a family has 1-2 children only. Many families have only girls but couples do not want to have more baby. | significantly impacts on this change. |
| Family violence has been reduced. "Patriarchal" character has been reduced. There was husband beating his wife black-and-blue. Nowadays, violence has been 70% decreased. Few couples fight each other. <i>"Before, there were families that couples fought each other as frequently as eating rice everyday"</i> . | Project has certain impacts. Center for learning in community has integrated gender equality content. |
| Women are cared for positioning at all levels and in managing positions. Before, women were not respected. Nowadays, there is a woman that is Standing Vice Secretary of the Party. | Social economic has been developed. Project has partly contributed to enhance perception |
| Delivering the third child has been reduced. Abortion rate has been decreased. Men also come to buy condom. Prevalence of using IUDs has been increased. 2005: 50 IUDs, 2007: 140 IUDs. Condom: 45% of couple in reproductive period used condom in 2004. In 2007, about 65% of them used condom (Condoms were bought or provided during the communication period). Before, pregnant women went to clinic to delivery with their moms. It was difficult to call their husbands. Nowadays, men take their wives to go to clinic for delivery more often. The husband always watches over their wives, the husband takes his wife to clinic for IUD. | Project has certain impacts. Through communication of health collaborators and women, checking up gynecology 2 times per year, providing contraceptive pills and condom The clubs for population and family planning, or clubs for not having the third child established Before, 80% of women had gynecological diseases, did not use IUD. Nowadays, gynecological diseases decrease, IUD increases |

4- *The approach of the project was from both sides, both men and women. Before, if gender equality was mentioned, it often focuses on women.*

- To men: Promoting perception of men in gender, gender equality, roles and responsibilities of men in the family, in reproductive health care including participating positively in using male contraceptive methods . This was illustrated through: 1) directly participated in project's training courses with Bac Ninh provincial Farmer's Union, Bac Ninh provincial Women's Union, Center for Health Education and Communication, accessed to communication documents of the project; and 2) indirect disseminated by a wife, neighbors who participated in the project.
- To women: Promoting perception of women in gender, gender equality, reproductive health, communication skills in the family, some basic women's rights and laws as the legal basis to protect women. Activities involving women's participation such as training and through direct and indirect communication.

5- ***Messages provided in communication documents were designed positively.*** Based on baseline survey, "gender equality" phrase was generally sensitive and not well supported by people, particularly by men. In order to help local people see the issues truly and from that they change their behavior, critical messages were not effective. Instead of that, it should provide messages showing clearly roles of men and practical benefits for both sides when men participate in.

6- **Building staffs at national level (NCFAW, CFAW and reporters) and at local level (Bac Ninh)** that have more knowledge, skills to work on gender equality in Vietnam. Through these, the project contributed directly to improve quality of gender equality activities and promote the position of women in society, the role of men in family toward greater equality on Vietnam.

3. Project performance management

- **Collaboration mechanism and capacity of participated partners**

Appropriate selection of implementing partners contributed significantly to project success and sustainable. The project had partners at national level, particularly the project co-ordinated with National Committee of Ideology and

Culture, NCFAW, that are the most important leading organizations having responsibility in promoting gender equality in Vietnam. The participations of these organizations along with mass media organizations at national level took advantage and favourable conditions for specific intervention in Bac Ninh province. Changes in perception and capacity of national organizations were indicators to evaluate sustainability of the project in promoting gender equality in Vietnam.

Capacity of Center for Health Education and Communication was improved, particularly on integrating gender into communication activities of family planning. This is a new point that could be multiplied and this contributes to strengthening effectiveness of health education and gender equality issues. Bac Ninh Center for Health Education and Communication was selected to be the key partner in Bac Ninh organizing implementation, management, and co-ordination project activities in communes, wards in Bac Ninh city, Tien Du and Que Vo district. The project contributed to strengthening management capacity for the Center as well as local organizations and mass union including provincial Women’s Union, administrations in communes and wards. *“As the project have a lot of activities, we have to manage activities for their quality (e.g. in order to organize a training course, it is necessary to know objectives, participants, who comes, who leaves...), or drama practicing (before performing in community): it is necessary to practice in theory, to practice acting, to have scenario, after that playing in one commune, drawn the experiences then multiplying widely to the remain communes. As we did not know how to start at the beginning, we had to learn by experience. Ideas of better implementation project activities were encouraged, this rarely happened without the project”.* Interviewed Director of Bac Ninh Center for Health Education and Communication.

Role of suburban district: Due to fairly small scale with 3 districts and 17 communes participated in, the project management committee decided to work directly with selected communes, only informed to districts and collaborated as needed. This is decision for quality and project progress. This contributed considerably to strengthening monitoring of provincial level to activities at commune level.

However, if the project is implemented at larger scale, we saw the necessity of establishing the project steering committee at district level. District Center of Prevention Medicine did not involve in this project. Though Vice President of districts was invited to some project’s activities; representatives of districts were participated in the project’s gender training. The network of health education in district did not participated in this project. Therefore this group had not been trained yet.

Table 6: Summary of strengths, limitations, opportunities and challenges of project implementation

| Strengths | Limitations |
|--|--|
| <p>Methods of gender equality communication that are shown directly by dramas or integrated into family planning are new and welcome by people. It attracted both men and women.</p> <p>Women were more likely to go to watch drama compared with men. However, the husband’s care for the wife is better and clearer. Before, men thought that women were born for deliver a baby and doing housework.</p> <p>By participating in the project, local authority staffs and managers care more about their families. The relationship between husband and wife is better. The better the general perception of people is, the better the activities are done in the communes, particularly in the unions.</p> <p>The most obvious change in province is that men involve in doing housework, share with their wives, and take advantage for their wives. The fact that men come to health station to ask for condom is an obvious change.</p> <p>Abortion rate reduced compared with that in previous years. For example, there were about 60 cases of abortion each year before, now (2007) there were about 30 cases.</p> | <p>A small number of young men still think that when they change clothes, their wife should wash for them. The more men participate in activities, the more they share with their wives.</p> <p>Amount of transformed information and methods of communication should be diversified.</p> <p>Perception of people is fairly high that some information content should be shown in a more delicate way.</p> <p>Other types of performance should be integrated into dram performance such as song or story to make the drama performance section more vivid.</p> <p>Even, the project just give a topic for drama then local communicators will compose the scripts, it would be more creative. For example, local people composed a song in a bird flu project</p> |
| Opportunities | Challenges |
| <p>Local stakeholders provide spiritual supports. If the commune Secretary of Party was female, the support would increase.</p> <p>There commune/ward authority provided additional</p> | <p>Men know activities related to gender equality but they do not interest much. Women are likely to come to watch dramas more than men.</p> <p>In two wards in Bac ninh city, leaders (head of the wards,</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>funding for drama performances. Gender equality issues could be integrated into plan of activities of unions. Project content, to a certain extent, could be integrated into union's regular activities.</p> <p>The leader of the committee for women advancement at province level are also the Vice president of People's Committee. Then gender is mainstreaming in the provincial annual plans, and in half-yearly and yearly reports.</p> <p>Provincial Women's Union has implemented following-up actions to district and communes level. Commune Women's Union organized training course for their members at village level</p> | <p>Party secretaries) weren't cared so communication activities in the form of drama performance have not been conducted. Leaders in some villages think gender is work for women and unions.</p> <p>Ninety percent of members in Farmer's Union are men and their current activities are still limited. Age groups of Farmers' Union vary and are the potential for project activities. If they were mobilized, they will participate actively in the project.</p> |
|---|---|

Lesson learned: If the project were redesigned, locations with clear criteria for evaluation should be selected. For example, it should be better to select locations with high prevalence of the third child, in difficulties, limited perception of gender equality (family violence). Villages that have a traditional business, having perception and culture limitation, having unsound customs such as having many babies and son preference ...would be clearly different from other locations.

- **Project's sustainable ability**

In general, sustainable changes were achieved by project. They are the most clearly shown as the followings:

- *General perception of local people and local authority including men and women on gender equality has been improved significantly.* Changes in men's responsibility in sharing housework and reproductive health are sustainable.

- *Capacity of staffs participated in the project has been strengthened,* from national level (secretary system of NCFW, CFW at all levels) to provincial level (Women's and Farmer's unions, commune stakeholders), particularly gender knowledge and integrating skills into regular activities.

- *Project intervention is appropriate to local responsibility and to partners' responsibility:* Contribution of communes in implementing project activities such as playing dramas (communes supported extra funding and labor) represents for their care and commitment to gender equality. Dissemination of gender and RH information through branches of Women's Union in villages (via women system) are really important indicators to ensure that project would be sustainable. Improved secretary system of CFW in Province and City, Ministry and Branch would bring to long-term benefit for gender equality attempt ion in Vietnam.

- **Project unexpected results**

Telecasting drama performance on the loudspeakers system seems less effective. This may be due to its length when dramas were transformed from stage to radio. Loudspeakers in communes and wards are receiving conflict idea, not only related to gender equality communication of the project. Sometimes, loudspeakers bring back negative effects. For example, in focus group discussion, there was a saying that "*loudspeakers should not direct to households with small babies*".

Some pictures of instruction how to use condom in leaflet as well as in the drama performance were not supported by several stakeholders (as a vice president of a commune commented) and local people because of being afraid of bad effects on children and community once it was disseminated in public.

- **Factors that effect on projects**

Support of local leaders (communes, wards) is the decisive factor to the project success. In reality, among 4 wards that were selected to be involved in the project in urban locations, only 2 wards could implement all project activities. In other two commune and ward (Tien An, Vo Cuong), some activities were implemented but drama performance was not carried out even though the performance was approved by provincial project steering committee.

Rapid socio-economics development at project locations, activities of committee for advancement of women at provincial to district and commune level also contributed positively to perception of people about gender equality.

Due to the communication activities of nation-wide population and family planning were implemented successfully, some people who were asked remembered communication activities via radio station such as “family planning, IUD, contraceptive methods”

Section 3 Conclusions and recommendations

1. Achieving project’s objectives: Project has been implemented successfully. Its planned objectives were achieved. The project has contributed directly to promoting gender equality in Vietnam and Bac Ninh province that are clearly shown as the following:

- ***Strengthening capacity for participated partners on gender equality:*** Capacity of secretary system of committee for advancement of women in provinces and cities, ministries and branches was improved. Training groups of Bac Ninh Women’s Union and their system to commune level that were trained on gender equality have directly contributed to ensure sustainability. Besides, the knowledge of members of Bac Ninh Farmer’s Union was improved.
- ***The project has contributed to change positively and appropriately on the roles of men and their responsibilities in family life:*** General perception of local people, leaders in project communes, particularly men have obvious changes, men involve in sharing housework, take advantage for women to participate in social activities, family violence is reduced, and families are in a better harmony.
- ***Responsibility of men in family planning has been improved.*** Men in communes of intervened locations are positively applied contraceptive methods for themselves and care more about reproductive health, women’s pregnancy. Opinion of having boys or girls is not serious, the birth rate of the third child and abortion rate obviously reduced in project communes.
- ***Strengthening capacity and multi-sector collaboration in communication of health care education of medical professions*** by performing activities in collaboration with partners at provincial level, government authorities, local sectors and institutions to carry out project interventions.
- The project provided a basic foundation for implementing activities to promote gender equality in the future through strengthening perception of related partners, building capacity for partners who have role and responsibility in promoting gender equality in Vietnam and Bac Ninh province, particularly integrating into regular work of locations.

2. Other impacts of the project

- The project built a key communicator group, contributed to maintain and replicate positive impacts of gender equality in intervention locations and others.
- Integrating gender equality communication into specific contents of family planning was an effective model, having potential capacity to multiply in order to promote current activities of health care profession in a comprehensive health care for men and women.
- Lessons learnt from implementing communication of gender equality including direct forms such as drama performance, training for key staffs, direct dissemination information through the meetings of Women’s and Farmer’s unions that were highly appreciated as well as limitations of radio station and leaflets would contribute significantly to improving project effectiveness in the future.

3. Project has some areas for improvement:

- Project designed to cooperate with partners at national and provincial level. This is an appropriate strategy. However, collaboration and sharing between national and provincial partners in order to increase the effectiveness of intervention at local level is still limited.
- It is better to design the project interventions in urban and rural areas separately then increase the effectiveness. For example, playing dramas on loudspeaker system is the same for the urban and rural leading to limited effect in urban areas.

- There is a room for improving IEC material. For example, radio dramas were shortened then it would be easier to monitor the whole drama. If integrate the practical information for local people to the leaflet such as income generation guidance, it will attract more their attention.
- Communication activities via provincial mass media such as newspapers, radio, and television were accessed by a certain subjects

4. Key recommendations

- IEC material design: It is necessary to have different adjustment in contents and type of communications for urban and rural areas so that it would be appropriate to specific subjects/locations, avoiding contents that could reduce the support of certain residential groups.
- Co-ordination of activities between national and provincial level: National partners such as Vietnam VTV, NCFAW, National Committee of Ideology and Culture should share collaboration with intervention activities at local level to reflex the fact, advertising activities in order to increase the project's images and effectiveness.
- Implementation strategy: Participated partners should share project activities. In provincial area, it is necessary to promote integrating gender into regular activities of organizations. Men should be paid more attention on mobilizing their participation in training courses and project activities.
- *Although the project achieved initial results positively, changing perception, particularly behaviour needs a long and continuous process. Therefore, it is necessary to have further activities to maintain current results.* Maintenance and replicating activities that were considered good models: drama performance, trainings, information dissemination...to ensure sustainability of the project is a practical and necessary requirement.

Section 4: Appendix

1. TOR (attached file)

2. List of interviewee

Bac Ninh province

Dr. Nguyen Van Lang, Director of Bac Ninh Center for Health Education and Communication
Mr. Bui The Thuc, Center's cadre
Dr. Nguyen Dinh Tam, Vice director of Bac Ninh Department of Health
Mrs. Nguyen Thi Lan, Vice Chairwomen of Bac Ninh Women's Union

Suoi Hoa ward, Bac Ninh province

Mrs. Le Thi Hien, Vice president of Suoi Hoa ward
Dr. Tiep, Head of health station
Mrs. Nguyen Thi Dip, head of residential quarter 3
Mrs. Nguyen Thi Khanh, head of branch in residential quarter 2
Mrs. Nguyen Thi To Quyen, Chairwoman of ward Women's Union
Mrs. Le Van Hao, Secretary of ward's Youth Union
Mr. Nho, Residential quarter 1
Mr. Long, Head of radio station

Dai Xuan commune, Que Vo suburban district, Bac Ninh province, afternoon 13th March, 2008

Steering Committee and unions

Mr. Huy, Vice president of Dai Xuan People's Committee
Mr. Tuong, head of radio station, head of drama group
Mrs. Nguyen Thi Hop, Chairwoman of ward Women's Union
Nguyen Thi Ha, Head of commune Health Station
Mr. Nguyen Thanh Trung, secretary of Youth Union

Male groups:

Trinh Van Hoach
Nguyen Van Xuan
Nguyen Van Vi
Tran Van Giang
Nguyen Van Giang
Nguyen Van Huyen

Phu Lam commune, Tien Du suburban district, Bac Ninh province 14th March, 2008

Steering committee

Mr. Luu Dinh Tuan, Vice president of People's Committee
Mr. Nguyen Van Thao, secretary of Youth Union
Mrs. Nguyen Thi Huyen, Head of Radio Station
Mrs. Van Thi Thach, Chairwoman of commune Women's Union

Male group at Phu Lam, Tien Du communes

Pham Ba Hoang
Ung Sy Khoi
Ngo Duy Truc
Nguyen Trong Huan
Đo Thanh Hung
Nguyen Cong Cuong

Female group

Nguyen Thi Hoa
 Nguyen Thi Vung
 Ngo Thi Thao

National Committee for Advancement of Women

Mrs Nguyen Minh Qui, Office Manager of NCFW
 Mrs. Vu Ngoc Thuy, Head of Planning Department

3- Evaluation time frame in Bac Ninh

“Promoting Male responsibility towards greater gender equality in Vietnam” project in 17 communes, wards, and towns in Bac Ninh province, Tien Du and Que Vo suburban districts. Tentative evaluation plan and methodology in Bac Ninh from morning 11th March, 2008

| Informants | Number | Methodology | Time |
|---|---------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| The first day (11st, March): planed from 9 am Tuesday | | | |
| Center for health education and communication, and project assistant | 4 | Small group discussion | 11 th March |
| 12th March | | | |
| Leader of Bac Ninh Department of Health | 1 | In-depth interview | 12 th , March |
| Bac Ninh women’s union | 1 | In-depth interview | 12 th March |
| 13th March, Morning – Suoi Hoa Ward, Bac Ninh City | | | |
| Head of radio station, Secretary of Youth Union, residential group | 5 | Group discussion | 13 th March |
| Women union | 1 | In-depth interview | 13 th March |
| Health station | 1 | In-depth interview | 13 th March |
| Vice President of Ward People Committee | 1 | In-depth interview | 13 th March |
| 13th March, Afternoon- Dai Xuan Commune, Que Vo district | | | |
| Secretary of Youth Union, representative of drama group, head of health station | 5 | Group discussion | 13 th March |
| Commune women’s union | 1 | In-depth interview | 13 th March |
| Health station | 1 | In-depth interview | 13 th March |
| Male group at selected communes: invited 7 female farmers (randomly selected). | 7 | Group discussion | 13 th March |
| 14th March: Phu Lam commune, Tien Du district | | | |
| People’s committee | 5 | Group discussion | 13 th March |
| Commune women’s union | 1 | In-depth interview | 14 th March |
| Health station | 1 | In-depth interview | 14 th March |
| Women’s union branch in village: invited 5 heads of women’s union branches in 5 villages of selected communes | 3 | Group discussion | 14 th March |
| Male group at selected communes: invited 7 female farmers (randomly selected). | 6 | Group discussion | 14 th March |
| Complementing information (consultant self selected and complemented as needed) | 3 household | Observation, interview local people | 14 th March |

4- Tentative suggestion for interview and group discussion in Bac Ninh**Managers at provincial level:**

- Did the project appropriate to local needs?

- Did project's activities in synch with the project's objectives? Is there any lacking activity that should be complement? Which activity should be excluded or has been excluded due to its inappropriateness?
- Did the project achieve expected outcomes as planned?
- What are the most obvious changes related to gender equality and men's responsibility of managers who participated in project, local stakeholders and local people?
- What is the most interesting/worst of this project?
- Did the capacity of staffs who participated in project change? What could be applied from project to reality?
- Which project's results would be sustainable after ending the project?
- Did the local stakeholder support the project?
- Local contribution to project implementation and management?
- Lessons learned from province during project implementation?

Managers at commune level (People's committees, local authorities)

- Did the project appropriate to local needs?
- Did project's activities in synch with the project's objectives? Is there any lacking activity that should be complement? Which activity should be excluded or has been excluded due to its inappropriateness?
- Did the project reach its target audiences?
- What are the most obvious changes related to gender equality and men's responsibility in helping life partner to use family planning methods and sharing housework of project managers participated in project, local stakeholders and local people?
- Did the necessary skills related to gender equality that person and group were equipped change during the project's participation?
- What is the most interesting/worst of this project?
- Did the capacity of person who participated in project change? What could be applied from project to reality?
- Which project's results would be sustainable after ending the project?
- Local contribution to project implementation and management?

People at project communes and wards:

- Could they be able to remember project IEC material?
- Did they know information about gender equality? If yes, from which source? Which source is the most available? Which source is the most effective?
- Which media activity was appreciated the most? Why? What form of information was evaluated as at its worst? Why?
- Did the group that is needed to promote gender equality receive media information?
- What are the most obvious changes related to gender equality and men's responsibility of managers who participated in project, local stakeholders and local people?
- What are the most obvious changes of KAP in men related to gender equality? What limitation has been not improved?
- Did communication and education activities related to gender equality and men's responsibility lead to any good results?
- What are the main changes related to gender equality in province in the last 3 years?

¹ Elizabeth King and Andrew Mason, *Engendering Development Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*. World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2001

² The Synergy Project, *Men and Reproductive Health Programs: Influencing Gender Norms*. Report submitted to USAID, December 2003

³ Elizabeth King and Andrew Mason, *Engendering Development Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*. World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2001

Appendix E: Selected Research Reports

On the pages that follow, please find draft research reports from Vietnam, Pakistan, and Nepal on the economic contribution of women's unpaid work. In addition, the published research report from Bangladesh and the published summary report, are included as separate documents.

Draft Research Report

Women's Economic Contribution through their Unpaid Work

HealthBridge
Institute of Social Development Studies
January, 2008

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This report is based on research conducted by the **INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES. THIS VERSION OF THE REPORT HAS BEEN EDITED BY STAFF OF HEALTHBRIDGE, AND THUS DIFFERS IN A FEW SPECIFICS FROM THE RESEARCH REPORT PRESENTED BY THE INSTITUTE. THE IDEAS CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT THUS MAY OR MAY NOT REPRESENT THE IDEAS OF THE INSTITUTE OR OF HEALTHBRIDGE.**

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

In every society, housework plays an important role in both individual and community life. Housework is defined as food supply, processing, cooking, washing, cleaning, house decorating, care for family members and so on. The diversity, time-consuming nature, and exhaustiveness of housework have been acknowledged. However, housework is still devalued both socially and politically, and housework performers hence are sometimes considered as “parasites” in the family and more often than not have to suffer from various forms of discrimination and exploitation because of their performing the “invisible” work in the household (UNIFEM, 1996; Monsod, 2007).

In many societies, housework is gendered and disproportionately burdens women. It may be perceived as a form of patriarchal oppression. Women are responsible for the greater majority of unremunerated domestic work, regardless of the fact that their participation in remunerated work in the formal and non-formal labour market has increased significantly and has changed during past decades (Mahalingam *et al*, 2002; David de Vaus *et al*, 2003). At international women's conferences and forums organized in Mexico in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and more recently Beijing in 1995, participants have addressed women's “housework function” and a consensus has been reached that this gendered perception has made women's contribution invisible to development as a whole. This is confirmed by the Human Development Report 1995 that many of women's economic contributions are grossly undervalued or not valued at all, on the order of \$11 trillion a year. In its turn, the serious underestimation of women's economic contribution to development limits the social recognition of women's work. The full visibility of the type, extent and distribution of this unremunerated work will therefore contribute to a better understanding and, it is hoped, sharing of responsibilities between the sexes. If women's work becomes visible in national statistics, it will be more difficult for policymakers to ignore women in national decisions. Nor will women continue to be regarded as economic non-entities in market transactions (HDR, 1995).

In Vietnam, economic changes which have flourished in the climate of Doi moi (renovation) and openness since 1986 have brought about tremendous changes in gender and family relations. The diversification, industrialization and privatization of the economy ushered in by Doi Moi have created numerous opportunities for individuals, especially women, to organize and/or participate in income-increasing activities. However, a much improved economic position does not necessarily mean that their socially-sanctioned responsibilities within the household have been lightened. Numerous researchers of household relations and the sexual division of labour have noted that in comparison with men, women continue to shoulder more of the obligations within the household, particularly in terms of reproductive tasks such as caretaking and domestic work, especially when the related state services have been cut-back, commercialised and partially privatised as part of Doi moi policies (Tran and Le, 1997; Long *et al.*, 2000).

This reality has given rise to a number of research questions such as the real pattern of domestic work in rapidly-changing Vietnam today, how domestic work is perceived by men and women, what are its costs, how to quantify the costs and whether this kind of labour has its contribution to the wider national economy. Research findings on this issue will raise public attention to domestic work and will help policy makers in formulating appropriate policies concerning socio-economic development and training with respect to laborers' interests and gender equality.

It is in that context that this study was carried out. This study aims at providing evidence on the contribution of women in domestic work, the value of this multi-faceted work, and its contribution to the national economy. The ultimate goal of the study is to raise public awareness and to attract government's attention on the above issues and to contribute further towards formulating national policy on women, employment, care of children and the elderly, and other related issues.

Specific objectives: The research objectives of this study are:

- To examine the current situation of involvement in domestic work amongst married men and women of reproductive age in the study site.

- To describe the perceptions and attitudes of those married men and women regarding domestic work.
- To quantify the amount of time occupying women and men in domestic labour and to calculate the monetary value of such work.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

Various methods were adopted to collect quantitative and qualitative information for the study, including a thorough desk review and field research. A questionnaire was initially used to produce quantitative information about housework and women's involvement in it. Such information would help to quantify the amount of time which women spent on housework and serve as a basis for calculating the monetary value of this labour. A number of detailed case studies, generated through participatory forms of observational research, also provide further information about the amount of time used by women for completing housework. The in-depth interviews conducted as part of these enquiries helped reveal the perceptions and attitudes held by people regarding housework and women's contribution. In order to facilitate the investigation, a mixed set of research tools were developed. They consist of varied guidelines for both in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with different community members.

Field data was collected in Ha Tay, Ha Dong and Thach That over a one-week period starting in late October 2007. Ha Tay is located to the southwest of Ha Noi. It was purposively selected using criteria based on its varied socioeconomic development. The provincial town of Ha Dong and surrounding areas in this province, which are closer to Ha Noi, are in a process of rapid urbanization whereas other areas of this province are more rural and agriculturally dominated.

A short description of the research process and the various methods adopted are presented in brief below.

2.1 Desk review

Before and during the period of fieldwork, the team leader and other members of the research team compiled and reviewed all accessible documents, published studies, service statistics, government surveys, and other documents at the local, national and international levels in order to formulate an overview regarding unpaid labour within the household, along with all available policy interventions. This review also helped guide the field research, and generated data for further analysis in the later stages. The reviewed materials include the Ordinance of Population, the Law of Gender Equality, the Labor Code, the Marriage and Family Law, GSO statistics, VLSS data, the general reports of two selected communal and district People's Committees and Committees of Population, Families and Children, and a number of published studies on household labor and unpaid work conducted by both Vietnamese and international scholars.

In addition, throughout the research process, with the hope of keeping abreast of topical developments in the socioeconomic situation in Viet Nam, as well as changes in relevant official policies, the team tracked relevant coverage and debates in both printed and online newspapers and magazines, which included but were not limited to *Thanh Nien* (Youth), *Lao Dong* (Labour), *Vnexpress*, *Tap chi Phu Nu* (Women's Magazine), and *Gia dinh va Xa hoi* (Family and Society).

2.2 Field research

As mentioned above, the province selected for study is Ha Tay in the Red River Delta of Viet Nam. In the provinces, Ha Dong city and Thach That district were randomly selected to represent both urban and rural settings. In each district/city, one *phuong* (ward) and/or one *xa* (rural commune) respectively was randomly selected from the list of all *phuong* and *xa* of the district/city. In the selected *phuong* of Ha Dong, 150 households were then randomly selected from a list of all eligible households in that *phuong*. A similar strategy was used to acquire a study sample for a *xa* of Thach That (the sampling procedure will be specifically addressed in the following sections).

2.2.1 Brief introduction of study sites

Ha Tay province lies at the Southwest entrance of Hanoi. The population of Ha Tay in 2005 was 2,543,500 people, of which about 48% were male and 52% female. A total of 90% of the population were living in rural areas. The density was 1.157 people per square kilometer. Monthly average income per capita in 2004 at current prices by income sources and by province was 415,400 VND. The three main sources of income are salary and wages (28.7%), agriculture, forestry and aquaculture (27.8%) and non-agriculture and non-aquaculture (27.1%). The gap in monthly average income per capita in 2004 between the highest income group and the lowest one in Ha Tay was 7.2 times (Statistical Yearbook 2006).

a. Dai Dong, Thach That

Dai Dong commune is located in Nong Giang area, to the Northeast of Thach That district, Ha Tay province. Its natural area is about 502.95 ha¹, of which agricultural land accounts for 389.67 ha (of which 348 ha is for rice farming). The number of households in the commune is 2,465 with a total of 9,476 people, of which there are 5,023 people of working age. The commune is composed of 11 hamlets. The main occupational activity in this locality is agriculture, which accounts for 50% of jobs. The remaining is equally divided into industry, small scale industry and services.

b. Nguyen Trai, Ha Dong

Nguyen Trai is a precinct/ward in the central area of Ha Dong city with an area of 0.42 km². The ward consists of 13 residential blocks. There are about 2,798 households with 11,678 people. The number of people of working age is 4,792. Most of the households in the locality earn their living from doing business and services and working for the state's organisations.

2.2.2.1 Household questionnaires

2.2.2.1.1 Basis for sampling

The purpose of this study is to illuminate some of the processes surrounding housework, by quantifying the amount of time spent and calculating the monetary value of this particular form of domestic labour. Therefore, in order to capture a more comprehensive picture, a family comprising two parents and at least one child were selected for investigation. The households were selected based on the age of the wife, ranging from 20 to 49 years old. According to the Marriage and Family Laws, legal age for marriage is 18 for women and 20 for men. It is assumed that if a woman gets married at age of 18, she will probably have her first baby when she reaches the age of 20 and she will stop child bearing at age of 49. This means that the busiest time in a woman's life is likely to be the period between the ages of 20 to 49. For this reason, the study therefore decided to focus on this period of time.

