An accountability indicator for gender equality projects run by non-governmental and international organisations

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Abstract: The article offers an easy-to-use indicator allowing scholars and practitioners to measure whether the criteria for the goals of gender mainstreaming and gender equality – established by various international treaties and recognised by experts in the field – are met by national and international organisations (NGOs/INGOs) as well as by the government policies and projects that focus on this area. Use of this indicator on more than a dozen standard interventions, currently funded by United Nations (UN) organisations, country donors and NGOs, reveals that most of the major actors in the field of gender (and women's rights) are actually failing to promote gender equity. They have substituted a political agenda to promote women's interests over men's (or those of a small group of mostly urban women), or an agenda of only symbolic equality that actually promotes global exploitation and cultural destruction, rather than overall gender equality interests and the protection of society. The indicator points to the specific areas where organisations need to improve in order to fulfil gender rights and other international legal criteria. This article also offers a sample test of the indicator using UNIFEM (now UN Women) as a case study.

Keywords: gender mainstreaming, gender equality, human rights, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), cultural protection, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNIFEM/UN Women.

Introduction:

Although international UN framework definitions, promulgated in 1997 by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), of gender mainstreaming and gender equality are largely ambiguous and self-referential ('to achieve gender equality … so that both women and men benefit equally', and such that 'inequality isn't perpetuated'), the portfolio of international gender projects in development continues to grow, as does the demand for gender 'impact' screening and for achieving what is described as a consensus on gender equality goals (UN ECOSOC, 1997).

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Even as international development agencies move towards establishing certain gender measures, including those that form part of

- the UN system's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which build on them

- a gender development index (from the UNDP's Human Development Report) and

- a gender empowerment measure (also in the UNDP report),

little examination has been carried out into whether these gauges of gender equality and mainstreaming are themselves valid, appropriate and culturally neutral, consistent with other international rights treaties for cultural rights protections and for equality in various rights areas (Tsuhiya and Williams, 2005).

The questions raised include:

- Is gender equality really being used as a gender neutral justification for 'the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women' to promote what the Convention on Ending Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) describes as 'everyone's' entitlement to 'all of the rights' included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Or has it become a euphemism for promoting specific benefits to women and girls, whether or not they meet the established rights standards (1979)?

- Is gender mainstreaming really about maintaining the 'stream' of cultural continuity in ways that are consistent with treaties on sustainable development, indigenous rights, and protections of cultures against any kind of genocide in the same ways affirmed by CEDAW ('the right of all peoples … to self-determination and independence' and 'the eradication of aggression, foreign occupation, and dominance'). Or is it about breaking cultures to industrialise them and promote Western attitudes to gender roles and sexuality which are favourable to Western and industrial economic interests?

- If the answers to the above are that the standards are being misapplied or transformed, and if part of the original feminist rights movement's goals have been changed (those challenging colonial systems of patriarchy, violence and consumption and seeking to replace them as unviable and unsustainable), are these changes consistent with international development goals of gender equality strategies or has part of the movement itself been coopted (Carson, 1965)?

- Overall, if standards are clear and if organisations have deviated from them in their application, can they be used to hold projects accountable and to guide the agenda in this field?

Although these questions are of global importance, they are of particular concern in some Commonwealth countries, particularly Africa and the Pacific islands, which have a history of British colonisation or influence. In many of these, the traditional cultural systems were chieftaincies, headed by a male. During the colonisation period, the cultures were missionised, with new systems of patriarchy under the Church set to replace the chiefs. Now, rather than work with both to try to protect the local cultures and to renovate indigenous systems, many foreign projects simply attack both systems as having gender inequality. In doing so, they not only undermine cultural rights but also destroy community traditions, while leaving nothing in their place on which to build.

The situation in Commonwealth countries is also complicated by the legacy of migrant labour, much of it from India. Large Indian populations settled on the lands of traditional peoples to cultivate crops for the British Empire and remain there still. In supporting individual rights, like women's rights, that reflect their interests as uprooted minorities, they also act directly to try to assimilate and homogenise the traditional cultures in a way that makes everyone 'equal', but also without roots and traditions. Indeed, this promotion of individual rights including gender rights is done in a way that distorts the integrated system of rights established in international treaties, while also disrupting communities and their sustainability.

To answer similar concerns that treaty agreements and established development principles have been sacrificed to other interests that are undermining the international system and humanitarian development goals, my recent articles have taken some initial steps towards establishing indicators and benchmarks. Through these, the public and organisations can hold international development actors accountable to international law and to their intervention

mission statements. These indicators provide inexpensive and easy-to-use tools for creating accountability and transparency in the use of public funds in development interventions. For lawyers and legal scholars they also amount to an attempt to codify the principles of international development law into the equivalent of a treatise of principles and legal elements so as to promote compliance. This article takes those ideas further.