The team calculated the sample size for the data collection from the community using the following formula:

$$n = \frac{Z_{1-\alpha/2}^2 P(1-P)}{d^2} \times 3$$

- Where:
- n is known as minimum sample size
 - p is the proportion of individuals who have the attribute of interest.
 - q =(1-p): Proportion of individuals who do not have the attribute of interest
 - d: The level of precision (up to researchers to decide)

With the level of precision of 10 percent, the calculated sample size is 192. This size will be multiplied by 3, the sample weighing coefficient in order to minimize the sampling error. The calculated sample size therefore is 576.

Based on the results yielded from the aforementioned formula and the study's objective to interview both husbands and wives of households so as to be able to paint a comparative picture, the factual sample is advisably 600 people (both husbands and wives) from 300 households. Thus, 150 households were selected from each site.

2.2.2.1.2 Sampling procedures

After deciding upon the number of respondents or households to be recruited for the investigation, the team employed the respondents and their spouses using multi-staged random sampling techniques.

- Stage 1:** Select purposively one province. As a result, Ha Tay province was selected.
- Stage 2:** Select randomly one rural district and one city/town. Ha Dong city and Thach That district were selected to have both rural and urban setting.
- Stage 3:** Select randomly one ward/commune in each city/district. Nguyen Trai ward, Ha Dong city (urban setting) and Dai Dong commune, Thach That district (rural setting) were selected.
- Stage 4:** Select blocks/hamlets: In each ward/ commune, 6-7 blocs/hamlets were selected randomly.

They are:

¹ 1ha= 10.000m²

- Nguyen Trai ward: Block 1, Block 13, Block 8_1, Block 8_2, Block 10, Block 12
- Dai dong commune: Tay Trong, Luong Ngoai, Dinh Roi, Roc Doai, Han Chua, Luon Trong, Dong Cau.

Stage 5: Select households: those households who can meet the three stated criteria will be selected.

- o Households whose wives are from 20-49 years of age
- o Households which have at least one child
- o Both wives and husbands are at home at the time of survey.

The research team had several meetings with the population cadres in Nguyen Trai ward and Dai Dong commune before fieldwork. In these meetings, the population cadres were requested to enlist all of the households satisfying the above criteria. The following form was used to facilitate enlistment.

| No | Name of household head | Name of eligible female respondent | Age | Name of her husband (if different from the household head) | Address | Remark: Proper time for interviews |
|----|------------------------|------------------------------------|-------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Phạm Văn A | Nguyễn Thị B | 32 | Phạm Văn C | 32, khu 1, phường Nguyễn Trãi, Hà Đông | Evening from 6 to 8 p.m. |
| 2 | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | |

After having necessary lists of the households from the studied ward/commune, the researchers reshuffled and numbered the list from one to end. Based on the number of enlisted eligible households and the number of households required for the study, the team calculated the sampling interval in each research site and randomly selected the households.

Table i: List of the households to be surveyed in Nguyen Trai *phuong* (Ha Dong)

| No | Block | Number of households (selected according to three criteria) | Sampling interval (k) | Number of surveyed households |
|----|--------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Block 1 | 162 | | 26 |
| 2 | Block 3 | 149 | | 24 |
| 3 | Block 8_1 | 176 | | 28 |
| 4 | Block 8_2 | 160 | | 26 |
| 5 | Block 10 | 140 | | 23 |
| 6 | Block 12 | 140 | | 23 |
| | Total | 927 | 6.18 | 150 |

Table ii: the households to be surveyed in Dai Dong *xa* (Thach That)

| No | Hamlet | Number of households (selected according to three criteria) | Sampling interval (k) | Number of surveyed households |
|----|------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Tay Trong | 120 | | 20 |
| 2 | Luon Ngoai | 121 | | 20 |
| 3 | Dinh Roi | 143 | | 24 |

| | | | | |
|---|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| 4 | Roc Doai | 190 | | 26 |
| 5 | Han Chua | 163 | | 23 |
| 6 | Luon Trong | 88 | | 15 |
| 7 | Dong Cau | 138 | | 22 |
| | Total | 963 | 6.42 | 150 |

In summary, the number of households and the individuals within them adopted for the study were decided upon based on the sample formula, in line with the study's objectives. To be eligible for the study, in each household, the wife should (1) be aged between 20-49, (2) have given birth to at least one child and (3) her husband is at home at the time of the study. With the assistance of the local population cadres, the team developed a sample frame that met the three criteria. Accordingly the required numbers of respondents were selected on a systematic random basis. Using this approach, the team faced little difficulty thanks to the enthusiasm of the local staff and the wholehearted cooperation of the respondents themselves. However, in order to interview both spouses of one household separately, researchers sometimes had to pay more than one visit to one household on the same day. The reason for this is that when they arrived the wives or the husbands were either at work or could not wait for their interviews due to unexpected calls. The team ultimately managed to interview 598 respondents from 299 households from both sites using semi-structured questionnaires.

2.2.2.2 Observational research

Given the complexity of the topic, we planned to conduct participatory observation in two households in each site in order to generate several case studies. It was planned that to understand better the diversity of housework in each site, one household with two generations and one with three generations would be selected. The researcher would ask for permission to stay with these households, follow them and carefully report all activities and events happening during at least 24 consecutive hours during the period of study. A time use table was used for this purpose. However, we only conducted one observation in Dai Dong commune because many households, especially in Nguyen Trai urban ward, who have been introduced to this methodological approach, refused to participate.

2.2.2.3 IDIs and FDGs with community members

In each locality, at district and commune levels, the team conducted four in-depth interviews with two men and two women respectively of different extended families. At first, the team planned to interview both the husband and wife of a household. The recruitment would be based on the result of the quantitative survey, from which more informative respondents would be selected. However, after consultation with HealthBridge colleagues, we decided to recruit those who did not participate in the questionnaire survey and so each of them came from different households so that we could capture a wider point of view from the studied population. In total, four men and four women from eight households were interviewed face to face for at least sixty minutes each. All the IDIs, as well as the following stated FDGs were recorded using digital recorders with the full verbal consent of the participants.

In each province, as briefly referred to above, the team also organized another two focus group discussions (hereafter FDGs). Individuals were chosen with the collaboration of the local population cadre based on their marital status, their family size and number of generations sharing the house. Specifically, two FDGs were conducted, one with men of families with at least one child and another with women of families with at least one child. In total, four FDGs were carried out, involving 24 participants.

Themes discussed varied with the different stakeholders and participants. However, they mainly included the family-building process, respondents' time use on a daily basis, division of work in the households, participants' attitude and perception regarding housework, the economic/monetary value of housework and so on.

2.3 Data processing, analysis and report writing

2.3.1 Questionnaire

Upon returning from the field, a data entry screen was developed using ACCESS Software. The preliminary cleaned data were entered into the form and were cleaned again after that. The database was ultimately converted to SPSS for further processing and analysis. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and cross-tabulations, which were used mostly in the report, were produced using SPSS.

2.3.2 Observational research

Information collected with these instruments was entered and processed using Excel and was used for analysis together with other qualitative and quantitative information.

2.3.3 In-depth interviews

The recorded materials of IDIs and FGDs were transcribed *verbatim*, analysed and collated by the team in the last two weeks of November 2007. Within a limited time frame, the data was analyzed in a conventional way (manually).

2.3.4 Report writing

The team leaders, in close consultation with other team members, subsequently wrote a full report. As mentioned previously, opinions expressed in the report are of the team only.

2.4 Limitations of the inquiry

The key limitation of this inquiry lies in its relatively small scale. As already mentioned, only two communes and/or wards in Ha Tay province were selected for study. Therefore not much claim is made regarding the representativeness of those studied or the possibility of generalising this information across the wider population. This said, quantitative and qualitative data have been used in order to capture a more in-depth portrait of the studied community. Since common perceptions and opinions do tend to exist across different districts, the findings – which are based primarily on this consensus – can provide insights into the actual situation regarding unpaid work within the households in Viet Nam.

OVERVIEW

3.1 KNOWLEDGE, PERCEPTION, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICE (KPAP) REGARDING HOUSEHOLD LABOUR AND HOUSEWORK

Definition of household labour or housework

Issues surrounding household labour, especially housework, have attracted much scholarly and political concern. A key issue is to understand the interrelation among the well-being of families, the construction of gender, and the reproduction of society. From different perspectives, researchers offer a range of different arguments regarding this concept. However, in the 1990s, probably the golden time of this maturing area of study, as Shelton and John (1996, p. 300) note, a fairly consistent conceptualization has emerged in the literature: “Housework most often refers to unpaid work done to maintain family members and/or a home” (c.f. Coltrane 2000). In the same review, Coltrane (2000) argues that this concise concept can also include other “less visible or overlapping types of ‘work’, which have been more often than not downplayed, such as child minding, household management, and various kinds of emotional labor” (2000). Lewis goes further in a recent article talking of household-based non-market work in order to make an important distinction particularly pertinent to those in the developing world whose home is also their workplace (Lewis 2006).

In a more specific and measurable way, housework is also classified according to the content, timing and/ or character of the tasks themselves. For instance, if one task is done inside of the house it will be labelled ‘inside’ and if it is done outside of the house it will be in a group of ‘outside’ tasks. Therefore, cooking and cleaning will be ‘inside’ tasks while shopping and gardening will be ‘outside’ ones. In other systems of categorical naming, cooking and cleaning are ‘daily’ tasks whereas gardening and shopping, which may occur on a weekly or non-daily basis, are termed ‘weekly’ ones. As to the character of tasks, the distinction between cooking on the one hand and gardening on the other will be captured by the labels ‘routine housework’ versus ‘other household labour’ (see Coltrane 2000 for a fuller account of the review).

Regardless of nomenclature, many researchers in the several large-scale national surveys conducted in the United States in and after the 1990s agree that household tasks are very time-consuming. Studies find that the five most time-consuming, less optional and less able to be postponed tasks are (a) meal preparation or cooking, (b) housecleaning, (c) shopping for groceries and household goods, (d) washing dishes or cleaning up after meals, and (e) laundry, including washing, ironing, and mending clothes (Blair & Lichter 1991; Robinson & Godbey 1997).

In this study, domestic work is interpreted as reproductive activities including housework, care for family members and community activities. Accordingly, household tasks include cooking, dish washing, shopping, laundry, housecleaning, childcare and tutoring, care for elderly members, and the like.

Gender role attitudes in respect of domestic tasks allocation

Research indicates that domestic tasks are often performed by certain groups of people more than others in society such as elderly people, children and especially women (Mahalingam 2002; CWS 2006). Although

women have made strides in the workplace, their gains have not been paralleled inside the home, where they have been shown to spend 2-3 times as many hours in routine housework as men and typically take responsibility for monitoring and supervising the work even when they pay for domestic services or delegate tasks to others (Coltrane 2000). This is partly because of gender socialisation through which gender ideology is constructed, whereby individuals internalise how to behave in gender-appropriate ways (Davis 2003, 2007). A number of scholars have affirmed that ability to perform such tasks have nothing to do with an individual's sex, gender or age. Nevertheless, this popular cultural understanding is not easily eradicated. It is even perpetuated by some researchers and media practitioners who continue to apply gendered labels to these activities or portray sex-stereotyped tasks to males and females (Guendouzi 2006). In so doing, they "explicitly acknowledge that gender influences household labour allocation" (Coltrane 2000, p 1211).

The perception that women do more housework than men has been further verified with a recent George Mason University study. The study of more than 17,000 people in 28 countries suggests that the institution of marriage changes the division of labor. Couples with an egalitarian view on gender—seeing men and women as equal—are more likely to divide household chores equally. However, in married relationships, even if an egalitarian viewpoint is present, men still report doing less housework than their wives regardless of their country of origin (Davis 2007). In this study, Davis cites Berk (1985) in claiming that the household is a "gender factory" in which not only goods and services, but also gender, are created through the allocation of household tasks. Therefore, as argued by West & Zimmerman (1987), for men, taking out the trash and not mopping floors are ways of "doing gender" or in other words, of reinforcing and reproducing their identities as men and as not women (c.f. Davis 2007). Similarly, when their financial identity as breadwinners is undermined, men do even less housework so as not to further weaken their position (Brines, 1994; Greenstein 2000 c.f. Beblo & Robledo 2007). Sociologists have also found that wives who earn more than their husbands do not delegate more household chores but compensate them for their "loss of face" by instead doing a "second shift" in the household (Hochschild 1989).

In a study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Susan Harkness (2006) studied the changes in female employment in the UK since the 1970s, focusing on working hours, times of work, income and unpaid work such as housework and childcare. Harkness found that while three-quarters of households now have dual incomes, women still take responsibility for most of the housework. Despite cultural changes such as the alleged rise of the so-called 'new man' and the implementation of more egalitarian employment policies, women continue to work long hours at home and at work.

It remains clear that men and, more often than not, women themselves assume housework to be women's natural proclivity. However, central to this maturing body of work is the idea that men should share more responsibility for domestic activities. Research indicates that married women enjoy less leisure and are burdened with more stress because of having to perform a preponderance of domestic tasks. This stress mounts considerably if they also participate in the paid economy. More importantly, this disproportionate share of responsibility for housework is related to women's well-being, the possibility of a decline in marital satisfaction and increased depression, which in turn threatens family happiness and the sustainability of the family unit (Coltrane 2000; CWS 2006).

3.2 MEASUREMENT OF HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTION

Perception regarding contribution of "women's work" within the household

Family work—and especially housework—are undoubtedly essential to the well-being of the household and the society as a whole. Empirical research findings reflect that all family members as well as society as a whole receive its benefits (Efroymsen 2007). In the role of housewife, women meet their husbands' needs so that they (men) will be able to fulfill their roles as paid employees (Mai Huy Bich 2002 c.f. CWS 2006). Given their special vitality, these 'committed-time' activities², to use Aas's term, tend to be socially undervalued and economically under-recognized. It was Reid's (1934) path-breaking definition and subsequent criteria for measuring unpaid housework production that first alerted official scholarly concern to the economic value of household production, including housework and care. In her thesis, a household activity would be considered as unpaid work if an economic unit other than the household itself could have supplied the latter with an equivalent service (c.f. Yun-Ae Yi 1996). Accordingly, it is logically possible to infer that much of the household work that is predominantly performed by women has monetary value or could be traded.

² According to Aas (1982), committed-time activities are activities to which a person has committed him/herself because of previous acts or behaviours or community participation such as having children, setting up a household or doing voluntary work. The consequent housework, care of children, shopping or provision of help to others are committed-time activities (c.f. De Vaus, 2003).

More importantly, if these ‘committed-time’ activities and other types of unpaid household production are able to be integrated into mainstream economics, it will be possible to better understand income distribution as well as to give visibility to women's work—a vital step towards gender equality—and achieve more comprehensive estimates of the level of economic activity (Aslaksen và Koren 1996; CWS 2006; Monsod 2007). Empirically, Adgar (2002) argues that if this segment of the non-monetary economy³ were reasonably valued in monetary terms, they would increase GDP by half or even more (similar to what Collas-Monsod 2007 observes). Also, in this instance, it is noteworthy that,

“Monetizing a hidden asset like unpaid work, does *not imply that unpaid work should be paid or taxed, nor that economic motives are found beneath the caring and giving work* that constitutes a considerable portion of non-market production. Unpaid work clearly has its own function and value outside the market economy. Instead, the *explicit acknowledgement* of the economic value of unpaid work argues that social support systems that **enable its effective functioning** should be viewed as *essential social infrastructure* rather than potentially dispensable welfare measures” (my emphasis).

In addition to the financial value of the unpaid work of women, it is also important to recognise the social importance of these activities. The unpaid work of people can act as a social ‘glue’ that helps bind society together. Much of the unpaid work carried out by women provides supports that would be difficult, if not impossible, to provide using market-based services (Adgar 2002; Lewis, 2006). The sense that someone cares, the flexibility of the support provided by many unpaid workers, along with the feeling that people are not doing things merely for financial gain, can all provide something additional to the simple financial contribution of unpaid work. (Adgar 2002; De Vaus et al 2003).

Valuation methods

In the burgeoning literature dedicated to identifying approaches to calculating unpaid work, there are two basic models offered that both claim to provide a realistic measurement of the valuation of domestic labour within the household (see Ironmonger 1989, De Vaus et al 2003; Hamdad 2003).

While there are several variants on these two approaches, two basic models can be identified: the market replacement cost approach and the opportunity cost approach. The former calculates what it would cost households in wages to bring in or hire others to do the same household tasks and care work carried out by themselves. The supposition underpinning the market replacement cost approach is that the time employed on unpaid activities is capable of being valued on the basis of the hourly earnings of those engaged in similar activities in the market itself. Embedded in this assumption is the notion that household members and their “replacements” are equally productive. Essentially, this means there is no difference between those carrying the tasks in the market and those carrying them in the household, a point placed under serious question by a number of authors (Lewis 2006; Hamdad 2003; England and Fobre 1999). While one would not like to claim that all domestic cooking is carried out at the standard of a Michelin-rated Paris chef, one might equally argue that such culinary tasks should not be valued at the lowest end of the spectrum either. Perhaps more important is the question of who will ultimately decide at what position in the market this value is fixed. While developments in this approach has put forward hybrid models based on this formula, it could be argued that nonetheless the flaw highlighted remains an impediment to the adoption of this model as a serious attempt to place a value on unpaid labour.

The latter, the opportunity cost approach, refers to what household members would have earned in wages had they spent an equal amount of time on paid work as actually spent on unpaid work (Ironmonger 1996). This approach assumes that there is an available job market into which one could enter and find ready employment.

The use of opportunity cost framework implies that all those performing household tasks can be paid vastly different wages. However, while most domestic tasks require the same amount of skills whoever carries them out, one would have higher wage rate than the other due to their individual position in the hierarchy of jobs. Given that most of this domestic labour is done by women, its value will be markedly less than the average, simply because women in every sector of market job receive lower pay. Because of this issue, this approach has been criticised as a means of calculating households’ unpaid work (Hammad, 2003).

³ The non-monetary economy includes not only labour but also the creation of a culture, a social asset. Whether we call it “collective efficacy” or “social capital,” there is a non-monetary infrastructure of trust, reciprocity, and civic engagement that is just as real as the water lines and electric lines that can be measured in monetary terms. By definition, the non-monetary economy rejects market price as the measure of value. Normative values drive production and distribution in the Non-Monetary Economy (Adgar, 2002)

While we have highlighted the flaws of both methods, nonetheless, they are currently the best framework available for measuring domestic labour, especially when adopted in tandem with the time use survey approach to calculating unpaid work.

3.3 RESEARCH ON GENDER, HOUSEHOLD LABOUR AND MONETISATION OF HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTION IN VIETNAM

Like many other developing countries, Vietnam is now experiencing far-reaching changes and demographic transitions associated with continued rapid economic and social development, as an ongoing outcome of the renovation (Doi moi) policies instigated since the latter half of the 1980s. New opportunities for investment, education, employment, and entrepreneurial innovation, ushered in by a market-oriented approach to economic development, have been shown to have benefits for women as well as men (World Bank 1999). This, in turn, has created a major source of significant change in gender roles under the prevailing conditions of market-socialism currently operating in Vietnam. Women have gained better access to offices and positions of power in society (Goodkind 1995; Le 1996; Fahey 1998).

The increased level of education, economic independence and accessibility to a wider range of family planning services and information has undoubtedly been instrumental in empowering women in making their own decisions regarding reproductive choices. The repercussions of this enhanced sense of autonomy many women feel they now have over reproductive decision-making is already being felt in some key areas. According to the Census of Population and Housing on 1 April 1999, the total fertility rate, i.e. the average number of children per women of reproductive age declined significantly from 3.8 in 1989 to 2.3 in 1999, suggesting that the replacement fertility (2.1 children per women) should have been reached by the year 2005. In other national data, age at first marriage increased from 25.7 in 2000 to 26.2 in 2003 for men and 22.9 to 23.1 for women (Population change and labour force survey 2003). Also, the increased prevalence of delayed marriage, which could be argued to be another outcome of a more liberal attitude displayed by young people, indicates an intensification of premarital relations among these young, free and single Vietnamese citizens enjoying the fruits of these new social conditions.

However, despite the much improved economic position, women continue to be disadvantaged in the reform process, amply illustrated by gender segregation in the labour market as well as by persistent gender inequality in wage and job mobility (Liu 1995; Le 1996; Le 1998). In addition, it has been argued that the emphasis on each individual household as an autonomous economic unit as the primary focus of Doi moi restructuring has reinforced the Confucian belief and practices regarding the rightful place of men and women in the household and in the wider society (Khuat 1998; Tran and Le 1997).

Among those researchers showing a particular concern with household relations and the subsequent division of labour, a number have noted that in comparison with men, women continued to shoulder more of the obligations within the household. This has been especially true in terms of their traditional tasks, such as care taking and domestic work, at a time when the attendant state services have either been cut back, commercialised or partially privatised as part of Doi moi policies (Tran and Le 1997; Long et al 2000). Moreover, it does not necessarily follow that increased economic participation means that women's decision-making power increases in comparison with men. Studies have revealed that although women are mainly responsible for decisions surrounding the management of the household, they still have to consult their husbands prior to any financial expenditure (POPCOUN 1997:8).

As a reaction to changes in social and cultural norms, which are perceived to have been brought about as a result of Doi moi, and in a state-driven attempt to control the spread of AIDS, the government and the media have sought to preserve traditional gender roles, considering women's roles as mother and wife to be critical to the nation's social and political stability, whilst continuing to enshrine the notion of gender equality in contemporary legislation (Gammeltoft 1999; Long et al. 2000; UNFPA 2003; Le Thi 2004; Pham et al. 2005). More recently, Bui Huong (2006) has argued that a number of current nationwide movements initiated by the government-supported Women's Union (VWU) have been mobilised as part of a broader discursive agenda at an official level aimed at reinvigorating and thus preserving "fine traditions" in modern Vietnamese families. Accordingly, 'women today' have a vastly expanded role to play in contemporary Vietnamese society. They are exhorted to participate fully in economic, social and political activities alongside men, whilst still being expected to continue to fulfil their traditional role of maintaining harmony in the family (See Hoang and Schuler 2004).

Thus, the structuring of state policies surrounding the place of women continues in practice to reinforce gender inequality, by placing a traditionally inflected emphasis on the patriarchal framework that views women as closely tied to the domestic sphere, regardless of how high on the income ladder women may actually rise. For this reason, if for no other, a thorough investigation is required into how unpaid labour in the home is

continuing to represent an unequal burden for women in striving to meet the twin demands of economic renewal alongside the preservation of the traditional structure of the Vietnamese family.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 General information

1.1.1 General information about the participants

a. Sex and place of residence

As mentioned at length in the previous section (Section 3. Research Methodologies), we randomly selected 299 households according to certain criteria and interviewed both husband and wife of each selected household using a set of semi-structured questionnaires. In so doing, we are able to analyse and compare the findings at the levels of households (299 households) and individuals (589), of which male and female respondents account for an even proportion, totalling 50-50% of the studied sample. Those respondents cluster into 150 households (equivalent 50.2%) in the urban ward of Nguyen Trai, and into 149 households (49.8%) in the rural commune of Dai Dong (See more in Table 1)

Table 1: Study sites * Sex of respondents Cross-tabulation

| Study sites | Number of households | | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|-------------|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % |
| Nguyen Trai | 150 | | 150 | | 150 | | 300 | 50.2 |
| % Col. | | 50.2 | | 50.2 | | 50.2 | | |
| % Tot.. | | 50.2 | | 25.1 | | 25.1 | | |
| Dai Dong | 149 | | 149 | | 149 | | 298 | 49.8 |
| % Col. | | 49.8 | | 49.8 | | 49.8 | | |
| % Tot.. | | 49.8 | | 24.9 | | 24.9 | | |
| Total | 299 | | 299 | | 299 | | 598 | 100.0 |
| % Col. | | 100.0 | | 100.0 | | 100.0 | | |
| % Tot. | | 100.0 | | 50.0 | | 50.0 | | |

b. Age

The age of the wife and the number of generations in each household are the most important criteria on which the sampling procedure is based. Those women who are eligible for the study are aged between 20-49 and thereby, their husbands will be selected. In order to facilitate the data processing and analysis, we recoded their ages into smaller ranges of 20-30, 31-40, 41-50 and above 50. Table 2 (*Sex * Age of respondents Crosstabulation*) illustrates that the respondents of both sexes mainly cluster around the age range of 31-40 (42.5%), of which women account for 20.1% and men 22.4%. Most female respondents are between the ages of 20-40, amounting to 71.9% of the total female respondents. On the other hand, male respondents are mainly between the ages of 31-50, accounting for 80.6% of the total male respondents.

Table 2: Age * Sex of respondents Cross-tabulation

| Age | Female | | | Male | | | Total | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | Freq. | % Col. | % Tot. | Freq. | % Col. | % Tot. | Freq. | % Tot. |
| 20-30 | 95 | 31.8 | 15.9 | 43 | 14.4 | 7.2 | 138 | 23.1 |
| 31-40 | 120 | 40.1 | 20.1 | 134 | 44.8 | 22.4 | 254 | 42.5 |
| 41-50 | 84 | 28.1 | 14.0 | 107 | 35.8 | 17.9 | 191 | 31.9 |
| >50 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 15 | 5.0 | 2.5 | 15 | 2.5 |
| Total | 299 | 100.0 | 50.0 | 299 | 100.0 | 50.0 | 598 | 100.0 |

c. Level of education

Table 3 (*Sex of respondents * Level of education Crosstabulation*) reveals that the level of education of the respondents is quite high. The proportion of those having finished high school and above is 60.7%. Perhaps surprisingly, the proportion of those who have not finished primary school is rather small, only 1% (six people). The respondents who have finished college/ university and higher account for 21.7% of the sample.

For the purpose of this inquiry, it is hard to say much more regarding the difference in level of education between men and women. In some levels of education there are slightly more men than women, such as having finished primary and lower (1.7% vs. 0.8%) and having finished secondary school and lower (17.1% vs. 14.1%). The number of women who have finished high school and higher are more than that of men, equivalent to 31.8% and 28.9% respectively (see Table 3a).

Table 3a: Sex of respondents * Level of education Crosstabulation

| Level of education | Male | | | Female | | | Total | |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| | Freq. | % col | % total | Freq. | % col | % total | Freq. | % total |
| Not finished primary school | 4 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 2 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 6 | 1.0 |
| Finished primary school | 6 | 2.0 | 1.0 | 3 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 9 | 1.5 |
| Not finished secondary school | 26 | 8.7 | 4.3 | 20 | 6.7 | 3.3 | 46 | 7.7 |
| Finished secondary school | 66 | 22.1 | 11.0 | 61 | 20.4 | 10.2 | 127 | 21.2 |
| Not finished high school | 24 | 8.0 | 4.0 | 23 | 7.7 | 3.8 | 47 | 7.9 |
| Finished high school | 93 | 31.1 | 15.6 | 108 | 36.1 | 18.1 | 201 | 33.6 |
| Vocational schools | 13 | 4.3 | 2.2 | 19 | 6.4 | 3.2 | 32 | 5.4 |
| College/university and above | 67 | 22.4 | 11.2 | 63 | 21.1 | 10.5 | 130 | 21.7 |
| Total | 299 | 100 | 50 | 299 | 100 | 50.0 | 598 | 100 |

Table 3b (*Study sites * Level of education Crosstabulation*) shows us that the level of education in Nguyen Trai ward is better than that in Dai Dong commune. The difference in the level of education between the two study sites can be seen in the number of respondents who have finished secondary school and higher, with 281 people in Nguyen Trai (47%) and 256 people in Dai Dong (42.8%). At the levels of having finished high school or higher, Nguyen Trai has 233 people (39%) while Dai Dong has only 130 people (21.7%). The proportion of those who have finished college/university and higher in Nguyen Trai is nearly six times that in Dai Dong (18.4% vs. 3.3%) (See Table 3b).

Table 3b: Study sites * Level of education Crosstabulation

| Level of education | Nguyen Trai | | | Dai Dong | | | Total | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | Freq. | % col | % total | Freq. | % col | % total | Freq. | % total |
| Not finished primary school | 1 | 0.3 | 0.17 | 5 | 1.7 | 0.8 | 6 | 1.0 |
| Finished primary school | 5 | 1.7 | 0.84 | 4 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 9 | 1.5 |
| Not finished secondary school | 13 | 4.3 | 2.17 | 33 | 11.1 | 5.5 | 46 | 7.7 |
| Finished secondary school | 32 | 10.7 | 5.35 | 95 | 31.9 | 15.9 | 127 | 21.2 |
| Not finished high school | 16 | 5.3 | 2.68 | 31 | 10.4 | 5.2 | 47 | 7.9 |
| Finished high school | 100 | 33.3 | 16.72 | 101 | 33.9 | 16.9 | 201 | 33.6 |
| Vocational schools | 23 | 7.7 | 3.85 | 9 | 3.0 | 1.5 | 32 | 5.4 |
| College/university and above | 110 | 36.7 | 18.39 | 20 | 6.7 | 3.3 | 130 | 21.7 |
| Total | 300 | 100.0 | 50.17 | 298 | 100.0 | 49.8 | 598 | 100.0 |

d. Occupation of respondents

As shown in Table 4a (*Sex* Occupation of respondents Crosstabulation*), only 5.6% say they belong to the categories of housework performers/do not do anything and pensioners, and the remaining 94.4% reported participating in different kinds of income-generating employment. The three most common jobs are small business/service (22.2%), public servant (20.7%) and farmers (20.1%). In this research, the main reported occupation of the female respondents are farmers (28.8% vs. 11.4% for men). The job that male respondents reported doing the most is public servants (21.7% of men vs. 19.7% of women). Small business and services are the second most prevalent job that male and female respondents ticked with the percentage of 21.4 % vs. 23.1% respectively.

Table 4a: Sex* Occupation of respondents Crosstabulation

| Occupation | Male | | | Female | | | Total | |
|------------|------|--------|---------|--------|--------|---------|-------|---------|
| | Freq | % col. | % total | Freq | % col. | % total | Freq | % total |
| Farmer | 34 | 11.4 | 5.7 | 86 | 28.8 | 14.4 | 120 | 20.1 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Worker | 28 | 9.4 | 4.7 | 18 | 6.0 | 3.0 | 46 | 7.7 |
| Simple manual worker | 59 | 19.7 | 9.9 | 23 | 7.7 | 3.8 | 82 | 13.7 |
| Small business person/service provider | 64 | 21.4 | 10.7 | 69 | 23.1 | 11.5 | 133 | 22.2 |
| Entrepreneur | 5 | 1.7 | 0.8 | 1 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 6 | 1.0 |
| Teacher/scholar | 9 | 3.0 | 1.5 | 22 | 7.4 | 3.7 | 31 | 5.2 |
| Public servant | 65 | 21.7 | 10.9 | 59 | 19.7 | 9.9 | 124 | 20.7 |
| Soldier/policeman | 16 | 5.4 | 2.7 | 4 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 20 | 3.3 |
| Housework performer/don't do anything | 9 | 3.0 | 1.5 | 17 | 5.7 | 2.8 | 26 | 4.3 |
| Pensioner | 8 | 2.7 | 1.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 8 | 1.3 |
| Other | 2 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2 | 0.3 |
| Total | 299 | 100 | 50 | 299 | 100 | 50 | 598 | 100 |

Occupation varies greatly between the sites. In Nguyen Trai, the highest percentage of respondents is recorded for the group of public servants (37.7% compared to other jobs in the site and 18.9% of the total sample) and next is small business/service (27.3 % and 13.7% respectively). Conversely, in Dai Dong, Thach That, more respondents are farmers (40.3% and 20.1%) and simple manual workers are reportedly one half as much, accounting for 21.1% in comparison with other jobs in the same site and 10.5% of the total sample (See Table 4b).

Table 4b. Study sites * Occupation of respondents Crosstabulation

| Occupation | Nguyen Trai | | | Dai Dong | | | Total | |
|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | Freq | % col. | % total | Freq | % col. | % total | Freq | % total |
| Farmer | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 120 | 40.3 | 20.1 | 120 | 20.1 |
| Worker | 30 | 10.0 | 5.0 | 16 | 5.4 | 2.7 | 46 | 7.7 |
| Simple manual worker | 19 | 6.3 | 3.2 | 63 | 21.1 | 10.5 | 82 | 13.7 |
| Small business person/service provider | 82 | 27.3 | 13.7 | 51 | 17.1 | 8.5 | 133 | 22.2 |
| Entrepreneur | 3 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 3 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 6 | 1.0 |
| Teacher/scholar | 11 | 3.7 | 1.8 | 20 | 6.7 | 3.3 | 31 | 5.2 |
| Public servant | 113 | 37.7 | 18.9 | 11 | 3.7 | 1.8 | 124 | 20.7 |
| Soldier/policeman | 16 | 5.3 | 2.7 | 4 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 20 | 3.3 |
| Housework performer/ don't do anything | 21 | 7.0 | 3.5 | 5 | 1.7 | 0.8 | 26 | 4.3 |
| Pensioner | 4 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 4 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 8 | 1.3 |
| Other | 1 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 1 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 2 | 0.3 |
| Total | 300 | 100.0 | 50.2 | 298 | 100.0 | 49.8 | 598 | 100.0 |

1.1.2 General information of the studied households

The objectives of this study are to depict the real situation of gendered division of domestic labour and people's attitudes towards it, and on that basis to estimate women's economic contribution through domestic work. To this end, in the following section, we will present the general information of the households participating in the study, which focuses on types of households, size of households, number of generations currently living in the households, health status, economic and living conditions, and income and decision making power in the households. This section supplements the above section (Section 4.1.1 General information of respondents) so as to gain a better insight into the research topic.

a. Type of households classified by dependent people

Dependent people in this study are defined as those aged below six and/or above sixty. It is presumed that households which have members aged below six or above sixty or both will be different from households which

do not have those kinds of people in terms of the support the households have to give or may get from them. Bearing this in mind, we categorized all the households into four sub-groups based on this criterion. The findings (Table 5) reflects that nearly two-thirds (65.6%) of the total households have members of these age groups, of which 70% have members aged under six. It is also obvious that percentages of the households meeting this criterion are quite similar in the two study sites. A slightly higher proportion is seen in the number of households having both members under six and above sixty years of age in Nguyen Trai compared to Dai Dong (16% vs. 12.8% respectively).

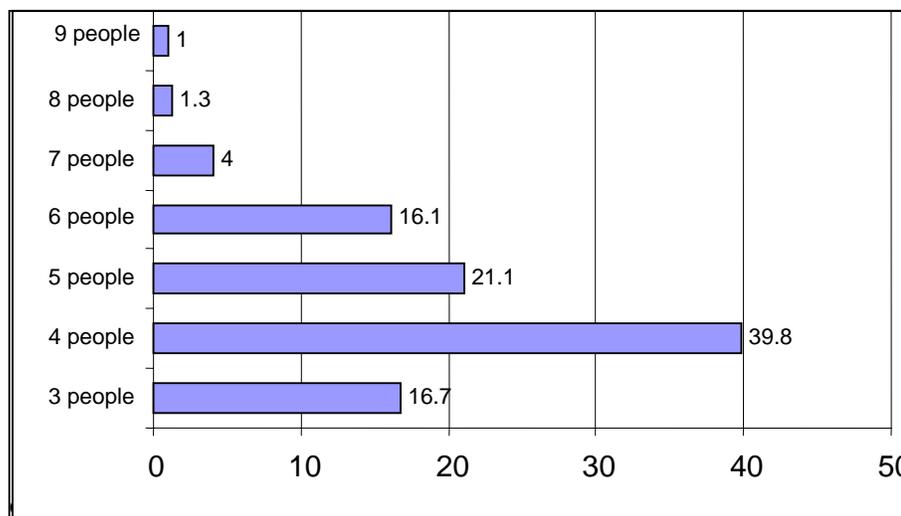
Table 5. Study sites * Types of households Crosstabulation

| Types of Households | Nguyen Trai | Dai Dong | Total |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Households that have members under 6 years of age | 69 | 68 | 137 |
| | 46.0% | 45.6% | 45.8% |
| Households that have members above 60 years of age | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| | 5.3% | 5.4% | 5.4% |
| Households that have both members under 6 and above 60 years of age | 24 | 19 | 43 |
| | 16.0% | 12.8% | 14.4% |
| Households that have neither members under 6 nor above 60 years of age | 49 | 54 | 103 |
| | 32.7% | 36.2% | 34.4% |
| Total | 150 | 149 | 299 |
| | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

b. Size of households

According to the findings, more than half of the participant households (56.5%) are small-sized, with 3-4 members. One-third (37.2%) of the households have five to six members. There are only 19 households (6.3%) having more than 7 members (see Diagram 2).

Diagram 2. Number of people frequently living in the households



More than two-thirds (71.6%) of households have two generations (husband/wife and children). The households of three generations (husband/wife and children and their parents and siblings) account for 28.4% of households (see Table 6).

Table 6. Number of generations

| Number of generations | Freq | Percent | Cumulative percent |
|---|------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Two generations (husband/wife and children) | 214 | 71.6 | 71.6 |
| Three generations (husband/wife, children, parents and siblings) | 85 | 28.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 299 | 100.0 | |

d. Health status of the household

According to Table 7 (*Health status of the household*), a majority of the households (84.9%) have members reporting good health. Only a small number of the households (15.1%) have members reporting either poor health or chronic illness or both.

Table 7. Health status of the household

| | Freq | Percent | Cumulative percent |
|---|------|---------|--------------------|
| Households having members of good health | 254 | 84.9 | 84.9 |
| Households having members of poor health | 37 | 12.4 | 97.3 |
| Households having members with chronic illness | 5 | 1.7 | 99.0 |
| Households having members of both poor health and chronic illness | 3 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 299 | 100.0 | |

e. Living conditions of the households

As illustrated in Diagram 3a (*Study sites * Households' electrical appliances Crosstabulation*), almost all households own at least one or more of the listed appliances. However, the living conditions seem to be better in Nguyen Trai than that in Dai Dong. It is possible to see that television is the only appliance that a strong majority of households in both Nguyen Trai and Dai Dong have (98.0% and 98.7% respectively). Households in Nguyen Trai possess other appliances (including radio, washing machine, and telephone) in far greater numbers than those in Dai Dong (see Diagram 3a). Only sewing machines are more prevalent in Dai Dong than in Nguyen Trai.

Diagram 3a. Study sites * Households' electrical appliances Crosstabulation (Unit: %)

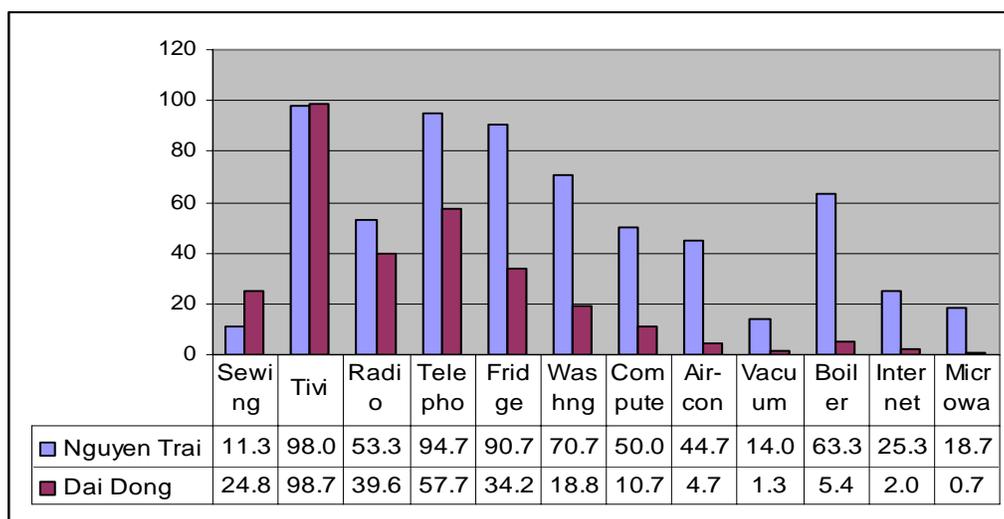
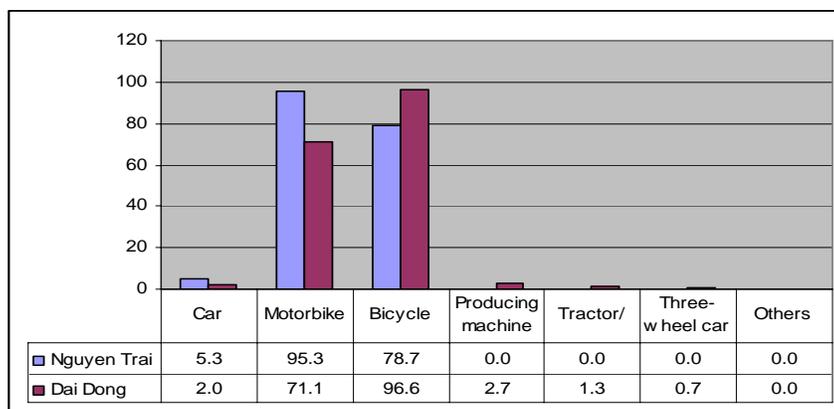


Diagram 3b (*Study sites * Households' means of production and transport*) shows that almost all of the households in both study sites have means of transport (cars, motorbikes and bicycles). However, the proportion of households which have cars and motorbikes in Nguyen Trai is higher than in Dai Dong (5.3% vs. 2.9% and 95.3% vs. 71.1% respectively). The proportion of households having bicycles in Dai Dong is higher than that in Nguyen Trai (96.6% vs. 78.7% respectively). Similarly, only a very small proportion of the households in rural Dai Dong have such means of production as tractor or three-wheel car (see Diagram 3b).

Diagram 3b. Study sites * Households' means of production and transport Crosstabulation (Unit: %)



f. Income of the household

Like the age of the respondents, the reported incomes of the households are very scattered. Therefore, we have to recode them into five groups as shown in Table 8 (Income of the household) to facilitate the data analysis. Accordingly, it is clearly seen that many households in both sites fall into the two income groups of above 500 thousand to two million (36.1%) and of two million to five million VND (48.8%). The percentage of households that have an income of more than ten million is not substantial, accounting for only one percent, while that of below 500 thousand VND accounts for three percent of the sample.

It is also reflected in Table 8 that there are more households whose income is more than two million VND in Nguyen Trai than in Dai Dong. On the contrary, there are more households whose income is less than two million VND in Dai Dong than in Nguyen Trai. Importantly, the substantial differences in the incomes of the households in one site and between the two sites will definitely affect the average income of each household respectively. This will be encountered in the Section 4.3, b- *Measurement of the domestic labour value*.

Table 8: Study sites * Monthly income by the household Crosstabulation

| Range of income (VND) | Nguyen Trai | Dai Dong | Total |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Below 500,000 | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| | 0% | 6.0% | 3.0% |
| 501,000-2,000,000 | 35 | 73 | 108 |
| | 23.3% | 49.0% | 36.1% |
| 2,001,000-5,000,000 | 85 | 61 | 146 |
| | 56.7% | 40.9% | 48.8% |
| 5,001,000-10,000,000 | 27 | 6 | 33 |
| | 18.0% | 4.0% | 11.0% |
| Above 10,000,000 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| | 2.0% | .0% | 1.0% |
| Total | 150 | 149 | 299 |
| | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

g. Decision-making power in households

In order to better understand decision-making power, we have listed fourteen issues based on primary family functions which range from reproduction, production, care, and so on, to examine the attitudes of both husband and wife of each household (see Table 9).

Table 9. Decision-making power in the household (Unit: %)

| Issues | Male respondents | | | | | Female respondents | | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|---------|------|--------|-------|--------------------|---------|------|--------|-------|
| | Who decides? | | | | | Who decides? | | | | |
| | Wife | Husband | Both | Others | Total | Wife | Husband | Both | Others | Total |
| 1 Giving birth | 3 | 6.7 | 90.3 | 0 | 100 | 4 | 4 | 91.6 | 0.4 | 100 |
| 2 Children's schooling | 6.7 | 9.1 | 82.5 | 1.7 | 100 | 5.4 | 8.8 | 83.5 | 2.3 | 100 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-----|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-----|
| 3 | Career guidance | 1.7 | 13 | 79.8 | 5.5 | 100 | 1 | 8.6 | 85.5 | 4.9 | 100 |
| 4 | Children's wedding | 0.7 | 6.8 | 87 | 5.5 | 100 | 1 | 5.2 | 89.6 | 4.2 | 100 |
| 5 | Ways of production Use of production capital | 15.5 | 13.8 | 70 | 0.7 | 100 | 14 | 12 | 73.3 | 0.7 | 100 |
| 6 | | 12.4 | 16.6 | 70.3 | 0.7 | 100 | 14.3 | 13.3 | 72.4 | 0 | 100 |
| 7 | Use of land | 5.9 | 26.6 | 57.2 | 10.3 | 100 | 4.5 | 29 | 56.3 | 10.2 | 100 |
| 8 | Daily expenses | 73.2 | 1.1 | 23.7 | 2 | 100 | 74.4 | 1 | 22.2 | 2.4 | 100 |
| 9 | Purchase of expensive property | 4 | 26.1 | 69.6 | 0.3 | 100 | 2 | 21.8 | 75.5 | 0.7 | 100 |
| 10 | House repair | 0.7 | 30.1 | 64.2 | 5 | 100 | 0.7 | 27 | 66.6 | 5.7 | 100 |
| 11 | Undersigned land and house ownership documents | 7.5 | 53.7 | 21.8 | 17 | 100 | 4.7 | 56.7 | 19.3 | 19.3 | 100 |
| 12 | Undersigned vehicle's documents | 7.8 | 63.1 | 25.4 | 3.7 | 100 | 7.2 | 66.6 | 23.5 | 2.7 | 100 |
| 13 | Undersigned saving book | 23 | 35.6 | 38.9 | 2.5 | 100 | 19.9 | 41.9 | 36.6 | 1.6 | 100 |
| 14 | Relatives and neighbours' business | 6.4 | 13.5 | 75 | 5.1 | 100 | 9.8 | 11.5 | 72.9 | 5.8 | 100 |
| Total | | 168.5 | 315.8 | 855.7 | 60 | | 162.9 | 307.4 | 868.8 | 60.9 | |
| Average percentage | | 12.0 | 22.6 | 61.1 | 4.3 | | 11.6 | 22.0 | 62.1 | 4.4 | |

The findings show that in 10 out of 14 issues (71.4%), more than 50 percent of the respondents of both sexes report that both husband and wife share the decision. A great majority of male and female respondents (90.3% and 91.6% respectively) answer that both husband and wife decide on issues organized around giving birth. Other issues such as children's schooling, children's wedding and career guidance are also decided by both husband and wife in the respondents' opinion (accounting for 87%, 82.5% and 79.8% of men and 89.6%, 83.5% and 85.5% of women respectively). Over 61% of both male and female respondents report that all the listed issues are decided by both spouses.

Many respondents (73.2% male and 74.4% female) think that the issue for which women are more often than not responsible is daily expenses, while only one percent of men and one percent of women think men are the ones who decide. Men are reported to have decisive roles in such issues as 'undersigned vehicle's documents' and 'undersigned house and land documents'.

Other people currently living in the household (usually parents) also have decisive roles, especially in such issues as 'undersigned house's document' and 'land use'. Remarkably, none of male respondents think that 'other people' can decide on having children, while no female respondents say that others can decide 'use of production capital'.

In summary, the average percentages reveal that more than sixty percent (61.6%) of respondents answered that both husband and wife decide on all of the fourteen listed issues. The proportions of both male and female respondents reported that men are the decision makers is nearly twice as much those reported for women (22.6% and 22% for men vs. 12% and 11.6 for women respectively).

4.2 Real state of gendered division of labour in the households in the study sites

a. Perception of housework

Table 10 (*Sex of respondents* Perception of housework Crosstabulation*) shows that men and women have different, and to some extent contradictory, stories to tell regarding the listed statements relating to housework. That is, the stories not only are not consistent across husband and wife, but that respondents also make self-contradictory statements. Approximately sixty-eight percent (68%) of female respondent compared with sixty percent (60%) of male respondent agree that 'it is women's proclivity to do housework'. At the same time, a strong majority of men (94%) and women (98%) agree that 'anyone can do the domestic work regardless of his/her sex'. A slightly smaller proportion of men (82%) and women (84%) agree that 'housework should be equally shared between husband and wife'.

Regarding the statement, 'Men are those who decide the important business in the family' more men (65%) agree than women (58%). A similar difference can be seen in the statement of 'Men often cook when they feel like it while women have to do so regardless of the fact that they like it or not', with which 55% of men and 67% of women agree.

Table 10: Sex of respondents* Perception of housework Crosstabulation (Unit: %)

| Statement | Female | | Male | |
|---|--------|----------|-------|----------|
| | Agree | Disagree | Agree | Disagree |
| It is women's proclivity to do housework. | 68 | 32 | 58.5 | 41.5 |
| <i>Men are responsible for the important work, women are responsible for trivial work.</i> | 55.2 | 44.8 | 50.5 | 49.5 |
| Men are those who decide the important business in the family. | 58.2 | 41.8 | 64.9 | 35.1 |
| <i>Housework should be equally shared between husband and wife.</i> | 83.6 | 16.4 | 81.6 | 18.4 |
| In the family, wives often work more than their husbands. | 87.3 | 12.7 | 85.3 | 14.7 |
| <i>Men often cook when they feel like it while women have to do so regardless of the fact that they like it or not.</i> | 66.6 | 33.4 | 54.7 | 45.3 |
| Anyone can do the domestic work regardless of his/her sex. | 98 | 2 | 94 | 6 |
| <i>An ideal wife is the one who can earn much money and be good at the housework.</i> | 60.2 | 39.8 | 58.7 | 41.3 |

In sum, two different perceptions of housework appear to co-exist. A more “modern” or new perception regarding household work highlights sharing of responsibility, acknowledgement of women’s contribution through housework, and the reasonableness of men’s involvement in housework. But as illustrated in Table 10 above, beliefs also continue that housework is performed by women and perceived as one of the criteria of ‘an ideal wife’. This issue will be discussed further in the following section (*b-Time spent doing housework everyday*).

b. Amount of time spent doing housework everyday

As previously discussed in Section 3 (Literature review), in the literature on the subject, household work or housework have been defined differently due to the research’s objective and scale. With the ultimate goal of this research being to raise the respondents’ awareness of this type of work by assisting them in visualizing all the domestic chores they have been doing within the household, we decided to list a total of 42 different domestic tasks (*see the questionnaire in the appendix*). These tasks can be regrouped into seven larger categories in accordance with important household outputs, which include but are not limited to (1) nutrition, (2) clean and sanitary accommodation, (3) clean clothes, (4) care for family members and (5) travel and transport activities (see more in Dulaney et al, 1992) and other visible family roles and functions such as (6) community participation and (7) repair. In this paper, we will limit our discussion to the first five categories of housework, which are presumably performed on a daily basis by the various household members (See Table 11).

Given that these are self-reported figures for work, there may be significant bias in the responses. To arrive at more accurate estimates of the time men and women spend on household work, various methods could be used, including asking them to keep a household diary; having someone observe their work each day and note the amount of time spent; asking them to list all the tasks they do in a day and estimate the amount of time spent on each task; asking them the number of waking hours in the day and subtracting time for all non-household related activities; and so on. All would have their related biases. In any case, these numbers may be more likely to represent trends than accurate figures for time expenditures on different tasks.

Table 11. Average amount of time spent doing domestic tasks of husband and wife (Unit: minutes)

| Daily domestic tasks | | Male respondents | | Female respondents | |
|---------------------------|--------|------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| | | Wife | Husband | Wife | Husband |
| Nutrition care | Mean | 89 | 13 | 93 | 10 |
| | Median | 90 | 0 | 95 | 0 |
| Accommodation/ house care | Mean | 39 | 16 | 40 | 12 |
| | Median | 33 | 5 | 30 | 0 |
| Care for clothes | Mean | 40 | 6 | 37 | 6 |
| | Median | 40 | 0 | 40 | 0 |
| Care for family members | Mean | 115 | 69 | 122 | 59 |
| | Median | 95 | 30 | 95 | 20 |
| Travel and transportation | Mean | 35 | 8 | 34 | 7 |
| | Median | 30 | 0 | 30 | 0 |
| Total | | 318 | 112 | 326 | 94 |

Table 11 (*Average amount of time spent doing domestic tasks of husband and wife*) shows that both husband and wife participate in housework, albeit to different degrees. On the one hand, according to the male respondents, women spend 318 minutes (approx. 5.3 hours) on household tasks while men spend 112 minutes (approx. 1.9 hours/ per day), which accounts for 35% of the women's time. On the other hand, the female respondents reported that normally women spend 326 minutes (approx. 5.4 hours) and men only 94 minutes (1,6 hours) for those tasks, accounting for 29% of the women's time.

Those tasks that men participate in the most are 'care for family members' (69 minutes per day) and 'Accommodation/house care' (16 minutes per day). These findings reflect that even in tasks such as these, women still spend two to six times more time than men do (Table 11).

The following sections will depict gendered division of domestic labour based on the amount of time each household member spends on these tasks analyzed in crosstabulation with study sites and types of household.

Table 12. Study sites* Time spent doing housework Crosstabulation (Unit: minutes)

| Daily domestic tasks | Nguyen Trai | | Dai Dong | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Wife | Husband | Wife | Husband |
| Nutrition care | 93 | 13.2 | 89 | 9.5 |
| Accommodation/ house cleaning care | 42.95 | 12.6 | 36.15 | 15.45 |
| Care for clothes | 37.4 | 10.15 | 40.15 | 2.25 |
| Care for family members | 128.8 | 75.8 | 108.25 | 52.05 |
| Travel and transportation | 37.6 | 10.85 | 31.95 | 3.8 |
| Total (minutes): | 339.75 | 122.6 | 305.5 | 83.05 |
| Total (hours): | 5.66 | 2.04 | 5.09 | 1.38 |

As shown in Table 12 (*Study sites* Time spent doing housework Crosstabulation*), women across all the sites are still primarily responsible for most domestic tasks. However, women in Nguyen Trai spend thirty minutes more a day than women in Dai Dong. 'Care for clothes' is the only category on which women in Nguyen Trai spend slightly less time than those in Dai Dong (3 minutes).

Interestingly, men in urban Nguyen Trai tend to spend more time on housework (2 hours/day) than those in Dai Dong (about 1.5 hours/day). The task they do the most is 'Care for family members', approximately one hour and fifteen minutes a day. Similarly, 'Care for family members' is the task that men in Nguyen Trai do the most, nevertheless, they spend about twenty-five minutes a day less than those in Nguyen Trai. One explanation could be that men in urban Nguyen Trai have better awareness concerning gender equality and responsibility sharing thanks to more accessibility to IEC messages on these topics. Additionally, the proportion of both husband and wife working as civil servants is the highest in Nguyen Trai compared to other jobs (37.7% as in Table 4b). In such cases, where office hours are regular, couples tend to share with each other at home.

Table 13. Types of households* Time spent doing housework Crosstabulation (Unit: minutes)

| Daily domestic tasks | Households having members under 6 years of age | | Households having members above 60 years of age | | Households having both members under 6 and above 60 years of age | | Households having neither members under 6 nor above 60 years of age | |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------|---|--------------|--|--------------|---|--------------|
| | Wife | Husband | Wife | Husband | Wife | Husband | Wife | Husband |
| Nutrition care | 94.5 | 13.8 | 73.3 | 4.25 | 82.85 | 8.95 | 92.55 | 10.25 |
| Accommodation/ house cleaning care | 39.05 | 14.65 | 35.7 | 6.25 | 42.4 | 9.35 | 39.7 | 16.4 |
| Care for clothes | 38.85 | 7.8 | 29.25 | 8.75 | 37.6 | 5.3 | 40.6 | 4.1 |
| Care for family's members | 158.7 | 90.45 | 83.75 | 27.95 | 110.25 | 63.9 | 74.05 | 34.4 |
| Travel and transportation | 36.95 | 8.7 | 28.3 | 2.85 | 32.05 | 11.35 | 34.1 | 4.6 |
| Total (minutes): | 368.05 | 135.4 | 250.3 | 50.05 | 305.15 | 98.85 | 281 | 69.75 |
| Total (hours): | 6.13 | 2.26 | 4.17 | 0.83 | 5.09 | 1.65 | 4.68 | 1.16 |

As shown in Table 13 above, women in all household types spend more time than men on domestic work. The findings show that women in households having members aged below six have to spend the most time (approx. 6.13 hours/day) compared to women of other household types. However, women in households having members aged above sixty still spend the least time (approx. 4.17 hours/ day), nearly two hours less than that of women in households having members aged below six and thirty minutes less than those having neither age extreme. Even men in these households spend the least time on household tasks (less than one hour/day), less than half of the time a man in the household having a member aged below six spends on the same tasks. We can thus infer that household members above sixty contribute significantly to housework.

As stated in the introduction to the research methodology (Part two), the research team has applied a range of methods so as to better capture the real state of the division of domestic labour. Under the observational approach, one female researcher was introduced to a two-generation family. Both husband and wife are in their early 30s. They have two children, a boy of the 7th form and a daughter of the 4th form. The wife is six months pregnant. The husband is a carpenter and the wife is a seller of sticky-rice. As observed, her day starts at 3.40 a.m. and finishes at 10.00 p.m., which means her day extends for over 18 hours. During that time, *'the wife does not grant herself a respite'*. Photo 1 (*Observation conducted in a family in Dai Dong*) partly illustrates her day. This photo was taken at 11.30 a.m. on 28 October 2007. The wife is cooking and her daughter is helping her while her husband is receiving a guest in the sitting room and her son is watching a television programme.

"At about 10.20 a.m. she started to prepare to cook lunch. She was cooking from 10.30 to 11.50 [one hour and twenty minutes]. While she was cooking, the electric-fee collector came at about 11.30 and she stopped to pay him. Her husband, Hoa, came home just before lunch time and sat talking with the collector." (Extract from the observation report in Dai Dong)

The same reality is reflected in the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted in both sites. Housework consumes a lot of women's time as well as physical and mental strength, in both rural and urban contexts. Thus, they do not have much time to relax. The story in *Box 1* below is drawn from an in-depth interview. Like many other women, Ms. Hai (a pseudonym) not only participates in the activities to generate income for the household but is also involved in other domestic work such as cooking, washing, tutoring, and caring for other family members including her husband's mother and siblings.

Box 1. Life of a rural woman

Ms. Vu. T. Hai, born in 1961, lives in LT, Dai Dong, Thach That, Ha Tay. She is a farmer. She herself has to look after 10 *sao* (3.600 m²). In addition, she sometimes works in other households' farms in the locality in order to earn more money.

She got married in 1979. Her husband is from the same commune and is an electrical worker in Thai Nguyen province. He is often absent from home and therefore she has to take care of every business in the household, ranging from the small to large. They have four daughters. The first two are studying far from home at college and university. The third is a 10th form pupil and the youngest is a 4th form pupil.

After marriage, she moved in with her husband's family, consisting of his mother and younger brother and sister. Hai's sister-in-law recently got married and moved out. Her mother-in-law was born in 1933. She is in poor health, so she hardly helps Hai with the work around the house like cooking and reminding the children to study. If her mother-in-law is not well, Hai has to stay at home, abandoning all other jobs, even the hired ones, to take her to hospital and look after her.

Hai often rises at 5 a.m. to prepare breakfast for the family. After feeding the pigs and chickens, she goes to the field. At lunchtime she will visit the market on the way home to buy food to cook lunch and dinner. If it is harvesting time, she cannot get home until 8 p.m., and continues to work until 9-10 p.m.

Normally after dinner she feeds the pigs and chickens, has a shower, and reminds her children to study. She disclosed that she cannot teach them because of her own limited education and time. She really wants her children to study well. Although she has to take a loan, work for somebody, and contract more fields in order to pay off two million VND of schooling expenses every month, she still wants her children to continue their studies.

Her husband can only help her by sending home about one million VND monthly, one half of his salary. Other than that, he cannot do anything. He is not very well either, and thus cannot do hard work. That is why he rarely comes home at harvesting time. She wants her husband to share the domestic work; however, she herself thinks that: *"that kind of work is what I can do and it is not heavy work though"* and affirms that *"it is impossible for us, women, to sit relaxing and watching our husbands working but it is possible for the husbands to do so, and it is the same in every family."*

Hai is but one vivid example, but there are other women and men in this study who share the view that women are always strongly 'attached' to housework and it has thus become the norm for women. However, in our conversational interviews, women often have expressed their expectation to receive support and acknowledgement of the importance of domestic labour from their husbands and other family members. When being questioned about this issue, men themselves have also shared a 'modern' view regarding housework and informed us that they would be willing to help their wife whenever possible.

Despite such enlightened words, as mentioned above, both men and women make contradictory statements when exerting themselves to prove their more 'equal' division of household work. On the one hand, the fact that they say that they share the work reflects to some extent radical changes in their awareness. On the other hand, many respondents, especially in the focus group discussions, affirmed that although both men and women can be good at housework, there are some tasks 'designed' for women that women can do better, and there are other tasks for men which women cannot perform even if they so desire.

Farmers are very busy at the cultivating and harvesting seasons. At the time, wives have to work very hard and men should participate as well. Other than that, women stay at home and do some odd jobs which do not bring in income so that their husbands can go out to work. There are tasks that cannot be done by either wives or children, such as mending household equipment and appliances, which men can easily do. Therefore, it is not correct to say that men let their wives do all the non-monetary odd jobs. (FGD with married men, Dai Dong)

At present, our parents allow us to live on our own. Thus, if my wife is busy, I will have to do all the tasks such as cooking and so on. ... It takes the whole day just to do odd jobs around the house. Men are clumsy, not as skillful as women, so it takes longer to do such jobs. (FGD with married men, Dai Dong)

Also, from their perspective, some women think that sharing is ideal but only to some extent, for if men have to do the 'meticulous' tasks involved in housework, they would have to change their personality.

I do not like it as well because I think that it is not advisable for men to do too much of such work because the work is very specific and meticulous. In so doing they will become very strict and more demanding. On the contrary, if women do not have to do such work and become the breadwinner of the family it will not be good either because they will not have time to look after their kids. Besides, it will be very exhausting and complicated. In my opinion, it is necessary to share the housework, whoever can do better will do it and it should not be loaded on one person. (Female, aged 31, 2 children, Ha Dong)

c. Difficulties in doing housework

We used a list of difficulties encountered when doing housework, in no particular order of priority, to facilitate respondents in this question. The list consists of lack of time, lack of facilities/amenities, lack of knowledge and/or skills, lack of health, lack of support from others, and one optional variable of 'other' for the respondents to specify. One might argue that those prompts are not very correct, especially those relating to facilities/amenities and knowledge and skills, because household tasks do not require many facilities or skills as they are rather 'simple'. In our opinion, such an argument will only contribute to further devaluing of housework and increasing the burden that housework performers shoulder. No more efforts would be invested in invention of such revolutionary amenities as washing machines, fridges, ovens, vacuum cleaners and the like to reduce the domestic burdens and time the performers (mostly women) have to suffer from and spend on the so-called 'simple' tasks⁴. In addition, negation of the importance of knowledge and skills (e.g. nutrition, hygiene, art and so on) required in carrying out the tasks would square with the assumption that the task does not require a higher education. This point of view implies that housework is not a real job and the doers, therefore, are labelled as 'parasites'.

The findings show that men and women have different responses to questions regarding the difficulties in doing housework. In the list of difficulties, the two most selected by men are 'Lack of facilities/ amenities' (39.1%) and 'Lack of knowledge and/or skills' (38.5%). Those responses may reflect an effort on the part of men to rationalize their modest participation in domestic work. In the process, they have underlined the fact that they have not performed those tasks enough to learn the necessary knowledge and skills, thus implicitly stating that household work does indeed involve a skill set that requires time and effort to build. Women, meanwhile, are

⁴ Though it must be acknowledged that while such labour-saving devices reduce effort, they may not reduce the number of hours women spend on housework.

most likely to specify ‘Lack of time’ (42.5%) and ‘Lack of facilities’ (42.1%) as the greatest difficulty. ‘Lack in support from others’ was mentioned by only 7.4% of men and 13.4% of women.

Male respondents wrote down some other difficulties, which can be classified into two sub-groups. First, they are extremely busy and stressed with their office work. Some said that they were “*stressed, tired in the office already and [they] thus just want to relax and don’t do much housework*”. Second, they are under the pressure of the socio-cultural conceptions relating to housework. Some said that they “*hesitate to do housework*” because of “*the patriarchal viewpoint*” or they would be considered as ‘*lacking self-motivation*’ if they have to do housework. Conversely, women’s supplementary comments mainly further specify the difficulty of ‘*Lack in time*’; for instance, they said “*the child snivels*”, “*too many children*” and so on. “*Lack of money*” is also perceived by some male and female respondents as another difficulty that households have to cope with in doing housework.

Table 14: Difficulties in doing housework

| Difficulties | Male respondents | | Female respondents | |
|------------------------------|------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| | Freq. | Percent | Freq. | Percent |
| Lack of time | 99 | 33.1 | 127 | 42.5 |
| Lack of knowledge and skills | 115 | 38.5 | 99 | 33.1 |
| Lack of facilities | 117 | 39.1 | 126 | 42.1 |
| Lack of health | 53 | 17.7 | 47 | 15.7 |
| Lack of support from others | 22 | 7.4 | 40 | 13.4 |
| Others | 15 | 5 | 14 | 4.7 |

d. Amount of time for sleeping, relaxing and entertaining

It is important to reiterate here that although there have been some radical changes in the respondents’ awareness and attitudes to domestic work, women still have to work more and longer hours than men in the house. Even now, women sometimes ‘*do not have time to go out for pleasure*’ or do not have any spare time to perform other community roles. According to some men, “*when someone is sick, [my wife] has to delegate, or reckon the time at noon or in the evening to go visiting them*” (FGD with married men, Dai Dong).

The quantitative data (Table 15) shows that in Dai Dong, nearly half of women (48.3%) and over a third of men (35.6%) do not have a siesta. Both men and women in Nguyen Trai are more likely to have a siesta than those in Dai Dong. In both sites, fewer women than men take a siesta.

Table 15. Study sites* Time for a siesta Crosstabulation (Unit: %)

| Amount of time | Nguyen Trai | | Dai Dong | |
|----------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Husband | Wife | Husband | Wife |
| No siesta | 22 | 26.7 | 35.6 | 48.3 |
| <1h | 20.7 | 23.3 | 7.4 | 12.1 |
| 1-<2 | 46 | 38 | 52.3 | 35.6 |
| > 2 | 11.3 | 12 | 4.7 | 4 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table 16 (Study sites* Time for night-time sleep Crosstabulation) reveals little difference in the reported time husband and wife spend on night sleep. Over 70% of both male and female respondents in both sites sleep for at least seven hours a night. Those in Nguyen Trai are more likely to sleep for less than six hours, while those in Dai Dong are more likely to sleep for more than eight hours. A possible explanation is that urban people have a tendency to stay up later watching television.

Table 16. Study sites * Time for night-time sleep Crosstabulation

| Amount of time | Nguyen Trai | | Dai Dong | |
|----------------|-------------|-------|----------|-------|
| | Husband | Wife | Husband | Wife |
| <6h | 10 | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| | 6.7% | 5.3% | 4.7% | 4.7% |
| 6 - <7h | 34 | 37 | 30 | 31 |
| | 22.7% | 24.7% | 20.1% | 20.8% |
| 7 - <8h | 69 | 63 | 66 | 67 |
| | 46% | 42% | 44.3% | 45% |
| ≥8h | 37 | 42 | 46 | 44 |
| | 24.7% | 28% | 30.9% | 29.5% |
| Total | 150 | 150 | 149 | 149 |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

In short, Table 15 and 16 above show that households in Nguyen Trai tend to spend more time sleeping at noon and less time sleeping at night than those in Dai Dong. Women in both sites spend less time sleeping at noon and at night than men.

e. Impacts of housework

As discussed above, the findings show that there is a differentiation between men and women as far as household work is concerned, with women working more hours and sleeping less than men. The extra burden on women could be considered a form of violence, which Le Thi Quy (1994) has defined as “*invisible domestic violence*”. Cooking, tutoring and caring for children and other family members have left Hai (Box 1) and Lien (Box 2) and some other women in this study with little time to preserve their basic human rights such as the right to relax, the right to study to better their educational status, and their right to enjoy cultural products and so forth.

Box 2. Life of a woman in the city

Bui T. Lien is 31 years old. She is a lecturer in a vocational school in Ha Tay.

She got married in 1999. Her husband is an engineer in a distant electric power company. He often leaves home for work at six in the morning and never comes back before 6.30 in the evening. They now have two children, a daughter aged six in the first form and a son aged 8 and a half months. They live in their own house which is very near to her parents in Ha Dong city, so they often come to help.

Lien often gets up at 6 a.m. She feeds the daughter and takes her to school. On the way back, she goes to the market to buy food for the family. Before leaving for work at 8 a.m., she cooks and grinds food for her small son’s midday meal. Her mother comes and looks after the boy when she is at work. Her mother often stays there the whole day and just has a quick visit home when Lien is back at lunch time. Her mother often bathes the boy in the afternoon and helps with cleaning the house when he is sleeping.

Lien comes home at 11 a.m. to feed the baby and lull him to sleep. She goes back to work at about 1.30 or 2.00 p.m. She finishes work at 4.00 p.m. and goes to pick up her daughter. After giving her some milk to drink, she bathes her and prepares for dinner. When she finishes cooking, she will feed the boy. After that, the family sits down for dinner. After dinner, Lien puts the dirty clothes in the washing machine before having a shower. Her husband or her mother will hang the clothes out to dry. After the shower, she has a short rest and tutors the girl. At 9.00 p.m., she will feed the baby boy again before taking him to bed. Everything will be done by about 10.00 p.m. and then everyone goes to bed.

When she had just given birth to the boy, they paid 500,000 VND to hire a maid. This woman did everything, so Lien did not have to do anything other than look after the boy and remind her daughter to study. Yet, two months ago, she went back to the countryside because of family reasons. Since then, she and her husband have to divide the tasks. He has to do the washing-up in the evening, tutor the daughter and put the dirty clothes into the washing machine and hang the clothes out to dry. Nonetheless, he sometimes uses work commitments as an

excuse to avoid doing household tasks.

Lien comments, “*Once I am home I cannot step out of the bed⁵, so I do not have time to read, say, newspapers. I am faced with many difficulties in my wish to raise my level of ability ... just because I don’t have enough time*”. Besides, she often feels tired and stressed. Due to overwork and poor health, she has had to miss many opportunities to be promoted and to raise her income.

She thought that the domestic tasks that she was doing were the means through which she contributed economically to the family, saying that “*If I don’t do it myself, we will have to spend a sum of money each month to hire somebody to do so. We will save that amount if we do it ourselves*”. However, she also affirmed that not all of the domestic tasks can be given an economic value. For instance, as far as care for her children is concerned, it is not possible to hire somebody to look after and care for them with the same responsibility and affection as their parents.

4.3 Measurement of value of domestic labour

a. Perception of contribution of domestic labour

Being asked about the perception of contribution of domestic labour, virtually all male and female respondents think that ‘*Housework helps stabilize psychology and feelings*’ and ‘*Housework educates and develops people*’. However, two-thirds of the respondents of both sexes think that ‘*Housework is invisible and time-consuming*’ and a rather similar proportion of respondents speculate that ‘*Housework has no economic value*’. Yet nearly three-fourths of both men and women agree that ‘*Housework can enhance socio-economic growth*’, which contradicts the above perception regarding the economic value of domestic labour is perhaps misleading. It is necessary to have more information, education and communication in this matter (Table 17).

Table 17: Sex of respondents* Perception of contribution of domestic work Crosstabulation (Unit: %)

| Statement | Male | | Female | |
|---|-------|----------|--------|----------|
| | Agree | Disagree | Agree | Disagree |
| Housework is invisible and time-consuming. | 67.9 | 32.1 | 71.6 | 28.4 |
| Housework has no economic value. | 64.5 | 35.5 | 65.9 | 34.1 |
| Housework helps stabilize psychology and feelings. | 97.3 | 2.7 | 98 | 2 |
| Housework educates and develops people. | 96.7 | 3.3 | 98.7 | 1.3 |
| Housework contributes to producing material goods for the family. | 67.2 | 32.8 | 72.9 | 27.1 |
| Housework can enhance socio-economic growth. | 71.9 | 28.1 | 73.6 | 26.4 |

b. Calculating the economic value of housework

As discussed at length in the previous section (Part 3- Literature review), different methodological models can be used in measuring the value of domestic labour. In this study, based on the collected data, the researchers estimate the monetary value of domestic work based on the models of opportunity cost (the household’s average income) and market replacement cost (the housekeeper cost method).

b1- Opportunity cost (Use of household’s income).

In order to estimate the price of unpaid work, this model is based on the premise that when an individual engages in unpaid work, he or she has to give up activities that could be done instead, along with all associated monetary and non-monetary benefits (Malika Hamdad 2003). Within this model, we use the actual incomes that the households in the study sites provided and the average income per capita in Ha Tay, as released by the General Statistics Office’s VLSS in 2004. From this, we calculate the hourly income for each individual. We assume that an individual will work for 240 hours each month (30 days x 8 hours/day). However, as we argued earlier (Part 3- Literature Review), the use of an opportunity cost wage implies that different people performing the same household task can be paid vastly different rates, simply because each individual has a different job and therefore different wage rates.

In this inquiry, there is a difference in the average incomes of households in Nguyen Trai and Dai Dong. This is partly affected by the high income of some households in each site (Part 4.1.2 f- Households’ income). However, because these wealthy households were randomly selected, they are perceived as representative of other households of the same income groups in the study sites. Below we present the value of domestic labour on the basis of the average income of husbands and wives in each site and in each income group.

⁵ To look after her boy aged eight months and a half.

Table 18a: Monthly and hourly average income of the husband and wife in the study sites (Unit: VND)

| Study sites | Wife | | Husband | |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Monthly average income | Hourly average income (240h/m) | Monthly average income | Hourly average income (240h/m) |
| Nguyen Trai | 1,687,893 | 7,033 | 1,989,627 | 8,290 |
| Dai Dong | 832,840 | 3,470 | 1,228,581 | 5,119 |

Table 18b: Measurement of domestic labour value based on average income of the husband and wife in the study sites (Unit: VND)

| Study sites | | Hours spent doing housework per day | Income per hour by doing housework | Income per day by doing housework | Income per month by doing housework |
|-------------|---------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | Nguyen Trai | Wife | 5.66 | 7,033 |
| | Husband | 2.04 | 8,290 | 16,912 | 507,355 |
| Dai Dong | Wife | 5.09 | 3,470 | 17,663 | 529,894 |
| | Husband | 1.38 | 5,119 | 7,064 | 211,930 |

Table 18b (*Measurement of domestic labour value based on average income of husband and wife*) shows that if a wife in Nguyen Trai spends about six hours on housework she will earn about 40,000 VND a day and nearly 1.2 million a month. Similarly, a wife in Dai Dong can earn nearly 530,000 VND per month. However, the table also reflects that hourly average income of a husband in Nguyen Trai is nearly 2.5 times as much as that of a wife in Dai Dong. Therefore, his income per month by doing housework is nearly as much as her even though he spends only 2 hours per day, two fifth of her time spent on the tasks. Similarly, compared with a woman in Dai Dong, a woman in Nguyen Trai only spends 34 minutes more on domestic work but her income per month by doing housework is twice that of the woman in Dai Dong.

If the hourly wages are derived from the household's income groups, we will have different results. As mentioned above, the same household tasks can be paid at different wage rates if done by different individuals from different income groups. As illustrated by Table 19 (*Measurement of domestic labour value based on income groups*), the hourly wage of a woman in the lowest income group (less than 500,000 VND/month) is about 396 VND. Her time spent on housework per month will thus be priced about 59,000 VND. At the same time, a woman in the second income group (from 501,000-2,000,000) can earn about 422,000 VND from about five hours of domestic labour at the hourly wage rate of more than 2,600 VND. In the same way, a woman in the higher income group will have a higher hourly wage and the value of her time spent on housework will be greater (See Table 19).

If we recode the households' income into different income groups, a problem emerges in that a man in the higher income groups can contribute more than a woman in the lower income groups even though he spends less time than her on housework. For instance, in spite of the fact that a man in the third income group of more than two million to five million spends about two hours doing domestic tasks, equaling one-third of the time a woman of the low income group of below 500,000 VND spend on the same tasks, his contribution through housework would be six times as much as her using this method.

Table 19: Measurement of domestic labour value based on income groups (Unit: VND)

| Income groups | Wife | | | | | | Husband | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Monthly average income | Hourly average income | Time spent doing housework (day/minutes) | Time spent doing housework (day/hours) | Value of housework per day | Value of housework per month | Monthly average income | Hourly average income | Time spent doing housework (day/minutes) | Time spent doing housework (day/hours) | Value of housework per day | Value of housework per month |
| Below 500.000 | 95,140 | 396 | 297.11 | 4.95 | 1,960 | 58,806 | 161,460 | 673 | 105.5 | 1.76 | 1,184 | 35,534 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|--------|--------|------|---------|-----------|------------|--------|--------|------|--------|-----------|
| 501.000-2.000.000 | 641,352 | 2,672 | 316.3 | 5.3 | 14,083 | 422,491 | 775,182 | 3,230 | 106.9 | 1.78 | 5,749 | 172,478 |
| 2.001.000-5.000.000 | 1,403,183 | 5,847 | 332.36 | 5.54 | 32,390 | 971,704 | 1,788,036 | 7,450 | 102.83 | 1.71 | 12,740 | 382,193 |
| 5.001.000-10.000.000 | 2,402,879 | 10,012 | 312.3 | 5.2 | 52,162 | 1,564,875 | 2,970,152 | 12,376 | 92.68 | 1.54 | 19,058 | 571,754 |
| Above 10.000.000 | 7,633,330 | 31,806 | 273.5 | 4.56 | 145,033 | 4,351,000 | 12,366,667 | 51,528 | 74.17 | 1.24 | 63,894 | 1,916,833 |

According to the GSO's most recent VLSS, the average income per capita in Ha Tay is 415,400 VND/month (GSO 2004). Using this official statistical data, we arrive at the following table (Table 20):

Table 20: Measurement of domestic labour value based on Ha Tay's monthly income per capita according to the VLSS 2004 (Unit: VND)

| Study sites | | Hours spent doing housework per day | Value of housework per hour | Value of housework per day | Value of housework per month |
|-------------|---------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Nguyen Trai | Wife | 5.66 | 1,730.8 | 9,796.5 | 293,894.9 |
| | Husband | 2.04 | 1,730.8 | 3,530.9 | 105,926.8 |
| Dai Dong | Wife | 5.09 | 1,730.8 | 8,809.9 | 264,297.7 |
| | Husband | 1.38 | 1,730.8 | 2,388.5 | 71,656.4 |

The calculated hourly wage rate for both Nguyen Trai and Dai Dong is 1,730 VND. At that premise, a woman in Nguyen Trai contributes about 295,000 VND to the family income through her housework, while a woman in Dai Dong contributes about 264,000 VND every month (See Table 19).

b2- Market replacement cost:

Another model of valuation of domestic labour is market replacement cost. Users of this method presuppose that the time a household member spends on unpaid activities can be valued at the earnings level of other people who are engaged in similar activities in the market sector. In this model, it is assumed that household members and their 'replacements' are equally productive and responsible. Another premise behind this approach is that households save money by deciding to perform the activity themselves. The amount they save, and hence the value added to the household's income by doing the work, is the cost of purchasing the same services in the market, or hiring someone else to perform the tasks (Hamdad 2003).

This approach is divided into two other variants of (1) replacement cost specialist which imputes the unpaid work on the basis of hourly earnings of people employed in matched occupations and (2) housekeeper cost method which employs the wage rates of a general housekeeper in this respect. However, it is advisable to remember that it is unlikely that market replacements exist for all household activities, and there are likely to be a wide range of wage rates for the same task being undertaken by different people in the market. Meanwhile, housekeepers are likely to be paid far less than many specialists. In addition, there will still be a number of household productive tasks that a housekeeper would be unlikely to carry out and applying the single wage rate could lead to inappropriate valuations (Hamdad 2003). It is hard therefore to decide which is the most appropriate method (see Part 3- Literature Review).

In this study, we apply the housekeeper cost method in valuing domestic labour on the basis of the available data. The findings show that there only 33 of the 299 households (11%) who actually have somebody in to help with the housework, and their earnings are very different. In order to simplify data analysis, we estimate the average wage of the housekeeper so as to calculate women's contribution through those tasks. Additionally, we also use the average wage of a housekeeper in the market at the time of study in the study sites, the wage in Nguyen Trai being 600,000 VND and in Dai Dong 400,000 VND.

+ The actual wage rate the studied households paid for the housekeeper

As previously mentioned, there are only 33 households (11%) who hire someone to perform domestic tasks. On average, a household has to pay 391,000 VND per month, while one household in Dai Dong pays only 251,000 VND for this purpose. Accordingly, the hourly wage rates in Nguyen Trai and Dai Dong are 1,629 VND/hour and 1,046 VND/hour respectively (see Table 21a).

Table 21a: The actual wage rate that the studied households paid for the housekeeper on each study site (Unit: VND)

| Study sites | Monthly wage | Hourly wage |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Nguyen Trai | 390,960 | 1,629 |
| Dai Dong | 251,000 | 1,046 |

If these hourly wage rates are used, a wife in Nguyen Trai will earn 276,000 VND and a wife in Dai Dong will earn 160,000 VND for their time spent on housework (see Table 21b).

Table 21b: Measurement of the value of domestic labour based on the actual wage rate the study households paid their housekeepers (Unit: VND)

| Study sites | | Hours spent doing housework per day | Value of housework per hour | Value of housework per day | Value of housework per month |
|-------------|---------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Nguyen Trai | Wife | 5.66 | 1,629.0 | 9,220.1 | 276,604.2 |
| | Husband | 2.04 | 1,629.0 | 3,323.2 | 99,694.8 |
| Dai Dong | Wife | 5.09 | 1,046.0 | 5,324.1 | 159,724.2 |
| | Husband | 1.38 | 1,046.0 | 1,443.5 | 43,304.4 |

+ The average wage rate for the housekeeper in the study site.

Table 22 reveals that, using this method, a woman in Nguyen Trai would have a wage of about 400,000 VND and a woman in Dai Dong 250,000 VND from housework. However, this is just an estimation, as it is not logical to use the wage rate of the general housekeeper to calculate the value of the time the household members spend on housework. Clearly, the working conditions, productivity and responsibilities of the replacements are qualitatively different in nature. This is clearly illustrated in Lien's disclosure (Box 2). As quoted above, she said that, *"It is not possible to place an economic value on all the domestic tasks. For instance, as far as care for her children is concerned, it is not possible to hire somebody in to look after and care for them with the same responsibility and affection as their parents."*

Table 22: Measurement of the value of domestic labour based on the average wage rate for general housekeepers in the study sites (Unit: VND)

| Study sites | | Hours spent doing housework per day | Value of housework per hour | Value of housework per day | Value of housework per month |
|-------------|---------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Nguyen Trai | Wife | 5.66 | 2,500.0 | 14,150.0 | 424,500.0 |
| | Husband | 2.04 | 2,500.0 | 5,100.0 | 153,000.0 |
| Dai Dong | Wife | 5.09 | 1,667.0 | 8,485.0 | 254,550.9 |
| | Husband | 1.38 | 1,667.0 | 2,300.5 | 69,013.8 |

In summary, it is possible to measure domestic labour using two methodological approaches of opportunity cost and market replacement cost. However, both methods have their problems, meaning that the imputed results are not to be read as any more than vague estimations. The findings show that a woman in Nguyen Trai will contribute between 277,000 and 1.2 million VND per month (0.6 to 3 times as much as the average income per capita of Ha Tay) and a woman in Dai Dong between 160,000 and 530,000 VND per month (0.3 to 1.3 times as much as the average income per capita of Ha Tay). According to income groups, a woman in the study sites will contribute between 59,000 VND to 4.35 million VND (about 0.1 to 10 times as much as the average income per capita of Ha Tay in 2004). Thus, the price calculated for domestic labour varies according to income groups and localities.

The variations in estimates raise an important issue: is it more important to prepare food for wealthy children than poor ones? Does a clean home for a wealthy person have more value than a clean home for a poor one? It is impossible to avoid biases and estimates in calculating that which has no definite economic value, and attempts to do so involve necessary limitations. However, this should not prevent the attempt. As has been noted repeatedly elsewhere, the failure to assign economic value to the household work performed daily without pay by women makes that work 'invisible' and leads to full-time housewives being labelled as 'parasites'. Since there is no measure that is free of bias, the only solution is to assign a reasonable measure, and understand that it is an approximation of something that cannot be arrived at with accuracy. As such, a calculation for the entire country is possible, allowing for a reasonable range of the value of women's unpaid work.

5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion and conclusion

A gender-based division of labour, which is both socially constructed and culturally based, determines to a large degree the roles, functions and tasks that men and women each undertake within the household, and in the wider society. The arrangement originates in the biological difference between men and women, particularly in women's role as childbearers, and is strongly supported, enhanced and therefore perpetuated by patriarchal teaching. As a consequence, society in general, and women themselves in particular, continue to believe that due to the fact that women are born in 'soft and weak' bodies, they will therefore be more 'suited' to work that requires patience, skill, and the meticulousness associated with 'nimble fingers'.

A lively illustration of this reality is revealed in the course of our multi-methodological research conducted in the two localities of Nguyen Trai urban ward and Dai Dong rural commune in Ha Tay province, Vietnam. The findings show that virtually all respondents, both male and female, claim that both women and men can do housework regardless of their sex and tasks should be shared equally between spouses. However, whether in rural or urban contexts, wives invariably tend to be those who spend more time doing housework compared to their husbands. As far as locality is concerned, a wife in Nguyen Trai ward spends a self-reported average of 5.66 hours doing tasks including cooking, cleaning, washing, mending clothes and taking care of the family members, tutoring the kids and so on, while a wife in Dai Dong commune spends 5.09 hours carrying out similar duties. The husbands portrayed in this research also participate in housework, though rather modestly and much less frequently than their marriage partner. A man in Nguyen Trai household for instance, normally spends 2.04 hours on domestic work, while a husband in Dai Dong only spends 1.38 hours on such tasks, amounting to 36% and 27%, respectively, of the hours that their wives work. It is one of the main revelations of this study that "*Taking care of family members*" is a category of housework that respondents of both sexes assume men prefer doing, and in fact do participate in the most, accounting for 62% of men's household time (75.6 minutes) in Nguyen Trai ward and 63% (52.05 minutes) in Dai Dong commune.

Significant variations in time spent on housework emerged in the study. Households having members under the age of six and those having members both under six and above 60 spend more time on housework (an average of 5.09-6.13 hours/day for the wife and 1.65-2.26 hours/day for the husband). Meanwhile, households which have members over 60 years of age spend the least time doing domestic tasks (4.17 hours/day for the wife and 0.83 hours/day for the husband). This mirrors the fact that elderly people in these households also take part in housework and therefore lessen the burden on women. This supports what we know from the literature regarding the bases of the allocation of labour within households. Research has for some time now shown that not only women, but also certain age groups, especially those in the older age range, have to help shoulder the unequal burden of domestic work, and this is probably more so among those with little or no income (Mahalingam et al 2003; CWS 2006).

One has to conclude, on the basis of the empirical findings of this study, that housework continues to be mainly undertaken by women, and that other family members, especially men, fulfil only a 'helper' role. We found from our in-depth interviews that those husbands who do carry out housework with some willingness are younger, possessing a more modern perception of housework. If they are older, they do not have to go to work and thus have more free time than their wives. At this juncture, it is worthwhile repeating Ann Oakley's (1987) argument regarding the sharing of housework. She said that there still exists a differentiation between men and women as far as this type of work is concerned: as long as the husband thinks that he has 'helped' his wife with the domestic tasks, it is not difficult to envision who is viewed as responsible for housework. Oakley concludes that,

As long as women are blamed for an empty fridge and a dirty floor, it is not significant to speak about the meaning of integration in marriage [...] symmetry is just a myth (cited by Tony Bilton et al. 1987).

Not only men but also women themselves rationalise the unequal division of labour skewed to women within the household by underscoring dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity. As mentioned above, when asked about their perception of housework, respondents of both sexes agree that sex/gender *in general* cannot determine who should be responsible for the housework, nor how much each partner does. Nevertheless, in our dialogic interviews, the male respondents thought that their wives often did the most housework because they are more skilled in this area. Additionally, some men assume that this work is more appropriate for women because they are unable to perform what men can do. In the same spirit, the female respondents worry that their men's sense of their own masculinity would be endangered if they have to do supposedly 'feminine' housework. In response to this perception, Oakley (1979) concluded that only this can explain why men either

do not get involved in any kind of domestic work or do little more than ‘help’ in order that “his masculinity will survive” (1979).

This study also reveals that the actual division of domestic labour is consistent with the division of spousal domination in decision-making processes. Both male and female respondents share the view that the issue that women dominate is daily expenses while men, and occasionally their parents, are primarily responsible for less frequent decisions such as purchasing important assets or vehicles. Remarkably, all issues other than the above-mentioned ones are decided by both husbands and wives. However, husbands are those who have the last word in decision-making, as disclosed by some of our respondents in the in-depth interviews.

We may argue that women continue to do more domestic labour for several reasons. First of all, under the influence of the new economic policy and market economy development since the mid-1980s, rural households have become the autonomous economic unit in agricultural production and business. That means each household has to reorganize their production activities and redistribute the labour among individual members of the family, especially between husband and wife, in order to fulfill the functions of the family in the new economic situation. It is obvious that this reorganisation and reallocation of household labour has served to, and/or partly enhanced, the traditional culture of masculinity which institutionalizes the role of women as dependent on their husbands and their in-laws. This gendered relationship governs other social relations as well as other aspects of life among family members.

In addition, as we have discussed at length in the literature review, this open-door policy not only brings about opportunities for economic development but also for cultural exchanges with other countries in the region, and indeed across the globe. Consumerism, individualisation and the like, which have been introduced in Vietnam as part of radical social changes, have seemingly not affected to any great degree the stubborn notion of male authority in Vietnam. The rapid feminisation of the labour force has been recorded by the state’s official data, but this fact is not likely to be accompanied by any greater equity or sharing of labour within individual families. On the contrary, in Vietnam the intense focus on the household unit as the driver of economic growth means that women are even more likely to be burdened with the double bind of acquiring paid employment while having to maintain their existing roles as domestic providers and labourers. These ‘womanly roles’ are even applauded by the organisations respecting women’s interests and benefits as a means to protect the intactness of families in the whirlwind of burgeoning development (Bui, 2006).

To make the situation even worse, mass media enshrines gender inequality imposed by the feudal regime of past generations by uninterruptedly conveying messages regarding traditional gender roles. Dinh Doan, a media commentator, has emphasised the socially-sanctioned roles of men and women and especially their decisive characteristics of role fulfillment in correlation with ideas surrounding family well-being (2007). In his words,

“A husband and his wife should be a ‘magical alliance’, but not ‘a mutual help group’ or ‘a collective’. That may explain why counting the benefits and losses does not have any position/standing in a happy family. A clearly-cut labour division timetable, which says what tasks a husband and a wife should do in the family is an unhealthy proof of a conjugal life... Doing household chores is not always enjoyable. However, it is said that ‘Men make house, women make home’. Women therefore should ‘keep the fire in the family’. You, women should remember that the possibility of taking care of husband and children is one of the greatest sources of happiness that many other women long for. Do not forget that the emotional fire that you light will both ‘keep yourself warm and others warm as well’. (Dinh Doan, Newspaper of Science and Life, 3 September 2007).

Consequently, women today have to bear excessive burdens in order to achieve the title of ‘superwoman’, “good at both office work and housework”. Sometimes, this double standard requires women to sacrifice their health and their youth, as well as spare time for relaxation and entertainment (Newspaper of Science and Life, August 2007).

As mentioned earlier, another objective of this inquiry is to calculate the economic value of domestic labour in order to have a fuller insight and evaluation regarding the contribution of this type of unpaid work, on which basis to propose feasible solutions to make the corrective gender equality adjustment. Towards this aim, we used two methodologies: opportunity cost (mainly based on average income) and market replacement cost (based on paying a maid to do the same tasks). Although the two methodological approaches are criticised as a means of evaluating domestic labour because of their questionable validity, the decision concerning which wage or rate of income to be used does at least give us a pointer to the sort of monetary value that domestic labour

should be attributed. The results are limited in reliability due to the self-reporting bias of time spent on housework, as well as the limitations of both methods and of the task at hand, of assigning an arbitrary 'precise' value to something for which no accurate value exists.

Despite these limitations, it is important to recognise that these models are instrumental in proving that housework is a real, visible and economically significant form of employment and the status of those performing such tasks should be justly enhanced. As seen in the previous section, we can arrive at different estimates by using different methods. The estimated monthly contribution of a woman through household work in Nguyen Trai and Dai Dong fluctuates within the range of 59,000 to 4.35 million VND. That is, even when undervalued, a woman's monthly unpaid work is worth at least 30% of the total income per capital in Ha Tay (VLSS, 2004). In summary, the women and wives in this study are involved in a tremendous amount of work that significantly contributes to their family, not only emotionally but also economically.

5.2 Recommendations

a. Increase societal awareness regarding such issues as the economic value of domestic labour and women's contribution to that value through household tasks over and above their contribution through other paid activities.

In order to reduce the load of domestic labour on women's shoulders and encourage other family members to participate and share responsibility for this kind of work, it is desirable to carry out a more comprehensive set of awareness and behaviour change communication activities. The primary goal of such a campaign is to enhance societal awareness of improvements that have been made in women's status and gender equality and specifically focus on the economic and emotional contribution of the domestic tasks to the well-being of each individual, his/her family, and society as a whole. Such a campaign would also aim to highlight the compounded burden that women have to shoulder: working to generate income while concurrently performing the roles of reproducers and carers for young and old members of the household. More significantly, such a campaign should point out that measuring the monetary value of women's contribution through housework is impossible to quantify fully, precisely because it fails to embrace the 'emotional labour' involved in women's love and feelings, which cannot be calculated by any formula. Additionally, it is necessary to communicate with the public about the concept surrounding the steep opportunity costs incurred that women have to pay when they spend most of their time and energy on housework.

b. Changing existing messages: Rewriting the story of domestic labour

The existence of a normative social expectation that women have to work to generate incomes and to take care of the domestic work, while there has been no mechanism to encourage men to share those tasks, has made the objective of gender equality hard to realise. Slogans like "Women should be good at office work and capable of housework, striving for the objectives of gender equality" should be replaced so as to make both men and women see their responsibilities in implementing these objectives.

It is important to inform the public of the successful examples of women in various fields, especially those which have been hitherto dominated by men (such as politics and economics). However, this appraisal of women's roles should strive not to cause more burdens for women or unintentionally marginalise men out of the policy and programme concerns. Therefore, it is necessary to develop gender-neutral messages and images so as not to frame either men or women into the values, roles or stereotypes on the basis of their sex, especially in relation to the 'division of labour' in and out of the household.

No less important, it is advisable to raise the awareness of the policy makers and leaders regarding the roles and contribution of both men and women in/to the national economy in order to involve them in disseminating gender-equality messages. In so doing, the biased Confucian thinking of "respecting men and belittling women" will, hopefully, be supplanted by a substantive or corrective model of equality, which on the one hand respects equality between women and men, and on the other hand takes cognizance of the biological and social differences between them (IWRAP Asia Pacific 2006). Recognition of the double burden on women could also lead to the development of a high-quality system of medical and child care which is partly subsidized by the State in order to reduce the household's burden of domestic chores. Many European countries have models of social policy that could be studied in this regard.

More emphasis needs to be placed on the recognition of domestic labour as being on a par with paid employment, which requires that investment, training, supporting services and ultimately its production is included into the measurement of GDP. It is necessary to either develop or complement a national system of statistical data in terms of time use and with more specific regard of time used for housework and childcare, as well as the indicators for measuring those tasks' value. To this end, housework should be identified as a separate job in the list of jobs and occupations employed in the national statistical research programme.

Of equal importance, the media practitioners, planners and programmers/producers have to be trained and retrained in gender awareness and sensitivity before and during the campaign to be conducted. An important goal of these activities is the awareness and recognition at the highest level of society of the vital role of household work in the maintenance of a nation; that is, that while work for pay is vital, so too are the daily tasks of cooking, cleaning, and caring for others. It should not be assumed that any work for pay has more value to society than the work of caring for others; as such, more work could be done to assign socially-reasonable values for the work often done by women without pay, which could then lead to sounder socio-economic policies regarding the importance of paid and unpaid labour. Other policy considerations would include the need to bring full- and part-time household workers into existing social security systems and benefit programs.

c. A renewed agenda for research

Calculating the value of domestic labour is new in terms of both theories and practice in Vietnam, especially the measurement approaches. While predominantly of an exploratory nature, this study is nonetheless one of the very first instances of research in this field. It is therefore advisable to conduct larger-scale and more specific research studies so as to gain a better and more precise understanding of issues organized around housework and women's economic contribution through so-called 'invisible' work. In addition, more research efforts are needed to develop or make up the deficiency in the existing theoretical system of measuring domestic labour. It is only through this renewed research agenda that the complete story regarding domestic labour will be fully explored, allowing a more comprehensive picture to emerge that will prove invaluable in informing future policy-making in this crucial area.

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**The Economic Contribution of Pakistani Women
through their Unpaid Labour**

DRAFT REPORT

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Financial and technical support: HealthBridge
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

**Society For Alternative Media and Research - HealthBridge
Islamabad –Pakistan**

June 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Acknowledgments..... | 2 |
| Summary..... | 3 |
| Rationale for the Research..... | 3 |
| Background..... | 4 |
| Changing cultural expectations of women in Pakistani society..... | 4 |
| Dependence on men..... | 5 |
| Positive government initiatives..... | 6 |
| Methodology..... | 6 |
| Research Results..... | 7 |
| Family composition..... | 7 |
| Unpaid work and the typical woman’s day..... | 7 |
| Education and improvements in female school attendance..... | 10 |
| Leisure, rest and recreation..... | 10 |
| Employment status and income..... | 11 |
| Rural-urban differentials in terms of hours worked..... | 11 |
| The economic value of women’s work..... | 12 |
| Urban-rural comparisons of types of work performed..... | 13 |
| Tasks that elude economic valuation..... | 14 |
| Perceived importance of women’s work..... | 16 |
| Economic value of women’s unpaid work in Pakistan..... | 17 |
| Conclusions..... | 18 |
| Suggestions & Recommendations..... | 19 |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Age of female participants..... | 7 |
| Table 2: Time respondents say women spend daily in household work..... | 8 |
| Table 3: Time respondents go to bed and wake up..... | 9 |
| Table 4: Availability of household help..... | 9 |
| Table 5: Educational level of the female respondents..... | 10 |
| Table 6: Do women have free time? | 11 |
| Table 7: Employment status and income of respondents..... | 11 |
| Table 8: Economic value of unpaid work by activity..... | 12 |
| Table 9: Additional work carried out by women in urban and rural communities..... | 13 |
| Table 10: The tasks for which monetary value cannot be assigned..... | 14 |
| Table 11: Discussion over family matters/decision-making..... | 15 |
| Table 12: Economic value and importance..... | 16 |
| Table 13: Financial worth of the domestic work..... | 17 |
| Table 14: Contribution of Pakistani women to GDP..... | 17 |

Acknowledgments

Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR) would like to thank HealthBridge for its technical and financial support that enabled of this research. SAMAR would also like to thank those organizations which facilitated the research in the field and the researcher’s team members who put their time, energy, and effort into obtaining quality data from the field. We would also like to thank those who have contributed to this important research by agreeing to participate in our interviews. Last, but not least, we would also like to thank all the people who have provided their valuable technical inputs in analyzing the data and writing the report.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funders.

Summary

This report presents background information and research results from a study undertaken on the economic contribution of women through their unpaid labour. The purpose of the research was twofold: to gain an understanding of the nature of women's unpaid work in both rural and urban areas, and to obtain a figure of the economic worth or value of that work. For the purposes of this research, unpaid work includes those tasks performed daily by Pakistani women, including caring for others, fetching water, cleaning, cooking, and other activities for which they receive no pay. A secondary purpose of the study was to become acquainted with women's perceptions of their unpaid labour. The research included a survey and in-depth interviews with women in rural and urban areas that contributed to a better understanding of women's unpaid work and the daily schedule of their lives.

It is important to mention that this report uses the terms "household work," "housework," and "unpaid labour" interchangeably. In this report, household work refers to the wide range of activities required to maintain the home and care for the family, including activities typically described as "housework" (cooking, cleaning, washing), the care of children and other family members, management of household accounting, and work around the homestead including gardening and caring for small livestock.

Key findings from the research include the finding that women typically work 16 hours a day; this work includes all major and supplemental tasks.¹ Most of the women have no leisure time and typically utilize their "spare time" to complete household activities. Through the research, it became clear that women assume most of the responsibility for household chores without a helping hand. Even when they have a servant, women typically do their own cooking and generally take on complete responsibility for teaching children and helping them with schoolwork.

An analysis of the data demonstrates that both urban and rural women perform a wide variety of tasks,, typically working long and often strenuous days. Women recognize that their household activities have value, although they would likely be surprised at the magnitude of its economic worth.

The researchers calculated that if such household tasks as cooking, cleaning, and sewing were out-sourced, it would cost Pak. rupees 4,000/month for a single household in urban areas, equivalent to Pak. rupees 48,000 per year, or 800 USD². For a rural household the figure is Pak rupees 2,150/month, which is Rs. 25,800 per annum, equal to 430 USD. Such generalizations fail to take into account that the value of each task is different in different geographical areas, because of varying levels of poverty and inflation rate, but one finding is universal: women spend most of their waking hours engaged in vital work of high value to families and society. The results of the research indicate that women across the country are contributing **\$368.503 billion** to the national economy of Pakistan, or almost triple the nation's GDP.

Rationale for the Research

Unpaid work plays an important role in people's lives and has significant economic value. Economic statistics to date, however, have not adequately measured or assessed the value of such work. The System of National Accounts (SNA) records all economic activities of a nation and publishes economic indices including gross domestic product (GDP). Nonetheless, unpaid work, which is not part of the formal market, is not recorded in SNA, making women's work in particular invisible.

Family welfare depends not only on income and consumption of various goods and services, but also on time use patterns in unpaid household work and leisure. In recent years, the value of unpaid household work has

¹ An interesting finding of the research was women's division of work into two categories: "major" and "additional" or supplemental. Major tasks are limited in nature, yet so-called additional tasks both occupy a large amount of time and have great significance for the family, including as they do such tasks as carrying water, earning money for the family, and caring for family members. In one sense these terms are misleading, but they are retained here as they reflect the perception of the women themselves (and perhaps the researchers) and suggest that other studies on women's work may greatly underestimate women's work by ignoring such "additional" chores.

² The exchange rate at the time this report was prepared was Rs. 60= 1USD

been more explicitly recognized as an economic variable, and has been shown to be of great significance for the analysis of national income and its distribution.

Household consumption patterns are closely linked to time use patterns both in paid employment, unpaid household work, and in leisure. Many consumption goods are not ready for immediate consumption, but need further work before they can be consumed. An example is groceries in the store that need time input in the form of shopping and cooking before the meal is ready for consumption. In this respect, the household may be seen as a small factory where household members take part in tasks involving transportation, shopping, cooking, cleaning, and care. Time and skill convert “raw materials” into goods ready for consumption.

Throughout their lives both men and women engage in a tremendous amount of productive work. Men play a vital role in a number of fields, and are usually the main income earners. But while their roles are recognized and valued, those of women are typically not. Further, while men generally are able to partake of days off, holidays and leisure time, and work shorter days than women, women get few if any breaks and work from dawn to night.

Background

Changing cultural expectations of women in Pakistani society

Demographic statistics provide a snapshot of the effects of discrimination against women. Pakistan is one of the few countries in the world which has fewer women in its population than men, i.e. 906 women for every 1,000 men (Census of Pakistan - 1981) compared to a world average of 111 women to every 100 men. In the 15- to 40-year-old cohort, there are 75% more female deaths than male. This is largely attributed to nutritional anaemia, which affects most women in the country as a result of discrimination against women in the sharing of food. Women are generally given less food and often have to make do with leftovers. Because of the lower resistance of their underfed bodies, women are more susceptible to potentially fatal diseases such as malaria, gastroenteritis, and respiratory diseases, particularly tuberculosis. Repeated pregnancies also take a heavy toll by lowering women’s resistance to disease (Women Movement Pakistan, 1983). The condition of women who do not hold a wage-earning job outside the home is aggravated both physically and psychologically by their confinement within the four walls of their homes. They get little of the sun and fresh air and no recreation, while the men go about freely and are therefore less affected by their poor housing conditions.

When attention is drawn to the subordination and oppression of women in Pakistan and demands made for change, Pakistani ideologues are quick to rebut such charges by painting an idealized picture of the high status of women in Islam. However, this line of argument obscures the real issues, those of the actual conditions to which women in Pakistan are subject. It is against such a background that questions about the value of women in Pakistani society need to be examined.

Women’s contribution to the family economy has changed beyond recognition when compared to conditions many decades ago. Many women are now engaged in unskilled work in factories, operate in the “informal economy” as peddlers, or are engaged in domestic employment. They often prefer such employment to home-based work, as waged employment pays better and contributes to their psychological health (by enabling more regular interaction within their communities). Despite the great increase in their burden of work, with an outside job and still maintaining responsibility for all household work, women willingly take on jobs to earn money for the family.

The role and status of women in Pakistan is changing quite rapidly through the influence of “western” culture. In earlier times, the husband used to be the only breadwinner. The stereotypical image of woman was of a happy housewife with no commitment outside the home/family. Most conventional families and communities harboured deep-seated prejudices against women taking up paid work – implying as it did that the father/husband/brother had become dependent on the earnings of his daughter/wife/sister. This attitude was responsible for discouraging many qualified women from joining even traditionally “feminine” vocations. In some cases, though, educated women did take paying jobs despite family resistance, as they believed that in

addition to lessening the economic burden on their family, work tends to boost their mental health. Although a major change is now taking place with the attitudes of people towards women working outside the home, a sizable proportion of Pakistani society has still not reconciled itself to the concept of this change. As such, working women are still considered an oddity even though millions of women are involved in a variety of academic and technical jobs throughout the world.

The majority of upper class women find themselves in a different situation than other Pakistani women. These women have servants to do their chores and do not need (or are not allowed) to take jobs and have careers. In spite of their status, and in the absence of any chance of taking an independent job or career, compounded by the extreme difficulty faced by women in setting up an independent household without the “saya”, or protection, of a male head of family, these women are entirely dependent on the males of the family. They are therefore virtually reduced to the status of well-fed, well-dressed, and well-ornamented slaves who depend absolutely upon the whim of their husbands or fathers. When their husband ill-treats or abuses them, they must suffer in silence.

Against this background, the main focus of the present study was the full-time housewife in Pakistani society and her contribution to the welfare and economy of the country through the services that she provides. Pakistani housewives provide “free” care-giving services to their families in the role of an unpaid and generally unacknowledged worker. Daily life is, after all, supported not only by market economy activities but also by housework and care of others. Female workers offer their labour without requesting family members or others to compensate them for the work done. As the work is unpaid, and is also unfortunately often unvalued, the women themselves are not respected. In comparison, in the case of a formal job or other paid work, compensation is given for the labour offered on the market, and the person engaged in the task is usually recognized for the contribution made.

At the same time, however, a woman in paid employment is subject to different kinds of pressures than a woman without outside work. Her working day starts early, for she must feed her husband and children and send the latter off to school before she herself rushes off to work. Travelling to work is itself quite a battle given the state of public transport in Pakistan. In order to attract women workers, many large companies maintain fleets of minibuses to pick up their female employees in the morning and take them home after work. In the case of a woman who is the first to be picked up or the last to be dropped at home, this can add an hour or two to the long day spent at work. Whilst her husband relaxes with a cold drink under a fan. She is expected to rush straight into the kitchen to prepare the family’s evening meal, and there are numerous small chores to attend to, young children to be looked after and put to bed. Some chores, such as washing clothes and cleaning the house, are inevitably put off for the weekend, which therefore offers no chance for rest.

Dependence on men

As mentioned above, Pakistani housewives are generally dependent on the males within their families for their subsistence, due to their relatively lower educational levels and fewer formal job skills, the resulting lack of employment opportunities, and lack of acceptance of women earning a living. Since most women have attained only low levels of formal education, they are not qualified for higher-level jobs. They are restricted both by family and societal expectations that prevent them from reaching a higher level of either education or employment.

In Pakistani society, different roles are ascribed to males and females, to a greater degree than in many other cultures. It is apparent from these proscribed roles and responsibilities that males, being the head of family and custodian of their rights, enjoy more autonomy, rights, and power than do women. Men themselves decide what is right and wrong for their family members according to societal views. Men provide the basic necessities to the family and are mainly responsible for earning a livelihood. Men enjoy virtually all power within the home.

Women working at home are dependent on their husbands or other male family members, and thus have little or no control over their own decisions or family matters. They have virtually no decision-making power in the family. Where women do work outside the home, they are seen as contributing to family economy, and

thus have some, albeit limited, decision-making power in the family, including in financial matters. Such women are typically more assertive and confident than housewives.

Positive government initiatives

In addition to its work to improve the ratio of girls to boys in school attendance (see below), the present government has taken many other steps to improve the situation for the women of Pakistan. Amongst them is the formulation of the first-ever national development and empowerment of women program. A positive step in this direction has been the introduction of the reservation of 33% of seats in the local councils, which means more than twice the number of reserved seats for women at national and provincial level than previously. In 1990, there were only 20 reserved seats for women in the National Assembly; this has now increased to up to 60 seats for women. This has been done to:

- strengthen women in political decision making positions by providing supervision/support and defining their authority, and through engaging in the development of gender equality in decision-making; and
- mandate the inclusion of women through merit in all decision-making bodies, executive and judicial organs of the state at the federal, provincial and local levels, and by taking measures to remove obstacles in women's access to decision making in the family, community and the society (Empowerment of Pakistani Women).

It is within this context that this research study was undertaken.

Methodology

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods consisting of in-depth interviews (IDIs) and a survey (see Appendix X for the survey form and IDI questions). A total sample of 647 women was interviewed. The research was conducted by trained researchers working in NGOs (coordinated by SAMAR) in six rural areas of Mansehra district and in one urban area of Rawalpindi district, to gain an understanding of the nature of women's work in both rural and urban areas. SPSS software was used for data analysis.

The research was made challenging by the current socio-political situation of Pakistan, flooding, proclamation of a national emergency, assassination of a famous political leader, suicide bombings, sectarian violence, crises of the judiciary, strikes, and threats to civil society by Islamic extremists across the country. Furthermore, the topic of the study is vast; a more comprehensive study would require more time and study sites to cover all the geographical areas of the country. Such an extensive research was not possible given limited financial, human, and technical resources. Nor were the researchers able to go to the field along with the team for data collection, though all efforts were made in advance to train the team sufficiently.

The small sample and nature of this study is not, however, a major concern, as the research indicated that regional differences are less significant than urban-rural. In short, women throughout Pakistan work long days, performing many important tasks. A far larger and more "representative" study would thus have been unlikely to yield much more substantive information than was already collected.

Finally, there are some activities in which women engage that are not suitable for economic analysis, such as mother's love, care for children, breastfeeding, and the affection involved in caring for the sick or elderly family members. After all, this research is essentially an attempt to measure the immeasurable—the economic value of the work performed by women each day without pay. While we recognize that the results are limited in scope, we are confident that the magnitude of the figure is within the order of magnitude representing the real contributions of women, and trust that identifying the magnitude of women's contributions will contribute significantly to a greater valuing of women.

Research Results

Family composition

Most of the women participating in the study were aged between 20 and 39 (Table 1). Most (74.3%) were married and living in a nuclear family consisting of five or fewer family members (husband, wife and children). In nuclear families, the load on women was greater, whereas in extended families more women help with domestic chores so that the load on each single woman is less. This is particularly true where families cannot afford to hire household help. In addition to performing tasks in their homes, women also directly take part in economic activities, whether paid or not.

Table 1: Age of female participants

| Age of women interviewed (years) | N | % |
|----------------------------------|-----|------|
| Less than 20 | 13 | 2.0 |
| 20-29 | 225 | 35.7 |
| 30-39 | 247 | 39.1 |
| 40-49 | 109 | 17.3 |
| 50 and more | 37 | 5.9 |
| Minimum | 17 | |
| Maximum | 71 | |
| Average age | 30 | |

Unpaid work and the typical woman's day

From their teens into their fifties or sixties, Pakistani women perform a range of household work that includes cooking, washing, ironing, picking up and dropping off children, collecting firewood and other fuel, fetching water, shopping for groceries, helping their family in economic activities, and assisting children with their school work. Women report spending on average eight hours per day on these “major” household tasks. Beyond the so-called major tasks, there are a range of additional or “minor” tasks which, when added to the major ones, require on average sixteen hours per day to complete.

Furthermore, women often engage in more than one activity at any given time, for instance holding or feeding a baby while cooking, comforting a crying baby while helping another child with housework, or tending to the sick while doing the laundry. If each separate activity were taken into account, women's working hours would expand considerably. Meanwhile, there are many tasks which require that even full-time housewives leave the home to perform, yet which are linked to household tasks, such as buying groceries, fetching water or fuel, picking and dropping of kids at school, and paying utility bills. Ironically, having their women perform such tasks does not humiliate even those men who would feel ashamed to let their wives work outside the home for pay.

The distinction made here between “major” and “minor” (or supplemental) work, with very different results in terms of the hours required each day, is interesting and significant. When asked about the number of hours they spent on household work, women generally neglected to mention so many tasks that they *halved* the amount of time they calculated spending on “household” work. When the actual tasks engaged in by the average woman were accounted for, it became clear that rather than working an eight-hour day at home and in related tasks, women actually spent sixteen hours doing so. This difference suggests both the ways that women themselves undervalue or discount much of the work they do (the work, ironically, being invisible even to she who performs it) and the methodological difficulty in performing this research, since when asked what work they do, women are likely to significantly understate their responsibilities and the time the work takes.

Women begin their domestic working life in their teens, if not before, spending on average 1-2 hours a day on productive work. When they start their working lives, girls may still spend most of their time in studies, and simply provide help to their mothers. Once they marry, women spend 8-9 hours a day on major productive activities, and a further eight hours on overall work, until they reach the age of 60 or so. This includes about

two or three hours per day for meal preparation throughout their adult lives. Time spent on family care peaks for women in their 30s, with an average of one to two hours per day on pre-school child care and one hour per day on the care of school-going children. Women spend on average two hours a day cleaning the house. Other “minor” or “supplemental” activities fill out a woman’s 16-hour day.

The number of hours women work in the home grows rapidly in her twenties. From their thirties, when a considerable number of women join the labour market, they spend on average 8-9 hours on *major* household work (see above); those who do not have an additional job outside the home may spend twice that amount. The average eight to sixteen hours of productive work per day continues until a woman reaches her early 50s. After 50, employed women, who used to work for wages begin to retire, and the load of housework is reduced with the marriage of children. However, as shown in Table 2, women still spend on average eight to sixteen hours per day—depending on what they define as work—on productive activity until they reach the age of 60.

Women must also train their daughters in household work. Young girls begin learning such skills at an early age. Such training is another major task of women, which they never count as work.

Table 2: Time respondents say women spend daily in household work

| Time consumed in major and total domestic works | N | % |
|--|----------|------|
| Less than 5 hours | 56 | 10.2 |
| 5 – 9 hours | 369 | 67.1 |
| 10 – 15 hours | 124 | 22.5 |
| More than 15 hours | 1 | 0.2 |
| Minimum time | 1 hour | |
| Average time spent daily on “major” domestic work (prepare breakfast, lunch and dinner and tea with snacks for afternoon; wash dishes, clean house, wash and iron clothes) | 8 hours | |
| Average time for major <i>and</i> minor domestic work (through FGDs) (Visit the sick/relatives, take care of children, serve guests, take care of sick/elderly family members, pick up and drop off kids, help children in their studies, shop, participate in community work, collect firewood/fuel, fetch water, help in family earning, participate in household planning.) | 16 hours | |
| Please note that it takes women on average eight hours to complete the household tasks which are major and notable by all. But it takes them on average 16 hours per day when we take into account all the household work done by them. Sixteen hours of work and eight hours of sleep make a total of 24 hours of a day, indicating that women have no free time for leisure activities, and personal activities must be fit in around other work or through sleeping less. | | |

The research results suggest that Pakistani women spend far more time on domestic work than do women in some other countries. For instance, research shows that Korean women, on average, spend 3 hours 6 minutes per day on paid work while 3 hours 48 minutes is spent on unpaid work (these figures average working hours across all women, whether or not they work outside the home). Women in Pakistan, on the other hand, spend an average of 63 hours a week on domestic work; housewives in Australia do 50 hours of housework a week. Women in Canada logged an average of 50 hours of housework a week in 19783. As unpaid work is not economically evaluated, the contribution of Pakistani women to productive activity, despite the significant amount of time they spend on that work, is not socially acknowledged.

Typically in Pakistan, women are the first to rise in the morning and the last to go to bed at night. As shown in Table 3, half (54.7%) of female respondents in our research get up at 5:00 a.m. to start with housework, and most are presumably not finished with their work until late, going to sleep at 10:00 p.m. or later. Women do not have a single free day for themselves. The research results indicate that they work while other family members sleep, watch television, or are engaged in other leisure activities.

Table 3: Time respondents go to bed and wake up

| Sleeping and waking up time of women | No | % |
|--------------------------------------|-----|------|
| Sleeping time of respondent | | |
| 10 pm | 313 | 48.5 |
| 11 pm | 256 | 39.6 |
| 12 midnight | 73 | 11.3 |
| 1 am | 4 | 0.6 |
| Wakeup time of respondent | | |
| 4 am | 27 | 4.2 |
| 5 am | 352 | 54.7 |
| 6 am | 183 | 28.4 |
| 7 am | 54 | 8.4 |
| 8 am or later | 28 | 4.3 |

The survey revealed that, as shown in Table 4, almost half of the total female respondents undertook their household work alone, while a mere tenth were helped by a maid (which in turn required supervision of the maid's work). Almost no women (0.5%) reported that they received the help and support of their husband in household tasks. Employed women, if they spent on average eight hours a day on housework, bore a further burden due to time also spent on outside work and travel to and from their paying job.

Table 4: Availability of household help

| Help Available to the Females | No. | % |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|
| None | 280 | 44.1 |
| Maid | 79 | 12.4 |
| Husband | 3 | 0.5 |

³ New Internationalist, Issue 181, March 1988.

Education and improvements in female school attendance

International experience has demonstrated that educated girls are more likely than uneducated ones to be knowledgeable about their rights and thus to try to exercise them. They also may be more likely to question negative assumptions and be reluctant to accept everything imposed by their family, elders, or head of the family. But such girls receive little if any support from the social environment in Pakistan. Many families are of the view that there is little benefit in continuing girls' education, as girls would be unlikely to find a decent job, and are likely simply to marry, so that their earnings would not be perceived as a benefit to their parents. As soon as girls reach puberty, they typically stop going to school and their families marry them off. Even for girls with high ambitions, it is very difficult to find a decent job, so they are forced to accept household work as their sole or main occupation.

As shown in Table 5, one fourth of the female respondents were illiterate or had only basic literacy, and only one in ten had achieved higher education.

Table 5: Educational level of the female respondents

| Educational Background | No. | % |
|--|-----|------|
| Primary | 115 | 18.0 |
| Middle | 80 | 12.5 |
| Secondary | 106 | 16.6 |
| Higher secondary | 104 | 16.3 |
| Higher education | 68 | 10.7 |
| Functionally illiterate (can only write name or can only read and write) | 165 | 25.9 |

Among other criticisms the Pakistani education system faces is the gender disparity in enrollment levels. On the bright side, some progress has been made in recent years in trying to fix this problem. In 1990-91, the female to male ratio (F/M ratio) of enrolment was 0.47 for primary education. It reached 0.74 in 1999-2000, an increase of 57% within one decade. For the middle level of education it was 0.42 in the start of the decade and increased to 0.68 by the end of the decade, an improvement of almost 62%. In both cases, gender disparity decreased significantly, though relatively more rapidly at the middle level. Even so, gender disparity remained relatively high at middle level.

The gender disparity in enrolment in secondary education was 0.4 in 1990-91 and 0.67 in 1999-2000, for a decrease in disparity of 67%. At the college level, the figures were 0.50 in 1990-91 and 0.81 in 1999-2000, or a 64% decrease in gender disparity.

Leisure, rest and recreation

Housewives working 16 hours per day are unlikely to find much leisure time for themselves, and, even if they do avail some time, it is typically spent on activities again related to their home, such as sewing and embroidery, gardening or plantation, and helping children with their homework. Rarely do women have time for themselves to listen to music, watch television, or read.

Almost two-thirds of female respondents reported that they had some free time at home; the other third reported that they had no time for leisure activities (Table 6). Given women's use of free time to engage in other household work, the fairly high figure reported for free time may actually be misleading. Two-thirds of respondents said that they do not get any kind of vacation from domestic work.

Table 6: Do women have free time?

| | N | % | N | % |
|------------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|
| | Yes | | No | |
| Availability of leisure time | 398 | 62.4 | 240 | 37.6 |
| Vacation from domestic work | 212 | 35.3 | 388 | 64.7 |

Employment status and income

The formal employment status of interviewed women, as shown in Table 7, reveals that only one-fifth of the respondents held formal jobs outside the home. The term full-time housewife refers to women who work in their own home all day without pay. Although a full-time housewife does a number of tasks at home, her work is not counted as part of the gross national product and, since it is unpaid, is not recognized in the same way that paid work is. The majority of women in Pakistan (79.4%) are labelled as housewives. While women who work outside the home receive an average salary of Rs.6,000/?, the housewife receives nothing and is considered to contribute little or nothing to her family or society; she is also not entitled to any of the benefits that come with some paid employment.

Table 7: Employment status and income of respondents

| Professional details of women | N | % |
|--|------------|------|
| Formal employment status of women | | |
| Have formal job | 133 | 20.6 |
| Do not have formal job (full-time housewife) | 514 | 79.4 |
| Monthly income of working women (Rs.) | | |
| Less than 5,000 | 43 | 35.8 |
| 5,000 - 10,000 | 39 | 22.5 |
| 10,000 – 20,000 | 31 | 25.8 |
| More than 20,000 | 7 | 5.8 |
| Minimum | 700 Rs. | |
| Maximum | 30,000 Rs. | |
| Average income | 6,000 Rs. | |

Rural-urban differentials in terms of hours worked

When the results of the survey were analyzed, very little difference appeared regarding the time spent on household work in different parts of the country. The major difference in terms of specific tasks carried out was that between urban and rural areas. Urban women in different cities, and rural women in different villages, were seen to be engaged in somewhat similar tasks as their urban or rural counterparts, respectively. Women *everywhere* spent a large amount of time on housework, regardless of whether they also held a wage-paying job.

Evidence from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions showed that if we calculate the hours spent on all services rendered by housewives including both “major” and “additional” tasks, the amount of time spent working reaches 16-20 hours a day. The women themselves had no clear idea to what extent they

spent time doing household chores. Women provide their free care-giving as an obligation and duty, without keeping an account or even having much concept of the amount of time it consumes.

The economic value of women's work

Assigning an economic value to the work undertaken by women without pay is no easy task. For much of the work performed by women, a market value exists, but the range can be great, depending on the setting in which that task is performed—for instance, cooking in a cheap versus an expensive restaurant, or having one's clothes washed in a commercial laundry versus paying someone to do so at one's home. Perhaps universally, where work is usually done by women, the pay rate is lower than for work typically done by men. The figures given here are not meant to be exact equivalents of the salary that women would earn if they did household-related work for pay, but rather to indicate an approximate range of value that allows us to understand the magnitude of the value of women's work.

When looking at the various activities performed by women in and around the home, the greatest allocation of time—and thus possibly the highest in economic value—is for meal preparation, which takes 210 hours per month. (Other tasks which require less time would be paid at a far higher rate, such as nursing the sick and tutoring children.) Women spend on average a further sixty hours per month cleaning house, thirty hours per month washing dishes, twenty hours per month on clothes maintenance (including washing and ironing), and eight hours per month sewing.

Assigning average values for the work performed, the total value assessed through the study for cooking by urban household-based women, as shown in Table 8, is 1,200 Rs. per month. Washing and ironing of clothes was also calculated as 1,200 Rs., dishwashing 600 Rs., housecleaning 600 Rs., and making and mending clothes 400 Rs. per month for urban women. For rural women, the figures were 700 Rs. for cooking, 500 Rs. for washing and ironing of clothes, 400 Rs. for dishwashing, 400 Rs. for housecleaning, and 150 Rs. for making a suit of clothes.

For comparison, a restaurant cook may earn 6,000-7,000 Rs. per month. A typical woman cooks at least three meals per day and sometimes has to prepare snacks with tea. When a woman cooks, she keeps in mind the preferences and dietary requirements of family members. In addition, if guests arrive, she must prepare additional snacks or meals, depending on the situation. Thus, it can be said that households produce roughly 3-4 times more than the food service industry in cooking and three times more than the laundry industry in laundry, as clothing maintenance includes sorting of clothes, drying, folding, pressing and storing in the wardrobe of each family member, which together involve much physical work and time.

A maid that is hired for only a few hours earns 600- 800 Rs. per month per activity, such as for cleaning the house or washing dishes, with the amount variable by area of living, size of house and number of family members. A maid washes dishes once a day while a household-based woman does so three times a day. Yet women are likely to be discontented with the quality of the services they receive from paid servants, who are believed to be working with lack of interest, not with their heart.

Table 8: Economic value of unpaid work by activity

| Economic Value of Unpaid Work By Forms of Activities | | | | | |
|--|---------|-----------|------------|---|---|
| Work done by all women | Hrs/day | Hrs /week | Hrs /month | Value in urban society per month (In Rs.) | Value in rural society per month (In Rs.) |
| Prepare breakfast, lunch, dinner and afternoon tea with snacks | 7 | 49 | 210 | 1,200 | 700 |
| Wash dishes (3 times a day) | 1 | 7 | 30 | 600 | 400 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----|-------|------|
| Clean house (7 days a week) | 2 | 14 | 60 | 600 | 400 |
| Wash and iron clothes (2 days a week) | | 5 | 20 | 1,200 | 500 |
| Stitching/ sewing | | 2 | 8 | 400* | 150* |
| Total | 4,000 | 2,150 | | | |
| * amount is for per suit stitching | | | | | |

The maid servants who carry out household chores for pay in another woman's home are also themselves housewives, performing the same tasks in their own home for their own family members, but without compensation. That is, the woman carrying out similar chores in two places is salaried for a certain task in one home, and not paid for performing exactly the same task in her own home.

These figures indicate the significant economic value of unpaid work and the important role played by unpaid work in daily life, yet the figures fail to include many other important tasks carried out by women, such as raising and tutoring children, and caring for the ill and elderly. We found that if tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and making clothes were outsourced, then a single household in an urban area would pay rupees 4,000/month, equivalent to Pak. rupees 48,000 per year or roughly 800 USD⁴. The amount spent by a single rural household would be Pak rupees 2,150 per month, which is Rs. 25,800 per annum, equal to about 430 USD.

Urban-rural comparisons of types of work performed

The findings reveal that women in urban and rural society are engaged in very different kinds of “additional” activities (that is, additional to the work of cooking, cleaning, and caring for the home), and that wage rates for rural women are lower than for urban. One such difference is in the area of food shopping, which is more likely to be carried out by urban women because markets are far away from the village area (so that male family members usually do the food shopping), while the responsibility tends to fall on urban women who either go to the markets or purchase groceries from roaming vendors who pass through their streets or living areas. Rural women, meanwhile, spend a large amount of time producing (as opposed to buying) food, working on average 120 hours a month in the fields. The different kinds of work done by urban and rural women are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Additional work carried out by women in urban and rural communities

| Additional Work Done by Women in Urban Society | | | |
|--|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Work done by all women | Hrs/day | Hrs /week | Hrs/month |
| Pick and drop off kids from Schools | 1 | 7 | 30 |
| Help children in their studies | 2 | 14 | 60 |
| Shopping | | | 10 |
| Gardening | | 2 | 8 |
| Additional Work Done by Women in Rural Society | | | |
| Work done by all women | Hrs/day | Hrs /week | Hrs/month |
| Collect firewood/fuel | 1 | 7 | 30 |
| Fetch water | 1 | 7 | 30 |
| Do work in fields | 4 | 21 | 120 |

⁴ Exchange rate is Rs. 60= 1USD

| | | | |
|--|-----|-----|----|
| Help in family earning | 2 | 14 | 60 |
| Grow vegetables | | 1 | 4 |
| Gardening | 0.5 | 3.5 | 14 |
| Raise animals (cows, goats, hen, etc.) | 0.5 | 3.5 | 14 |

In urban areas, women typically must pick up and drop off children at school. If someone is paid to do so, or to garden, the household's available budget would decrease. Yet when a housewife carries out these same services, she is not compensated; rather she renders her free services to amplify the budget of the family. Picking up and dropping off children typically occupies thirty hours, helping children with their studies sixty hours, shopping ten hours, and gardening eight hours per month.

In rural areas the "additional" activities in which women are engaged include collecting firewood and fetching water, growing vegetables, raising and caring for domestic animals, and working in the fields. The largest expenditure of time is for working in fields, at 120 hours per month and helping in earning, at 60 hours per month. Though they work in fields, help in earning and taking care of chickens, goats, cows, etc., when women put livestock up for sale, they give the money to their husband for the family's use, which means that the income earned is considered to be a part of the husband's contribution to the family, rather than the woman's.

Tasks that elude economic valuation

There are certain tasks undertaken by women for which monetary value cannot be assigned. But these services provided by women are also important and add a number of hours to the weekly and monthly routine of housewives. Nobody would or could provide, even for pay, the affection that mothers freely give their family members, or the attention they devote to the raising of their children.

Table 10: The tasks for which monetary value cannot be assigned

| Work done by women --- monetary value cannot be assigned | | | |
|---|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Work done by all women | Hrs/day | Hrs/week | Hrs/month |
| Visit sick people /relatives | | | 5 |
| Visit elder relatives | | | 5 |
| Take care of children | 2 | 14 | 60 |
| Take care of husband | 1 | 7 | 30 |
| Prepare children for school | 1 | 7 | 30 |
| Take care of sick/eldest family members | 1 | 7 | 30 |
| Serve Guest | | | 5 |
| Work Done by Urban Women | | | |
| Participate in community work | | | 10 |
| Participate in household planning | | | 20 |
| Help in family earning | 2 | 14 | 60 |
| Work Done by Rural Women | | | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|----|
| Participate in community work | | | 10 |
| Participate in household planning | | | 20 |

Women also assume responsibility for caring for sick family members. If a nurse was hired, the family would have to pay 600-800 Rs. per day for the services. Although a nurse is professionally trained, she would not perform her tasks with the same affection and loving care as would a relative. Other tasks that cannot be assigned monetary value include taking care of older family members, serving guests, teaching children, and visiting sick relatives.

Children require the attention of their mothers, which takes about 180 hours per month. Young children require almost constant attention; even when asleep, women are conscious of the upcoming needs and requirements of the baby such as feeding and cleaning, and frequently must get up during the night to clean and comfort the baby. No paid servants or day care institutions asking for an amount of 1,000-2,000 Rs. would look after a child with the same love and care as would a mother.

We can say that it is unfeasible to allocate an economic value to such activities, and any attempt to do so would undervalue the genuine contribution women make throughout their lifetime. Moreover, we do not consider it to be true that it is only those activities that come with a price label that have worth; in some senses, assigning an economic value to such work can demean it. But it can be easier for many to understand the value of money than such intangibles as loving care. Therefore, while avoiding the ridiculous process of allocating a monetary worth to women's love and care, we have attempted to estimate reasonable market value for other tasks carried out by women in order to establish the magnitude of women's economic contribution to their families, to society, and to the country.

Family decision-making

Reproductive health research in South Asia has considered women's involvement in decision-making to be an important aspect of their household position. The 2001 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) asked women whether they were involved in decision-making in four areas: the kinds of food to cook each day, daily household purchases, their own health care, and large household purchases. More than 80% of DHS respondents reported deciding what food to cook either alone or in conjunction with another family member. More than 40% of women reported being involved in decisions on daily household purchases. These data are indicative of women's influence over routine household activities. In contrast, women's participation in decisions on their own health care and on large purchases was less common. Discussion of family planning was more common among women whose husbands had a secondary or higher education (60%) than among those whose spouses had no education (42%) or only primary schooling (51%). Therefore, it is again apparent to what extent education is important for the welfare of a country.

The findings of the present study confirm that the majority of housewives do have the opportunity to discuss important issues related to family with their husbands, but still have lesser decision-making power at home. The findings revealed that only 12% of female respondents discussed "everything" with their husband, 47% reported that they discussed only important issues, and for another 30%, the husbands decided everything on their own.

Table 11: Discussion over family matters/decision-making

| Influence in decisions related to family matters | N | | % | |
|--|-----|-----|------|------|
| | YES | NO | | |
| Discussion with the husband for important matters | 248 | 114 | 47.0 | 21.6 |
| Education of children | 330 | 277 | 54.4 | 45.6 |
| Marriage of children | 289 | 294 | 49.6 | 50.4 |
| Spending of money | 300 | 330 | 47.6 | 52.4 |

| | | | | |
|---|-----|------|-----|------|
| Birth of children | 265 | 42.1 | 199 | 31.6 |
| Intercourse with husband | 253 | 40.4 | 207 | 33.1 |
| Choice of having their own name after marriage | 207 | 33.1 | 253 | 40.4 |
| Kinship rights (<i>warasat</i>) | 242 | 39.7 | 368 | 60.3 |
| | | N | | % |
| Discuss everything with husband | | 30 | | 12.1 |
| Husband decides everything on his own | | 35 | | 30.7 |

The types of issues women mentioned discussing before making a decision included child birth—that is, whether to have more children or not, as well as where to give birth—children’s education, purchasing or selling of property, spending of money, their children’s marriage, and exchange of gifts with relatives. Consider the last, seemingly trivial point. A woman has to keep in mind what kind of relation exists with relatives and what is the current budget to buy gifts on different occasions. The planning regarding this state of affairs, visit to a market, purchasing of the gift, and attending the occasion all apparently seems to be a simple task of no importance. Yet it is representative of the great contribution women make in so many ways, and the thought and careful planning that go into managing a household and social relations through which the woman upholds the respect and sustains the relationship of extended families (including blood relations of both parents and the husband). All this adds to the time taken by the woman to render her free care-giving services.

Perceived importance of women’s work

For women working for pay outside the home, both they and their family members recognize the importance of their work. Their work is recognized because they are making a direct financial contribution to family income. Meanwhile, such contributions made by the women working full-time in their homes are not formally recognized. Although their work has a great importance for the survival and well-being of the family, it is given less importance and is considered customary, obligatory, and taken for granted. Despite this, as shown in Table 12, the survey revealed that 92.5% of female respondents associated economic value with their domestic work, while only 4% attached no economic value to household tasks. Thus, Pakistani women are at least nominally aware of the value of the work they do and give importance to that work by relating a monetary value to it.

Table 12: Economic value and importance

| Economic value and importance of domestic work | N | | % | |
|---|-----|------|----|------|
| | YES | NO | | |
| Respondent associates some economic value with her domestic work | 344 | 92.5 | 15 | 4.0 |
| Respondent rates domestic work as important | 544 | 86.3 | 85 | 13.5 |

The respondents provided a number of reasons to explain the importance of the work they do; for instance, that it involves labour and brings skills, a dirty home is irritating, they do not feel satisfied until the household work is completed, and it saves money (Table 13). The most prevalent reason for considering the work valuable seems to be saving money, as one fourth of the women surveyed reported that domestic work saves money for various activities of the home.

Table 13: Financial worth of the domestic work

| Financial worth of the domestic work | N | % |
|--------------------------------------|-----|------|
| Increase income/money/family budget | 44 | 6.8 |
| Save money | 171 | 26.4 |

Economic value of women’s unpaid work in Pakistan

Around the world, and under direct influence of the United Nations System of National Accounts, governments typically underrate the value of women’s unpaid work, excluding most of women’s labour from GDP and other measures of national wealth. As a result, women come to be viewed as a net drain on, rather than serving as a significant contributor to, the national economy. Many men are paid far less than would be feasible if men in turn had to pay women for all the domestic work they do. In that sense, women could be seen as subsidizing salaries throughout the labour force, by contributing their domestic work for free rather than demanding a wage.

The Federal Government estimated a massive expansion in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Pakistan in five years as the national economy has been showing strong signs of a minimum of seven per cent growth per annum. In 2003-04, the GDP of Pakistan was calculated at \$94.80 billion, which grew to \$126.836 billion for 2006 and will inflate to \$132.95 billion by the financial year 2008-09, provided the economic growth remains at the current rate of at least seven percent.

According to the calculations made in this study, shown in Table 14, women in Pakistan contribute an additional \$368.503 billion per year to the country through their unpaid work. Although we do not consider GDP a particularly realistic or helpful measure of social or economic well-being⁵, it is significant to note that in Pakistan, according to our estimates, GDP would almost quadruple if women’s unpaid work was added. Our estimate of the value of women’s work, at over \$368 billion, is **2.77 times** higher than the estimated GDP of \$133 billion. While this may seem quite high, consider the following:

- a) GDP excludes most of women’s work, so if women’s work overall were valued at the same rate as men’s, GDP would at least double.
- b) Women on average work 16 hours per day, which is presumably more than the average figure for men, so their production could well greatly exceed that generated by men.
- c) Women are responsible for providing some of the most basic and essential goods and services, which should be valued at a higher rate than unnecessary or harmful activities, which constitute part of work traditionally included in GDP.

Table 14: Contribution of Pakistani women to GDP

| Contribution of all Pakistani women to GDP through domestic work | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Total GDP 2008-2009 (expected) | \$132.955 billion |
| Number of Pakistani females 18-64 years (2006 est.) | 46,062,933 |
| Average days worked per year (365-holidays) | 365 |
| Average hours worked per day | 16 |

⁵ GDP suffers from a range of problems. As mentioned, it fails to include most work performed by women without pay. It does not take into account natural resources or the value of the environment. And measures of GDP per capita are completely meaningless, as they do not distinguish between fairly equitable and extremely skewed distributions of wealth. For more on this subject, see among others the works of Marilyn Waring.

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Average yearly salary per woman (monthly spending if work outsourced x 12) | \$800 |
| Average annual contribution for all women across country (average annual salary x total no. of females) | \$368.503 billion |

Females in Pakistan contribute to the family budget as well as making a major contribution to the economy of the country. Men are able to engage in paid labour because of all the work that women do without pay: cleaning the home, washing clothes, preparing food, washing dishes, and engaging in all the tasks involved in bearing and raising children. Without the work of Pakistani women, businesses and other employers would have to pay a far higher salary to men to allow them to hire someone to do the domestic work without which they could not go to work, and families—and hence society and the nation—would not function.

But just a reminder, in case the focus on economics has caused our readers to believe that women’s most important contribution is an economic one: societies cannot function with only the economic side of life. Equally or more important is the caring that goes into maintaining a household and nurturing its members. While it may remain an open question as to whether money can buy love, it certainly cannot buy the affection with which women tend to their family members. Without the daily tasks of caring, nurturing, and supporting others, society would crumble. The point of assigning an economic value is not to undervalue what really counts—but to remind ourselves that, even in the “male” world of economics, women make an enormous and essential, if usually unrecognized, contribution to the world.

Conclusions

This study aimed to raise attention to the currently invisible work carried out by the large population of household-based women throughout Pakistan. The researchers hope that in doing so, more attention will be given to the important contributions made by women on a daily basis, and as a result, that the status of women will improve. If women were valued more highly, the treatment of women in homes by their family members, as well as by officials outside the home, would improve, contributing to a more gender-equal society as well as a wealthier nation—in different senses of the word. It would also help people to understand that government expenditures on women are not an expense but in fact an investment, resulting in significant financial as well as other yields to individuals, families, society and the nation.

Women make a massive contribution to the economy of Pakistan through their free care-giving services. It is considered to be their responsibility to run the home and to care for children and often the elderly. At the same time a woman is expected to be a faithful and devoted companion to her husband. Although the housewife does a number of tasks at home, unfortunately her work is not counted as a part of GDP, and since it is unpaid and “voluntary⁶”, it is not documented as remunerated work. Yet, when looked at in a different way, women’s unpaid work represents a financial support to the entire economy.

It is because of the support of women to their husbands or males of the family that males are able to take on salaried work and jobs. Women thus indirectly and directly provide financial assistance and the basic necessities of life to their family. Through the work of women in the home, they help to save a lot of money for other needs or for future requirements, and much of what they do is too valuable to be assigned a price tag. All housewives thus contribute to the family budget and national wealth of the country.

The calculation of the economic value of women’s work is complicated and difficult, and no “right answer” is attainable. We attempted, through this research, to make a calculation of what women’s work is worth in economic terms. We see that if the household work is out-sourced it would be very expensive, and it can be considered as a rough estimate of what is saved by the women of Pakistan and contributed to their families.

⁶ “Voluntary” is a misleading term when applied to women’s work. Consider the question of why women do not go on strike to demand better working conditions in their homes, or more respect for their contributions. How long would a woman last in a dirty home, faced by hungry children and a wailing baby?

Through the results we can see that women across the country are contributing \$368.503 billion to the national economy of Pakistan.

Calculating the economic value of the unpaid work performed by women, and adding that value to measures of national wealth such as GDP, would not only significantly increase the sum represented by GDP (in this case, GDP would more than triple), but would increase the value or meaning of the figure and would boost the significance by including a long-neglected element, the unpaid work of women. As a result, the standing of women in society would likely increase, and the treatment of women by their family members and society could be expected to improve. It would also help to recognize that government's outlays on women are not charity but rather beneficial investments.

The research also reveals that the women of Pakistan attach monetary value to their domestic work. In the present study, we tried to appreciate the scale of women's contribution to families, society, and the nation's economy through their inexorable hard work and precious contributions.

Suggestions & Recommendations

The family is the basic unit of society, and women play a critical role by contributing to its welfare and to the development of the society as a whole. However, the importance of women's role in the family and society is neither fully recognized nor appreciated. Socially prescribed roles of women become a basis for discrimination and lack of participation of women in the society. Pakistani females lack basic rights to education, health care, essential nutrition, and, as adults, to decision making within the family and community.

At the personal level, perhaps the first thing that needs to be done is to change the way we rear our children. We must provide our daughters with opportunities to develop their decision-making skills and leadership capacities, and we must train our sons to respect their sisters as equals. In particular, we must ensure that daughters have equal access to the same quantity, quality, and type of food and education as sons. Since this is a long-term objective, we must also take immediate steps to place more women in decision-making and leadership positions and, at the same time, provide them with the necessary catch-up training and experience in order to be effective.

However, as the experience of capable women decision makers has demonstrated, these measures alone will not be sufficient. We also need to address the institutional context of decision making and leadership to create more women- and family-friendly institutions and organizational cultures. Some industrial countries—mostly in Europe—have already begun slowly to move in this direction, reducing working hours, introducing flexi time and career structures for part-time workers (most of whom are women) and providing government-subsidized or work-based child care, maternity and parental leave and emergency leave for caregivers. We also need to ensure that there are women in senior positions able to act as role models and mentors for young women and to establish women's networks that can support women in the same way that conventional male-dominated networks support the career development and promotions of men. In addition, institutions need to re-examine their organizational culture and work practices. Simply put, we need a society that values the caring for others at least as highly as working for an income, so women working in and outside the home will receive support and be valued.

The role of media can be enhanced as a means of information and education on women's issues and for a positive portrayal of women. Awareness campaigns can be initiated in the media and in schools to promote the positive benefits of a more equal sharing of responsibilities, decision-making and power between women and men inside and outside of the home, thereby beginning a transformation to more gender-sensitive men and caring fathers and husbands, and women more capable and confident in assuming new responsibilities.

In seeking to improve the condition of Pakistani women, the importance of education cannot be ignored. Women have a basic, often unrecognized, but significant role in the education of their children. The family is the first tier in the process of social upbringing, and the mother plays a vital role in the moral and civic upbringing of her children, as well as often helping children with the more mundane task of homework. Education is thus vital for women so that they can teach their children the difference between right and wrong and mould their children into good citizens. All these responsibilities fall on the shoulders of so-called

uneducated women, and women who devote themselves to doing the best by their children may be considered to be inactive—not working—if they do not in addition have a paying job outside the home. The education system of Pakistan therefore needs to be improved for the females of Pakistan. According to the latest census conducted in 1998, the female literacy rate is 32.6%. The participation rate of females has increased at the primary level, but high drop-out rates beyond primary school persist as a result of lack of opportunities, mobility issues, and traditions and cultural norms constraining the access of females to higher education. Through education women would be in a better position to gain awareness concerning their rights, could learn to be assertive, know the importance of decision-making, understand the issues of family and society and address them effectively, support their children in their school activities and teach them about rights and ethics.

Regarding paid work, women's capacity to earn can be increased by improving the availability of opportunities for women in remunerated employment. Equal remunerations for men and women for equal or similar work should be ensured. Many studies show a positive relationship between income and psychological well-being. At a theoretical level, wealth should predict higher psychological subjective well-being (PSWB) because greater resources allow people a greater ability to achieve some of their goals, and also because high income confers higher status, security and the chance to actualize one's abilities. This of course does *not* mean that money buys happiness, but being lifted out of insecurity can certainly reduce misery. A job outside the home presents an attractive alternative to dependence on others, giving the woman a sense of purpose and identity separate from her role as wife and mother. Discussions with the women participants suggest that working women have greater psychological health, well-being and self-esteem than housewives who have never worked outside the home and working women who have worked less than one year.

Measures can be taken to make the workplace conducive for the women worker, so that more females can join paid work and enjoy mental and psychological wellbeing, while still valuing women who do not work outside the home. Significantly, this should be a choice, rather than a decision forced on women by family or society disapproval.

Special courses can be conducted for women in entrepreneurial skills to assist them to establish their own small-scale enterprise at home or outside the home. An important caveat here is about the danger of burdening women—a burden they might happily accept in return for greater job opportunities, but one which takes its toll on women and families. As women enter the formal workforce in larger numbers, a more equal sharing of household responsibilities will become even more important. The system in some European countries of a maximum 36-hour workweek for *everyone* could be a model, encouraging both women and men to experience sufficient time with their families as well as to enjoy the benefits of the formal working world. The extremely low figure for men helping their wives with household work demonstrated from this research is another matter which should be addressed, through positive campaigns seeking to encourage men to take a more significant role in the family—and highlighting the advantages that would accrue to men if they did so. Greater involvement of men in domestic tasks would decrease the heavy load on women, raise men's understanding and compassion for domestic matters, and increase their involvement with their children.

Many men believe that women have little value and are just a burden for whom they have to provide food, clothing, shelter and security. Similar views may be held by government officials in determining budgets for women's issues. It is vital that we recognize that expenditures on women—whether in the home or at the national level—are not a drain or expense, but rather an investment in the economic and social welfare of the country. Additional research should be conducted in this regard to raise the awareness of people that women contribute to national wealth by taking care of their homes, saving their family money, giving free care service and supporting their husbands in a multitude of ways.

Government should recognize, count and make visible women's real economic contributions in both formal and informal sectors of the economy. For the development and empowerment of women, government should:

- Ensure effective implementation and enforcement of existing rights;

- Remove inequities and imbalances in all sectors of socio-economic development and focus on women's equal access to all development, benefits and social services;
- Safeguard and ensure the protection of women's human rights including economic, political and social rights of women in rural and urban areas, among those with and without formal employment, for young and elderly women of all abilities and income groups; and
- Provide women and girls access to quality health care services, to enjoy full health, including reproductive and mental health.

Women, whether working full-time in the home or outside as well, have little free time. Studies that have looked at the effect of leisurely pursuits on brain health have found that intellectual activities, such as career-related and educational work, are associated with a lower risk for Alzheimer's disease. Leisure time physical activity, in turn, leads to an improved lipid profile and reduction of obesity, which is a major atherosclerosis risk factor. The results of this study suggest the need to implement community-based interventions for promoting women's leisure time physical activity and maintaining and expanding existing facilities such as parks and pleasant walking paths. Awareness about the importance of leisure time activities should be made public. Education for leisure and enabling of women and girls to participate in leisure activities should include all the stages of life, from early childhood to old age, and should be an element in programs of formal and informal systems of social influence. Education for leisure should aim at enriching the knowledge and skills of those to whom it is addressed and at enabling them to use their leisure time in order to improve their quality of life. Culture, sport and social and recreational activities should be available without cost in readily accessible places throughout the country, and efforts made to ensure that women and girls can safely access and utilize such places. One of the priorities of state social policy should be to enable individuals to utilize the full potential of leisure, improve their quality of life during free time and learn values important for their own intellectual, psychological, physical and social development.

Special attention should be given to programs and possibilities for leisure activities for particular women such as the disabled, women who work in difficult conditions or who do monotonous work, the unemployed, retired and housewives. Women would thus be more able to enjoy their life physically and psychologically, and reap a little of the countless returns due to them for their contributions to others.

Whether Pakistani women work exclusively in the home or elsewhere as well, they labour hard from dawn to dark. As a basic human rights issue, their prevailing conditions should be improved and measures taken to make apparent their "invisible" work and the contribution they render for the betterment of family and country. Their rights should be protected regarding access to justice, education, and decision-making in family and community. Opportunities should be made available to them for development of their skills and potentialities in all spheres of life, especially social, economic and personal. Like all human beings, women require rest, vacation, and free time to partake in leisure activities and thus enjoy physical and mental health. Women also deserve respect as fully contributing, valuable citizens without whom no nation could survive.

Finally, this research—and report—is not "just" about the economic value of women's work, but also about the role of women in society. Women are too often viewed as mere help-mates, beings of low education incapable of making significant contributions. Yet all around us is evidence that the contrary is true. For instance, consider that a pragmatic, efficiency-based argument for women's participation in decision-making and leadership starts from recognition that women and men have different needs, interests, and priorities arising from their specific roles and situations. Even when men are aware of and seek to represent this difference, they lack information in the same way that mainstream decision-makers are unable to capture the perspectives and needs of minority cultures or the poor. This failure to incorporate women's concerns into decision-making represents a major loss for society as a whole. Women's needs, interests, and concerns are not just those of women themselves, but reflect their primary roles as mothers, wives, and caregivers. Therefore, incorporating a woman's perspective into decision-making should result in better decisions that more adequately reflect the needs and interests of children and families (including the males).

If women were more involved in household decision-making and had more control over financial resources, they would be more likely to use health services and, hence, to have better health outcomes. In addition, since many women are mainly at home and closer to children than men, they are likely to have a better sense of what is suitable to the specific situation, what are the expectations of children, what value they attach to different things, what is best for family, what family members require urgently, and for what a little wait would make no difference. Simply put, a society cannot thrive while ignoring the value and contributions of half of its members.

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**A Study on the Economic Valuation
of
*Women's Unpaid Work in Kathmandu Valley***

Draft Report

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Acknowledgement

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the Resource Centre for Primary Health Care (RECPHEC) for providing me and my research team this invaluable opportunity to conduct research on the topic entitled "**A Study on the Economic Valuation of Women's Unpaid Work in Kathmandu Valley**". The research team, comprising of myself, Mr. Dibya Giri and Ms. Subarna Shrestha, have tried to put up our best effort in completing the assignment. We consider it a great opportunity and pleasure to work with RECPHEC.

I would like to thank Mr. Shanta Lall Mulmi, the Executive Director of RECPHEC for providing us constant guidance and encouragement. I would also like to extend thanks to the renowned academic and human rights activist Prof. Dr. Mathura Prasad Shrestha for his valuable suggestions in completing the study.

My research team members Mr. Giri, Ms. Shrestha and enumerators Ms. Sita Khanal, Ms. Shristi Shrestha and Mr. Rajendra Giri also deserve thanks for their unstinted cooperation.

Last but not least I would also like thank Mr. Kapil Shrestha for editing the report and for lending useful of assistance.

Finally, I would like to thank all the respondents and community members in the research area for their warmth and openhearted cooperation.

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December 2007

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Chapter - I | 4 |
| 1. BACKGROUND | 4 |
| 1.2 Significance of the Study | 5 |
| 1.3 Objectives of the Study | 5 |
| 1.4 Methodology of the Study..... | 6 |
| 1.5 Limitations of the Study..... | 7 |
| Chapter - II | 7 |
| 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 7 |
| 2.2 Introduction..... | 7 |
| 2.3 Women in Decision-Making | 8 |
| Chapter - III | 9 |
| 3.1 ANALYSIS OF DATA | 9 |
| 3.3 Ethnicity of the Respondents..... | 10 |
| 3.4 Type of the Family..... | 10 |
| 3.5 Religion of the Respondents | 10 |
| 3.6 Average Monthly Income of the Household | 11 |
| 3.7 Occupation of Respondents..... | 11 |
| 3.8 Educational Background of Respondents..... | 11 |
| 3.9 Wake-up and Bed Time of the Respondents | 12 |
| 3.10 Lending Helping Hand for Housework | 12 |
| 3.11 Respondents View about Economic Value of Work | 12 |
| 3.12 Leisure Time for Women..... | 13 |
| 3.13 Non-daily Household Work | 13 |
| 3.14 Time Spent by Women on Different Household Activities..... | 14 |
| 3.15 Estimated Economic Value of Household Work..... | 14 |
| Chapter - IV | 16 |
| 4.1 Findings of Focus Group Discussions..... | 16 |

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 4.3 | Recommendations..... | 17 |
| Chapter -V | | 18 |
| 5.1 | CONCLUSIONS..... | 18 |
| Reference | | 19 |

Summary

All over the world, women's work has remained largely unrecognized and grossly undervalued. Long hours of women's work, which is mainly confined to household activities like cooking, cleaning, washing, fetching water, child rearing, feeding cattle and involvement in community work, are not considered as economically significant. UNDP agrees that the conventional 'narrow' and 'restricted definition' of economic activities has prevented the society from giving women's work its proper recognition and reward. Therefore, mostly men are considered as breadwinners and women as dependents.

Of late, there is increasing demand for recognizing the unpaid domestic and care-giving activities as market transactions at the prevailing wages. According to a UNDP estimate, women contribute about 67% or almost \$ 11 trillion worth non-mentioned or "invisible" output of the total global output of \$16 trillion for the same.

It is widely assumed that until and unless women's economic contribution is duly recognized the true impact of women's labour will neither be ever fully recognized and compensated, nor will it be possible to design development strategies accurately reflecting women's needs and aspirations. Women have thus long been advocating for the use of gender-disaggregated statistics to get a true picture of their economic contributions, including in the calculation of each country's GDP.

The main purpose of this research was to obtain a realistic picture of the economic value attached to women's unpaid work in and around the home, include unpaid farm work for the family, in Nepal. It can be hoped that dissemination of findings related to the tremendous economic contributions made by women through 'invisible', 'neglected', and 'silent' household work will assist in enhancing in the overall social status of women and their access to resources and opportunities. In addition, the research is expected to lead to a process of critically reviewing the conventional practice of the system of national accounting (SNA) which is used in the assessment of GDP.

In addition to a survey questionnaire, this study also utilises focus-group discussions and an extensive literature review. The study sites selected are three village development committees (Ramkot, Imadol and Machhegaun) located in Kathmandu metropolitan city, Lalitpur sub-metropolitan city, and Kirtipur municipality.

As household work clearly involves a certain level of technical knowledge, the work has been categorized as semi-skilled. Section 21 (1) of the Labour Act of Nepal Government, 2048 has fixed the minimum rate for semi-skilled work per month per person as Rs.2250. Similarly, the minimum wage rate for a grown-up labourer per day per person is Rs.125 and Rs.100 for the under-aged labourer. The researcher is of the opinion that these wage rates are minimal, insensitive and inapplicable in calculating women's economic and social contributions. But even applying these wage rates across women throughout Nepal would at least provide a low estimate of the type of contribution that women make to the country through their unpaid labours.

A key finding of the study is that the average working hour of the housewives per day is 7 hours in urban area and 9 hours in rural areas. But the time spent by the housewives in numerous weekly, monthly and occasional works considerably increase the women's workload, which give her very little time for rest.

CHAPTER - I

1. BACKGROUND

It has been widely felt that in spite of the enactment of numerous gender sensitive international human rights instruments and repeated commitments and pledges made by the governments and international agencies for over the last 60 years, gender justice and gender equality still remain a distant goal. Almost all over the world, women are still not only widely discriminated against but are also denied their social, political, economic and other rights. The optimism generated by mega events like the Fourth World Conference on Women 1995 in Beijing has failed to make significant headway in redressing the issue of structural injustice, inequality and discrimination against women, even more than twelve years after the event.

Nevertheless, of late, owing to the global resurgence of the women's movement, which is aimed at transforming deeply rooted patriarchal social, political and economic structures, there has been an unprecedented increase in the awareness and sensitization of various issues affecting women's equality and empowerment. The success of the women's rights movement in forcefully asserting equal rights for women has, indeed, forced many countries, including Nepal, to grudgingly recognize the legal and political rights of women. Women have also compelled the countries and societies to re-evaluate and reform their laws, policies, plan and programs in more women-friendly manner.

An important area where women have been vociferously demanding the reviewing of the society's perception and attitude is in the practice of grossly undervaluing and neglecting the economic contributions which they render to the society. Women, especially Nepali and other South Asian women, are forced to endure extreme economic discrimination which in turn reinforces other types of discrimination. The economic invisibility of women is one of the fundamental causes of continuing inequality and marginalization of women in these countries.

A startling revelation emerges in an article titled "Women often not paid for work", citing India's most trusted behavioral survey, the National Family Health Survey III. According to the article, women are often forced to work without pay: according to the article, one in four women did not receive any payment for their work.¹ By contrast, 92% of the men earned cash for their work and only 5% did not get paid.²

Female labour is so cheap that a manager of a plant in Malaysia has been reported to say that "one male worker working one hour produces enough to pay the wages of ten women workers working one shift plus all the costs of materials and transport."³ Several years ago in Sri Lanka, it was reported that garment workers, who must sit in the same position on a three legged stool for 12 hours a day, six days a week, were paid only \$5 a week.⁴

Women are also preferred by some employers for other reasons. Multinational companies are reported to prefer a workforce that is docile, easily manipulated, and willing to do boring, repetitive assembly work. Women, they claim, are the perfect employees, with their 'natural patience' and 'manual dexterity'. As a personnel manager of an assembly plant in Taiwan says, "young male workers are too restless and impatient to be doing monotonous work with no career value. If displeased, they sabotage the machines and even threaten the foremen. But girls, at most, they cry a little."⁵ The same may be said of Nepali women, who have perhaps too much patience and typically exist in a culture of silence. They hardly speak out about their problems and rights, although they make significant contributions to home and their community. But more recently, some women have started to speak out demanding recognition of their household work in economic terms.

As in Nepal, all over the world, women's work has remained largely unrecognized and undervalued. Long hours of women's work, which is mainly confined to household activities ranging from cooking, cleaning, washing, and child rearing to community work, are not considered as economically significant. UNDP agrees that the conventional "narrow" and "restricted definition" of economic activities has prevented society from giving women's work its proper recognition and reward.⁵ Thus, mostly men are spoken of as the breadwinners and women as dependents.

¹ "Women Often not Paid for Work", in The National Family Health Survey III, India.

² Times of India, 14 October 2007.

³ International Labour Report, July-August, 1984.

⁴ Kumudini Rosa, in "Industrial Women Workers in Asia, ISIS International Journal, 1985.

⁵ ISIS Journal, 1985

⁵ HDR Report, UNDP, 1995.

Time use data from research studies undertaken in several countries have conclusively established women's proportionally larger contributions to the household, compared to their male counterparts. For example, a review of seven African and Asian countries, including Nepal and Bangladesh, found that women's contribution to household work ranged from 2.5 times to 14 times more than men. Such non-recognition and neglect of the immense value of women's work has badly affected women's overall status in the society, their self confidence and their entitlements to wealth, income and other benefits like access to banking loans and participation in decision-making bodies.⁶

Hence, there is increasing demand for recognizing these unpaid activities as market transactions at the prevailing wages. The UNDP report also estimates that women contribute about 67% or almost \$11 trillion worth of non-monetized or "invisible" output out of the total global output of \$16 trillion.⁷

Until that happens, the true impact of women's labour will neither be fully recognized nor compensated, nor will development strategies accurately account for women's work or their role. As such, women have long been advocating for the use of gender-disaggregated statistics to obtain a true picture of their economic contribution.

Table 1.1: Progress in Gender Inequality in Nepal

| Descriptions | Male | Female |
|-------------------------------|------|--------|
| 1. Labour Force Participation | 67.6 | 48.9 |
| 2. Literacy Rate | 65.5 | 42.8 |
| 3. Infant Mortality Rate | 71.4 | 70.8 |
| 4. Child Mortality Rate | 26.6 | 35.6 |
| 5. Life Expectancy at Birth | 60.1 | 60.7 |
| 6. Elected in Local Bodies | 80.7 | 19.3 |
| 7. Professional Jobs | 81.2 | 18.8 |
| 8. Administrative Jobs | 87.3 | 12.7 |
| 9. Share in Income | 70.0 | 30.0 |

Sources: Census Survey 2001, CBS, HMG; Nepal HDR 2005, UNDP.

The enhancement in valuation of women's work will obviously help women in getting established as an important player in the economic scene which is likely to have further multiplier effect in improving their overall contribution and participation in economic as well other activities.

The present micro-level study is based on the survey of peoples' attitude and perceptions related to women's unpaid work and their contribution to the family and the country. The study has been carried out in different locations in the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Little research on women's work has been conducted to date in Nepal. Even the need for conducting such a study has seldom been realized by either research agencies or NGOs working in Nepal. It is hoped that the study will help to attract the attention of policy planners, decision makers, INGOs, NGOs, UN agencies and researchers to the neglected issue of women's economic contributions to society.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to advocate for the recognition of the economic valuation and importance of women's unpaid work. Other objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify indicators that will help in assigning a reasonable economic value to women's unpaid work.
2. To help generate social awareness on the critical contribution made by women in society by highlighting the economic aspect of women's domestic and community work.

⁶ Human Development Report in South Asia, 2000.

⁷ Ibid, 1995.

3. To explore alternatives and mechanisms to reduce disparities between men and women in sharing of burdens and benefits.
4. To make a strategy to draw the attention of policy makers, planners and economists on the issue so that they can appreciate and recognize women's economic contributions in formulating national policies, strategies and budgets.
5. To demonstrate best practices/models for women's empowerment.

1.4 Methodology of the Study

This research attempts to study the current knowledge and opinion of the respondents on the economic value of women's unpaid work. The study also tries to analyze and assess the various aspects influencing the knowledge and opinion of 120 married women and 30 married men in the research area.

A. Selection of Research Area

Three municipalities from Kathmandu valley, viz, Kathmandu metropolitan city, Kirtipur municipality and Lalitpur sub-metropolitan have been selected as the research area. Similarly three village development committees (VDCs) were selected: Ramkot and Machhegaon VDC from Kathmandu district and Imadol VDC from Lalitpur district. The specific study areas (Mangal Bazar in Lalitpur, New Road in Kathmandu, Naya Bazar in Kirtipur and other locations in the VDCs) have been chosen through consultation with the local people.

B. Sample Design

A total number of 150 respondents were interviewed, of whom 120 were housewives or married females and 30 married men. The married men were not the husbands of the female respondents in this study.

Three focus group discussions, two in Machhegaun and Imadol VDCs and one in Kirtipur municipality, were also conducted. The number of participants in these focus groups varied from 18 to 30 persons (both men and women). In addition to this, six women and four men from these focus groups were interviewed in depth. The selections of these interviewees were made according to their time availability, and so as to provide a mix of rural and urban people.

C. Time schedule

The study time, from preparation for the research through drafting of the final report, was six weeks.

D. Source of Data

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data were collected from the respondents using a questionnaire and additional interviews as discussed above. The secondary sources of data were obtained from research reports, relevant articles, and publications of government, NGOs, INGOs, etc.

E. Analytical Tools

All completed questionnaires were entered into the computer after being manually edited and validated. Data entry validity check was performed on 10 percent of randomly selected responses. Data generated through the qualitative study was compiled and analyzed to complement the survey results. Simple statistical tools such as mean, variance, ratio and percentage were used in the analysis.

F. Expected Outputs

The expected outputs of the study were as follows:

- Study report.
- A guideline for conducting further research on the issue.
- Information to facilitate in making informed decisions by the government and NGO sectors in recognizing the contribution of women's unpaid labour in the development of the nation and society.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

This research report has some important limitations. This study is based on an attitude and opinion survey of a small sample of 150 respondents from 3 municipalities and 3 VDCs in Kathmandu Valley only. The findings and recommendations of the study may not be fully applicable or generalizable for use in other parts of the country outside Kathmandu Valley. As such, a more comprehensive study covering a larger area and population as well as using more rigorous ideological tools is recommended to obtain a better picture of the issue.

CHAPTER - II

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides the literature review pertaining to the economic valuation of women's unpaid work in the international, regional and national context. The review is mainly based on the economic contribution of women to the national economy.

2.2 Introduction

For more than three decades the world has been witnessing unprecedented stirrings and awareness among the hitherto marginalized oppressed and silent women. These days, the women's liberation movement in many parts of the world including South Asia has seriously questioned and challenged many deep-rooted conventional, patriarchal, social and cultural structures and values. Women also have rejected subordination, domination and voicelessness, which have been perpetrated in the names of religion, culture and tradition.

Recently women have raised the issue of recognition of women's unpaid work and their economic contribution to national development. Since the subject is new and challenging, there exist tremendous information and perception gaps. In a tradition-bound South Asian country like Nepal, it appears that social scientists and researchers have hardly dared to venture into the subject. However, an attempt is made here to present a brief review of representative works including research reports, articles and books.

"It is hard to be poor but it is harder to be poor and be a woman." Against the situation of dire poverty, the most vulnerable are women and children. It is the reality in Nepal that cultural norms expect women to take care of the family despite seemingly insurmountable odds.

Dahal, 1995, Acharya and Bennet 1981 have written a research report on women's participation in agriculture. Nepalese agriculture is characterized by a heavy involvement of women labour. Though there has been no nationwide survey conducted that would show information on women in agriculture, some information is available, based on small and isolated or district-specific surveys. Many of these isolated surveys have shown that in addition to their household work, women in the farming sector work 10.8 hours a day as compared to 7.5 hours for men. The UNDP Human Development Report 1999 has also stated that in Nepal women work 2.1 more hours than men. Similarly, the results of some case studies show that women's participation is more than men's in almost all agricultural activities except ploughing, which by religion is a prohibited activity for women. It is mostly men, however, who conduct the marketing activities, which clearly has a strong impact on the distribution of the benefits within farming households. Because it is marketing which converts production efforts into cash, and women do not undertake such activities, the economic empowerment of women is hampered, contrary to objectives envisaged by development plans.

Shrestha, Moti Shova, Under Secretary Ministry of Population and Environment. 1999 presented a paper at a seminar in which she clearly points out the role of women in economic development with special reference to industry in Nepal. Ms. Shrestha explains in her paper that "Female development is an integral part of the economic development of Nepal. Access of females to economic resources is very marginal. Female labor figures significantly in subsistence farming, livestock raising, post-harvest processing, storage, patty-trade, home based manufacturing of crafts such as cloth-making, carpet weaving or foods preparing, beer brewing, oil pressing etc. and the collection of water, fuel fodder and wild foodstuff studies have shown that they work longer than their male counterparts. A larger part of their labor time is unremunerated. So indicators of economic development such as employment rates tend to undervalue female's labor contribution. Nonrecognition of female's actual contribution has lessened their role in economic development."

2.3 Women in Decision-Making

Pathak, Dr. Leela, 1999 presented a paper on Globalization and Women in Nepalese Agriculture at a seminar organized by the Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) in corporation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Germany. In a population Census of 1990, it was found that only 13.18 percent of households in Nepal were female-headed, and the figure is as low as 6.42 percent among total farm holdings.

Table 2.1: Incidence of Female-headed households in Nepal

| Description | In Total Farm Holdings (%) | In Total Households (%) |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mountain | 5.69 | 13.47 |
| Hill | 8.97 | 16.72 |
| Terai (eastern plains) | 3.49 | 9.43 |
| Nepal | 6.42 | 13.18 |

Source: CBS, 1991: Population Census.

Despite their significant contribution in agriculture, women farmers have very little say in household decision-making, while men also dominate in policy decisions. In some cases of horticulture (WFDD, 1993a) and livestock production (WFDD, 1993b), more than 70 percent of the policy decisions were taken by men. Yet operational decisions are more frequently made by women. In fact, operational decisions may be more important in improving productivity than one-time policy decisions.

UNDP, 1998 has published a sample survey of cottage industries in urbanized areas of Nepal. Females play a more important role in the informal than formal sector. Out of an estimated total of 1.04 million informal sector workers, approximately, 430,000 were females. Manufacturing in most cases is combined with agricultural and domestic work. In such activities as food processing and textiles production, women are often involved in entrepreneurial and managerial activities as well. But many of the activities are directly geared to household consumption rather than the market.

A field survey of cottage industries in urbanized areas revealed that slightly over half the labour force is female. Both family and wage labour were common, often working together.

The Tenth Plan (2002-2007): Chapter 26 of the Tenth Plan has clearly formulated objectives, policy and programmes regarding the women, children and social welfare sector, as well as the economic sector for women.

According to the economic sector in the Tenth Plan, “Women play a major role in economic activities. Generally, domestic chores as well as agricultural work done by women are not considered in the national income estimation. Women's access to economic resources and control over them is less because of legal discriminatory property rights. The average income ratio between males and females is 1:0.39.” The Tenth Plan also states, “Despite the fact that women work as much as 11 hours a day on average, their income is very low. It is because the majority of them work in rural areas, and that also in the informal sector. Another reason is that women do a substantial amount of work without remuneration. Because of the maternity role to be played by women, they have a dual work load and it has affected their employment outside domestic affairs. Of the total labor force employed in foreign jobs, the share of females is not more than 10.85%.” The primary objective of the Tenth Plan is to create an egalitarian society based upon women's rights by improving GDI (the Gender Development Index), and by abolishing all sorts of discrimination against women for the realization of economic growth and poverty eradication.

Acharya, Dr. Meena, 2003 has produced a study on the promotion of women in Nepal. In this study, Dr. Meena has clearly pointed out the social, economic and political status of women in Nepal. As she explains, “work is defined as an activity, which a second person can do for you, for example cooking, taking care of children, cleaning, washing—all activities in the household maintenance and child-care. Only activities, which a second person can not do for you, for example, sleeping, taking care of your own person, watching TV, study etc., are excluded from the definition of work overall and among most age-cohorts, large proportions of women were working than men as per this definition. In totality 66.5 percent of male and 72.4 percent of the female population were working in 2001, while slightly more than 90 percent of men and women in the 25-54 age group population were working, the difference was only in the kind of work they did. Of the total workforce, 52 percent were women, while among the home makers they constituted almost 95 percent” (See Acharya, forthcoming).

Table 2.2: Selected Indicators on Economic Activity and the Workforce, 2001

| Indicator/years | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 |
|--|------|------|------|
| “Economically Active” (Age 10 and above) | na | na | na |
| Male | 83.1 | 68.1 | 71.7 |
| Female | 46.2 | 45.2 | 55.3 |
| Female % in total “economically active” | 34.6 | 40.4 | 43.4 |
| Female % in agriculture jobs | 14.3 | 20.2 | 34.4 |
| Female/Male wage ratio | na | na | na |
| Agriculture | na | na | 4/5 |
| Non-agriculture jobs | na | na | 3/4 |
| Female % total “working” force (usually “economically active” home makers) | 50.8 | 53.6 | 52.5 |
| Female % among full time homemakers | 99.7 | 90.8 | 94.9 |

Source: 1. Population Census 2001.

2. Population Monograph, CBS, 1995.

Note: na – not available. Editor has placed some items in quotes, to indicate the injustice of the terms “economically active” and “working” to refer only to those who work for pay.

Cecile Jackson and Ruth Pearson, ed. Feminist Visions of Development, Gender Analysis and Policy is a collection of articles written by different authors. Ms. Diana Elson, Professor of Development Studies at the University of Manchester, mentions gender and economic growth models in her article, “Talking to the Boys”: “We shall have to work simultaneously on improving conceptual understanding improving our empirical knowledge, and constructing a process of institutional change. This Chapter is written in the belief that in doing all these things, we shall have to act both ‘in’ and ‘against’ the established models of macro-economic theory, empirical enquiry and policy process. If we only work on the ‘inside’ we run the risk of merely achieving small improvements in the formulation of models or collection of statistics which do not actually transform women's lives.”

Human Development Report, (1995) is a publication of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Data related to the economic activity of women is easily available in this report. According to “Valuing Women's Work” in Chapter 4 of the report, “Much of women's work remains unrecognized and evolved. This has an impact on the status of women in society, their opportunities in public life and the gender-blindness of development policy. In an attempt to understand the critical dimensions of women’s work, this chapter sets out to measure the scale and nature of their economic contribution. A survey of time-use data from a range of counties highlights the contribution by women to household and community work. The chapter concludes that if the unpaid contributions by both women and men were recognized, there would be far-reaching consequences for social and economic policy and for social norms and institutions.”

Human Development in South Asia, 2000 is a report prepared under the supervision of Khadija Haq, President of Mahhub ul Haq Human Development Centre, Pakistan. The report assembles a wealth of statistical and qualitative material on issues of women, gender and human development in South Asia. According to the report, “Human development, if not engendered, is fatally endangered.” He adds, “what comfortable stereotypes we have created: it is men who carry the major burden of economic work on this planet. They are the breadwinners. Women's work carries no economic value. Such work may be essential but banish the thought that it should ever enter national income, what a successful conspiracy to reduce women to economic non-entities.”

CHAPTER - III

3.1 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The field study uncovered many interesting and important findings. The survey has tried to identify the deeply-embedded attitudes, opinions and social practices related to gender roles and responsibilities in Nepali urban and peri-urban society. It has also shed some light on the structure and pattern of Nepali households.

Table 3.1: Household Size of the Respondents

| Area | Family Size (in Number and Percentage) |
|------|--|
|------|--|

| | 2 to 5 Members | 6 to 9 Members | 10 Members and Above |
|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Urban | 37 (61.7) | 16 (26.7) | 7 (11.7) |
| Rural | 38 (63.3) | 18 (30.0) | 4 (6.7) |
| Total | 75 (62.5) | 34 (28.3) | 11 (9.2) |

Note: 1. Married Women (n-120), 2. Men (n-30)

Most of the respondents (62.5%) have from 2 to 5 family members, while 28.3% have from 6 to 9 members and 9.2% have ten or more members.

Table 3.2: Age Group of the Respondents

| Respondents | Area | Age Group of the Women (percent) | | | |
|-------------|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | | 21-30 years | 31-40 years | 41-50 years | 50 Years and above |
| Women | Urban | 41.7 | 28.3 | 23.3 | 6.7 |
| | Rural | 40.0 | 36.7 | 16.7 | 6.7 |
| | Total | 40.8 | 32.5 | 20.0 | 6.7 |
| Men | Area | Age Group of the Men (percent) | | | |
| | | 24-35 Years | 36-45 Years | 46-55 Years | |
| Men | Urban | 20.0 | 60.0 | 20.0 | |
| | Rural | 33.3 | 40.0 | 26.7 | |
| | Total | 26.7 | 50.0 | 23.3 | |

Female respondents ranged in age from 21 to 50 and above, while male respondents were aged 24 to 55, with most women being of age 21-30 and most men 36-45.

3.3 Ethnicity of the Respondents

Table 3.3: Ethnicity of the Respondents

| Respondents | Area | Ethnicity (percent) | | |
|-------------|--------------|---------------------|------------|---------------|
| | | Brahmin/Chhetri | Dalit | Janjati/Newar |
| Women | Urban | 28.3 | 3.3 | 68.3 |
| | Rural | 53.3 | 10.0 | 36.7 |
| | Total | 40.8 | 6.7 | 52.5 |
| Men | Urban | 33.3 | 0.0 | 66.7 |
| | Rural | 60.0 | 6.7 | 33.3 |
| | Total | 46.7 | 3.3 | 50.0 |

Table 3.3 shows that just over half the respondents in the study were Janjati or Newar, while more rural than urban participants were Brahmin and Chhetri.

3.4 Type of the Family

Table 3.4 Type of the Family

| Respondents | Area | Type of Family (percent) | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| | | Single | Joint |
| Women | Urban | 63.3 | 36.7 |
| | Rural | 58.3 | 41.7 |
| | Total | 60.8 | 39.2 |
| Men | Urban | 46.7 | 53.3 |
| | Rural | 46.7 | 53.3 |
| | Total | 46.7 | 53.3 |

Most of the women reported living in a single family, while most of the men reported living in a joint family. Again, it is important to remember that the respondents do not represent married couples.

3.5 Religion of the Respondents

Table 3.5: Religion of the Respondents

| Respondents | Area | Religion (percent) | |
|-------------|------|--------------------|----------|
| | | Hindu | Buddhist |

| | | | |
|--------------|-------|------|------|
| Women | Urban | 71.7 | 28.3 |
| | Rural | 95.0 | 5.0 |
| | Total | 83.3 | 16.7 |
| Men | Urban | 80.0 | 20.0 |
| | Rural | 93.3 | 6.7 |
| | Total | 86.7 | 13.3 |

Most of the respondents are Hindus, though there are more Buddhists in urban than rural areas.

3.6 Average Monthly Income of the Household

Table 3.6: Average Monthly Income of the Household

| Respondents | Area | Average Monthly Income of the Household (Rs.) |
|--------------|-------|---|
| Women | Urban | 7,370 |
| | Rural | 6,237 |
| | Total | 6,803 |
| Men | Urban | 11,467 |
| | Rural | 4,800 |
| | Total | 8,133 |

According to women, average monthly income per household in urban areas is Rs.7,370 and in rural areas Rs. 6,237. The figures given by men are far higher for urban areas (11,467) and far lower for rural (4,800).

3.7 Occupation of Respondents

Table 3.7a: Female Respondents by Occupation

| Respondents | Area | A. Occupations of the Women (percent) | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|------------|----------------|----------------------|
| | | Primarily Housewives | Service | Trade/Business | Farmers/Wage Earners |
| Women | Urban | 56.7 | 10.0 | 28.3 | 5.0 |
| | Rural | 65.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 25.0 |
| | Total | 60.8 | 7.5 | 16.7 | 15.0 |

Most of the respondents in both urban (56.7%) and rural (65.0%) areas are primarily housewives. More women in urban areas are service holders or work in trade or business, while more women in rural areas are farmers or wage earners. The term “primarily” is used as presumably most of the women are housewives in addition to their other occupations.

Table 3.7b: Male Respondents by Occupation

| Respondents | Area | B. Occupations of the Men (percent) | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| | | Service | Trade/Business | Farming | Wage Earners | Sewing |
| Men | Urban | 26.7 | 60.0 | 6.7 | 0.0 | 6.7 |
| | Rural | 40.0 | 6.7 | 26.7 | 20.0 | 6.7 |
| | Total | 33.3 | 33.3 | 16.7 | 10.0 | 6.7 |

Occupations for men also varied widely between urban and rural areas, with most urban men being involved in trade or business, and most rural men in service, followed by farming.

3.8 Educational Background of Respondents

Table 3.8: Respondents' Educational Status

| Respondents | Area | Educational Level of Respondents (percent) | | | |
|-------------|------|--|----------|---------------|---------------|
| | | Illiterate | Literate | 1 to 10 Class | I.A and Above |

| | | | | | |
|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| Women | Urban | 23.3 | 13.3 | 48.3 | 15.0 |
| | Rural | 31.7 | 11.7 | 45.0 | 11.7 |
| | Total | 27.5 | 12.5 | 46.7 | 13.3 |
| Men | Urban | 0.0 | 6.7 | 53.3 | 40.0 |
| | Rural | 0.0 | 0.0 | 86.7 | 13.3 |
| | Total | 0.0 | 3.3 | 70.0 | 26.7 |

While none of the men reported they are illiterate, 23% of urban and 32% of rural women indicated that they are. Educational levels are universally higher among men than women, and among urban than rural areas, though the urban-rural differential is far more marked among men than women.

3.9 Wake-up and Bed Time of the Respondents

Table 3.9: Wake-up Time and Bedtime (Percent)

| Respondents | Area | Morning wake-up time | | | | Night bedtime | | | |
|-------------|-------|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|--------|---------|---------|
| | | 4 a.m. | 5 a.m. | 6 a.m. | 7 a.m. | 8 p.m. | 9 p.m. | 10 p.m. | 11 p.m. |
| Women | Urban | 16.7 | 41.7 | 33.3 | 6.7 | 0.0 | 13.3 | 50.0 | 36.7 |
| | Rural | 11.7 | 66.7 | 18.3 | 1.7 | 3.3 | 23.3 | 71.7 | 1.7 |
| | Total | 14.2 | 54.2 | 25.8 | 4.2 | 1.7 | 18.3 | 60.8 | 19.2 |
| Men | Urban | 20.0 | 26.7 | 40.0 | 13.3 | 10.0 | 13.3 | 46.7 | 40.0 |
| | Rural | 13.3 | 46.7 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 6.7 | 40.0 | 40.0 | 13.3 |
| | Total | 16.7 | 36.7 | 30.0 | 16.7 | 3.3 | 26.7 | 43.3 | 26.7 |

Most of the respondents of both sexes report waking up at 5 a.m., though men are more likely than women to wake up at 6 a.m. or later. While most people go to bed at 10 p.m., more women than men report going to bed late. People in rural areas wake up earlier than in urban areas, and more people in urban areas stay up till 11 p.m. than in rural areas.

3.10 Lending Helping Hand for Housework

Table 3.10: Lending Helping Hand for Housework

| Respondents | Area | Lending Helping (percent) | |
|-------------|-------|---------------------------|------|
| | | Yes | No |
| Women | Urban | 13.3 | 86.7 |
| | Rural | 3.3 | 96.7 |
| | Total | 8.3 | 91.7 |
| Men | Urban | 20.0 | 80.0 |
| | Rural | 0.0 | 100 |
| | Total | 10.0 | 86.9 |

An overwhelming percentage of women (91.7%) report that they receive no help in their housework, with even fewer rural than urban women receiving help. The opinion of men in this matter is similar to women, though more urban men than women believe women receive help. Interestingly, no rural men thought that women receive help in their housework.

In terms of help from people other than their husbands, only 5% of households in urban areas and none in rural areas report having servants. Only 8.3% of urban women report that they receive help from relatives, while only 3.3% in rural areas say they receive such help.

3.11 Respondents View about Economic Value of Work

Table 3.11: Respondents' View about Economic Value of the Work

| Respondents | Area | View of the Respondent (percent) | | |
|-------------|-------|----------------------------------|------|------------|
| | | Yes | No | Don't Know |
| Women | Urban | 35.0 | 55.0 | 10.0 |
| | Rural | 45.0 | 38.3 | 16.7 |
| | Total | 40.0 | 46.7 | 13.3 |
| Men | Urban | 40.0 | 46.7 | 13.3 |
| | Rural | 46.7 | 33.3 | 20.0 |

| | | | | |
|--|-------|------|------|------|
| | Total | 43.3 | 40.0 | 16.7 |
|--|-------|------|------|------|

When asked a simple yes-no question as to whether household work has economic value, over half of urban women and close to half of urban men replied that it has no value. Up to a fifth of rural women and men replied that they did not know. Although there appears to be a higher valuing of women's work with higher educational levels, the results are unclear and the sample size may be insufficient to make any clear statements in this regard (results not shown).

3.12 Leisure Time for Women

Table 3.12: Leisure from Work

| Area | Type of Family | Leisure from Work | |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | | Yes | No |
| Urban | Single | 89.5 | 10.5 |
| | Joint | 77.3 | 22.7 |
| | Total | 85.0 | 15.0 |
| Rural | Single | 85.7 | 14.3 |
| | Joint | 76.0 | 24.0 |
| | Total | 81.7 | 18.3 |
| All Total | Single | 87.7 | 12.3 |
| | Joint | 76.6 | 23.4 |
| | Total | 83.3 | 16.7 |

About 90% of women from single (nuclear) family and about 77% of women from joint families in urban and rural area report getting some free time from their work. Almost 20% of rural women report having no leisure time. Overall, women from joint families are twice as likely as those from single families to report having no leisure time (23.4% versus 12.3%).

In terms of men's perception of women's leisure time (not shown), 67% of urban and 73% of rural men said that women have leisure time, while a full 27% of urban and 13% of rural men said that women do not have leisure time. A further 13% of rural and 7% of urban men said that women only 'sometimes' have leisure.

3.13 Non-daily Household Work

Table 3.13: Non-daily Household Work

| Occasional Work | Area (percent) | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------|-------|------|
| | Urban | | Rural | |
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Looking after Guest | 93.3 | 6.7 | 93.3 | 6.7 |
| Sewing/Knitting | 31.7 | 68.3 | 26.7 | 73.3 |
| Visit Sick Friend | 91.7 | 8.3 | 86.7 | 13.3 |
| Visit Relatives | 91.7 | 8.3 | 95.0 | 5.0 |
| Farming | 31.7 | 68.3 | 35.0 | 65.0 |
| Purchasing Other Household Goods | 55.0 | 45.0 | 63.3 | 36.7 |
| Looking after Sick People | 96.7 | 3.3 | 43.3 | 56.7 |
| Vegetable Plantation | 35.0 | 65.0 | 48.3 | 51.7 |
| Gardening | 20.0 | 80.0 | 26.7 | 73.3 |
| Book Reading | 13.3 | 86.7 | 10.0 | 90.0 |
| Social Services | 25.0 | 75.0 | 20.0 | 80.0 |

In addition to the daily household work performed by women, various tasks occur less often. For instance, over 90% of urban women report that they must also, though not on a daily basis, look after guests, visit sick friends or relatives, and look after the sick. Most urban and rural women also report that they have no time for reading books or engaging in social services. Other tasks that are performed on an irregular basis (not shown) include washing and ironing clothes, collecting fuel, buying foodstuffs, and paying bills.

3.14 Time Spent by Women on Different Household Activities

Table 3.14: Time Spent from Housewives in the Different Work by Areas

| Type of Work | Time Spent by Women on Household work (Average Minute Per Day) | |
|--|---|----------------|
| | Urban | Rural |
| Preparing Breakfast | 17 | 27 |
| Cooking Lunch | 56 | 81 |
| Cooking Dinner | 57 | 86 |
| Preparing Afternoon Snack | 24 | 35 |
| Washing Dishes | 28 | 46 |
| Cleaning House | 29 | 42 |
| Washing Clothes | 36 | 92 |
| Ironing Clothes | 11 | 15 |
| Sewing | 18 | 17 |
| Taking Children to/from School | 6 | 14 |
| Cooking Preparation | 25 | 23 |
| Collecting Firewood/Fuel | 22 | 17 |
| Collecting Water | 10 | 11 |
| Helping Children with Schoolwork | 12 | 18 |
| Shopping for Food | 30 | 38 |
| Shopping for Other Items | 42 | 86 |
| Helping in Family Business/Piecemeal Work | 99 | 43 |
| Preparing Children for School | 12 | 21 |
| Cleaning Around the House | 20 | 35 |
| Community/Volunteer Work | 8 | 12 |
| Household Planner | 15 | 35 |
| Other Activities | 3 | 0 |
| Total Hours in a Day for Household Work | 7 hours | 9 hours |

In addition to the work they do for pay, rural women report spending nine hours a day on household work, while urban women report spending seven hours. For urban women, the most time-consuming activities are helping in family business/piecemeal work (99 minutes a day) and cooking lunch and dinner. For rural women, the most time-consuming activities, in addition to cooking, are washing clothes and shopping for non-food items. A close comparison of the numbers in Table 3.14 above yields interesting similarities and differences in terms of time allocation between rural and urban women, with several activities taking far longer for the former to perform. In addition to these daily tasks are the tasks mentioned above, which are performed on less than a daily level, such as washing clothes, collecting fuel, paying bills, looking after the sick, tending guests, and so on.

3.15 Estimated Economic Value of Household Work

Based on the rates prescribed by the government (Nepal Gazette, Srawan 30, 2063 B.S.) of about 120 rupees/day, the estimated economic value of household work can be calculated. Simply multiplying this daily rate by 30 days in a month yields a figure of about 3,700 rupees per month. However, since rural women spend more hours a day (8.62) on household work than urban women (6.83), women in rural areas should earn more than in urban areas despite a lower rural wage rate.

The Labor Act, 1992 (Section 21.1) has tried to classify various types of work into four categories: unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and highly-skilled. A further set of categories exists for work performed by children, with a higher wage rate for adults than for children. Based on these official definitions, household work can be classified under the category of semi-skilled work being performed by an adult. The maximum working hours per day is fixed at seven hrs according to government legislation. Therefore, it can be assumed that the wage rate of the housewife is Rs.125 per day and Rs.2,250/- per month. This wage rate is very low in comparison to rising prices in Nepal. Moreover, this

official rate is inadequate and inappropriate when applied to the subjective and objective aspects of domestic work performed by Nepali women.

To calculate the economic value of the household work done by women, the wage rate received per day is multiplied by 30 days. For example, if a woman gets Rs.125 per day according to the Labor Act of Nepal, she will receive Rs.122.04 for 6.83 hours of daily work and Rs.3,661 per month. But some of the household work is so valuable that it is difficult to assign an appropriate economic value. Activities such as breastfeeding infants, affection given by housewives to their children and husbands, and the loving tending of the sick are too valuable to measure through conventional methods. Similarly, the entire household management is done by women, and should not be ranked at the low rate of semi-skilled labour.

In short, women in Nepal daily assume a large and important burden of household work. The work they perform far surpasses the economic value determined through existing methods of valuation. Hence, there is an urgent need to review and reform the entire concept, methodology and practice of economic valuation in order to give justice to the economic contributions of women.

Case Study

1. The Life of a Rural Housewife

Rita Sharma (not her real name) is a 45-year-old housewife from a village close to Kathmandu. She is a Brahmin by caste and is living in a joint family consisting of five members. She has studied up to 6th grade. She says that her family income is only Rs.5,000 per month.

Rita wakes up at 5:0 a.m. to start her busy day. She says that she has nobody to help her in performing her household activities, and that her husband does not help her either. Normally, she is very much busy with household work, for at least ten hours a day. She goes to bed at 10:00 p.m. Besides household activities, she spends much time looking after her child and husband.

Rita has to prepare breakfast, lunch, a snack and dinner for all family members. She also is involved in cleaning, washing, fetching water, ironing of clothes, feeding cattle, and taking her child to the school in the morning and bringing him back home in the evening. She has to receive guests and take care of her old and ailing father-in-law and mother-in-law. She has to help her child in doing homework. She needs a lot of time in readying the child to go to school. She also shops for goods and fuel. Rita is involved in farming, visiting sick relatives and friends, and planting. She is also responsible for making payment of her child's school fees as well as the telephone, electricity and drinking water. She thinks that all these activities have economic value.

In addition to all that, Rita sometimes finds time for study and community work. Although she says she gets some free time to rest, when assessing her heavy workload it would appear that she rarely enjoys any free time. Yet Rita is typical of rural women.

2. Lifestyle of an Urban Married Man

Saroj Shrestha (not his real name) is a 24-year-old married man from Kathmandu. He is from a Newar family with five members. He has studied up to Intermediate level. He says his family income is only Rs.10,000 per month.

Saroj gets up between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. and goes to bed at about 11:00 p.m. after watching television. He also goes to restaurants on a regular basis after office hours.

Saroj explains that they have a helper to share his wife's household work. He did not say how much salary is given to the helper. He thinks his wife enjoys free time. He mentioned that his wife spends about four hours a day on household work, and that he sometimes helps his wife. Saroj also says that he likes to roam aimlessly whenever he gets free time. He agreed that there is economic value of the household work performed by his wife.

3. An Illiterate Woman from Kathmandu

Bindu Shrestha (not her real name) is an illiterate housewife from the core area of Kathmandu City. She is a 42-year-old Hindu woman from a Newar family living in a joint family with 12 family members. Their family profession is business with a family income of Rs.6,000 per month.

Normally, she wakes up at 6:00 a.m. and goes to bed at 10:00 p.m. She says that none of the family members share her work, though she also says that her husband does sometimes share in the work. She has one servant to clean the pots and dishes, who is paid Rs.800 per month.

Bindu mentions that she has no leisure time from her work. She has to work at least nine hours every day in addition to her weekly, monthly and occasional works. She thinks there is economic value of her work.

Every day, Bindu has to prepare breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner. She also needs to clean the home, and shop for vegetables, fuel and household items. Sometimes she has to receive guests and go see relatives. Once a week she has to wash and iron the clothes. She has to take care of the children and manage the household work. It would appear that she hardly gets any free time from her work. However, since she is illiterate, she cannot help her children in their homework.

4. A Rural Married Man

Kaji Bhai (not his real name) is a married man from a village near Kathmandu. He is a Hindu from a Kapali (Newar) family. He lives in single family of five members. He is just barely literate. His profession is tailoring and he earns a meagre Rs.2,000 per month.

Kaji Bhai states that he goes to bed at 9:00 p.m. and wake up at 7:00 a.m. He is the example of a typical village married man. He thinks his wife has free time from her work. He further mentions that his wife works about five hours a day. As he explained he helps his wife in cooking, cleaning and marketing. He thinks the work done by his wife has no economic value. When Kaji Bhai gets free time, he goes to the temple and wanders here and there.

CHAPTER - IV

4.1 Findings of Focus Group Discussions

The research team has also conducted a number of focus group discussions in order to obtain information and develop a better rapport with the respondents in the research area. The Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were held at ward no. 3 in Machhegaun VDC, Kirtipur Municipality's Ward No. 17 and ward no. 3 in Imadol VDC in Lalitpur district. The number of participants in focus groups were 24 in Machhegaun VDC, 18 in Kirtipur Municipality and 14 in Imadol VDC.

1. Most of the inhabitants in Machhegaun VDC ward 3, were Brahmin and Chhetri and the majority of the people in WARD no. 17 of Kirtipur municipality were Newars and most of the people in Imadol VDC, ward no. 3 were Subedi-Brahmins.
2. Most of the women were found to wake up between 4:30 to 5:00 a.m. and go to bed between 9:00 to 10:00 p.m. whereas most of the men get up between 5:00 to 6:00 a.m. and go to bed at 10:00 p.m.
3. Cooking, cleaning, washing, fetching water, taking care of children as well as cattle raising and farming were major work of the housewives. The married men were hardly involved in household work. However, they occasionally shared the work of the housewives. Still, there were many married men who thought that cleaning the house early in the morning and washing cloths were exclusively the work of women and this work should not be done by men. But they did not mind being involved in activities like marketing, making payment of bills and farm work.
4. The majority of the participants in focus group discussions agreed that the women worked more than the men at home. Male participants in focus group discussions expressed their view that there should be mutual cooperation between the men and women.
5. Female participants said they did not have servants at home and their work burden is shared by their family members and the relatives. But sometimes they employed workers for farm work and cattle raising.
6. According to the participants the normal wage rate for the women is from Rs.100 to Rs.120 and Rs.150 to Rs.200 for men employees at local level.
7. The women from Machhegaun VDC and Imadol VDC in focus group discussion explained that they got hardly any free time and they were seldom helped by their husbands, whereas, the women from Kirtipur Municipality told the researcher that they had leisure time in day time and their work is shared by their husbands.

8. These days the women were found to be involved in community work too. For example, we met one women community mobilizer working for "Bisheshwor for the Poor Programme" in Machhegaun VDC and one member of "Aama Samuha" in Imadol VDC.
9. The women participants were found to be earning by selling vegetables, milk and curd (yogurt), and thus were increasingly becoming economically independent.
10. Some of the male participants thought that foreign funding as well as NGO activities had to be utilized properly for development in Nepal. Up to now they expressed unhappiness with foreign funded and NGO activities. They thought that the foreign money should be utilized for improvement of education rather than other activities.

Almost all participants expressed happiness over this research on the economic valuation of women's unpaid work being conducted in their area.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to different sectors like the Government of Nepal (GON), INGOs/NGOs, research institutions and women's organizations with a view to enable them to change the policies, laws, conventional mindset related to all forms of gender discrimination, and non-recognition of the economic value of domestic work.

Specific recommendations

4.3.1 To the Government

- The Government of Nepal is advised to introduce appropriate policy reforms aimed at changing the methodology and practices related to the System of National Accounting (SNA) with the objective of incorporating the economic costs and outputs of women's domestic and household work in the GDP assessment of the country.
- To achieve this goal, the government should initiate coordinated and concerted policies and programs to change the attitudes, values, perceptions and practices aimed at enhancing and empowering the overall status of women in society ending all kinds of gender discriminations and inequities prevalent in the society.
- The government is recommended to introduce such programmes which will contribute in decreasing the workload of the housewives. For example, constructing the drinking water taps and schools closer to the settlement. These innovations are likely to help in saving both the time and workload of the housewives. Time thus saved can be utilized for other activities.
- A series of interaction, debates, discussion programs, seminars and workshop on the economic valuation of women's domestic work should be organized to critically sensitize the planners, policymakers, NGO and government officials and academics so that they are able to integrate this issue in the government's plans, programs and financial accounting and calculations. Such awareness will help them to introduce the changes and reforms in the government's policies, practices, laws and regulations related to the issue. The reassessment of the unpaid work done by housewives from the unconventional angle will also assist the economists and planers to have a more realistic picture of the economy.
- The wage rates fixed in Labor Act 1992 (Section 21.1) for skilled, semi-skilled, highly-skilled and non-skilled is very low at present. Therefore, the government is recommended to review this labour act and increase the wage rate.

4.3.2 To the NGOs/INGOs

- One of the findings of the present study is that most women involved in household work are experiencing multiple discrimination and inequities. For example, they have to spend a lot of time in household work whereas men hardly share the work of their wives. In the same way, women are paid less than the men for same hours of work.
- Setting up day care centres for the children as well as for the old people at community level is recommended to make the housework burden of women easier.

4.3.3 To the Women's Organizations

- Women's organizations which are active in Nepal should give priority to developing strategies and programs aimed at promoting the knowledge and awareness of the economic value of domestic and informal work performed by women. Hence they are recommended to start special programs like orientation on women's legal rights and women's issues in addition to the regular reprograms like literacy, income generation, and agriculture in order to enhance the knowledge and confidence of women.
- The formation of associations is recommended to bring women together and enhance their confidence and capacity to solve their problems.

4.3.4 To the Research Institutions

- Research institutions and the universities are also advised to initiate studies and research on the critical issues like women's overall economic contributions including economic contributions made through household work. The neglect of this issue has resulted in skewed and unrealistic economic policies, programs and projections.
- Researchers and students should be encouraged to conduct studies on these hitherto neglected and unconventional economic issues.
- To get the realistic picture of women's economic contribution through the informal economic works and unpaid domestic works, a national level research and study is strongly recommended.

CHAPTER -V

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The emergence of a dynamic and vibrant international women's movement has compelled politicians, policymakers, planners, economists and researchers to take note of the critical issues raised by women. Awareness of the structural disadvantages, pervasive discriminatory practices and intolerable inequality experienced by women is growing. Unfortunately, till now the emphasis in many countries like Nepal has been limited to a mere rhetorical exercise on the need for the creation of enabling and empowering environments for women in all sectors of the society.

In spite of the changes in the tones and emphasis of discussions on gender equality, progress in achieving the goal of gender justice and gender equality has fallen far short of the target. An important area where women's contribution has not been adequately and properly acknowledged or appreciated is in the economic sector. The conventional conceptual bias and methodological shortcomings in the economic valuation leading to GDP formation has resulted in either neglect or undervaluation of women's contribution, especially in terms of unpaid domestic work. This non-recognition of the household work or care economy has too often rendered the economic presence of women invisible. Overcoming this economic discrimination could have multiplier effects in facilitating equitable sharing or in improving access to resources and opportunities by women as well as in their entitlements to social benefits.

Hence there is urgent need to review the current conventional methodological practices related to the Systems of National Accounting (SNA) that fails to recognize women's tremendous contribution to the economy as well as in qualitatively changing the attitudes, values and outlooks of regarding household work. Valuing the caring and household work that are essential to a nation can only bring benefits to all.

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Canadian International
Development Agency

Produced with the support of the
Government of Canada through the
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)