In previous pieces, I published ethics codes for professionals working in the field, which protect public beneficiaries and legal requirements (Lempert, 1997). I followed these with a series of 'litmus-test' type indicators that can be used relatively quickly and easily, building an accountability framework for all public and private development spending, given the lack of existing monitoring in this area (2008). These represent an attempt to provide a core of building block tools to screen projects and international activities on basic principles, as well as more specific goals. Previous publications and works in progress include:

- a general indicator for sustainable development – the global goal of all development interventions including those in the areas of rights (Lempert and Nguyen, 2008)

- an indicator for whether projects promote dependency or self-reliance (Lempert, 2009a), and

- a specific democracy and human rights education indicator (2010)

Other indicators in this series include an examination of evaluation systems and their ability to perform their oversight role (2009b); tools for capacity building; and tools for democracy and good governance (both of which are largely used in connection with gender projects and market system/business interventions).

The goal of this piece is to offer a clear performance measure for gender projects in light of international goals of gender mainstreaming and gender equality. This article offers and tests an indicator that actualises the principles the international community has agreed to uphold in this field, although international agreements codifying universal principles of rights and equality and combining these with internationally agreed principles for and definitions of gender equality. It also applies my practical experience of working for the UN system and other donors, putting these principles into practice in evaluations of various organisations in the international system.

Use of this indicator on more than a dozen standard interventions, currently funded by UN organisations, country donors and NGOs, reveals that most of the major actors in the field of gender (and women's rights) are actually failing to promote gender equity and have substituted a political agenda for promoting women's interests over men's (or those of a small group of mostly urban women), or an agenda of only symbolic equality that actually promotes global exploitation and cultural destruction, rather than overall gender equality interests and the protection of society. The indicator points to the specific areas in which organisations need to improve in order to fulfil gender rights and other international legal criteria.

The article begins by defining 'gender mainstreaming' and 'gender equality' within the context of internationally agreed treaty principles on rights that can be placed into an indicator, compares existing indicators used by social scientists and practitioners to their agreed international standards, and explains why several international gender equality projects now fail in the absence of an indicator. It then offers a new one, testing it on several project categories, including a detailed examination of how to use it on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, now UN Women).

Gender equality principles in the context of treaty principles on rights

Historically, gender equality has emerged as an international principle in an implicit rights context along with several other potentially competing and conflicting areas of rights, particularly those at the cultural rights level. Since the idea of gender equality, like any other individual right, can be used as a weapon to seek to undermine cultural practices and cultures themselves, particularly in international projects funded by major global powers, such conflicts are inevitable unless boundaries and hierarchies are introduced to apply these distinct goals. In fact, it is easy to deduce how the various rights principles work in coordination, even though they are not explicitly stated in any rights document. Moreover, it becomes clear that gender mainstreaming reinforces the ideal of protecting cultural rights and reestablishing cultural balances and cultural viability, while gender equality focuses on improving conditions between genders (gender discrimination), and within and across genders (relative equality or parity) in both specific and differing social and cultural contexts.

'Gender equality' as a term is first mentioned in early UN treaties such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and in several international rights treaties from the 1960s, predating both the CEDAW treaty (1979) and UN

ECOSOC declarations on gender (1997). Nevertheless, neither the international treaties preceding CEDAW (such as the 1948 Convention on Genocide) nor those that followed dealing with other rights categories (such as the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the 1992 Rio Declaration, in the areas of cultural rights and cultures' sustainability), offer explicit instructions on how gender equality fits within the framework of cultural rights protections.

In fact, there is a clear but unstated logic as to how the concepts of gender mainstreaming and gender equality should fit within the framework of both cultural and other individual rights. This can be made explicit so that actions undertaken in the name of gender are fitted into these frameworks appropriately. Although political scientists may dispute how to define and measure rights, and how to avoid normative or cultural biases in defining rights, a starting point of universal concepts on rights signed by the international community already exists. These reflect an almost mathematical set of symmetry and equality axioms that can be used as an established measure for holding international actors to the very principles on which they have agreed.

When promoting an individual right like gender, cultural rights must also be considered. The place of gender concerns is inbetween and in harmony with both categories in ways that reaffirm cultural rights. Cultural rights must come first in any analysis of gender if those rights are to be protected, such that both men's and women's individual rights are consistent with their societies and cultures. The ideal of gender mainstreaming is actually an affirmation of cultural rights and cultural sustainability (making both men and women better off without causing either to be worse off, in a way that protects overall cultural integrity, diversity and sustainability). Meanwhile the ideal of gender equality affirms the principle of individual rights and equality that looks at individuals of both genders, not only across genders but within each gender and overall.

Although this may sound surprisingly simple, it is in fact possible to develop a universal indicator of gender equality principles reflecting agreement of the world community, by starting with this principle for the two rights levels and adding the principles implied for gender equality.

Below are restatements of the existing principles of rights protections that are guaranteed by international treaties and declarations at the levels of culture and individuals (a look at the treaty history), followed by highlights of the key principles from international agreements on gender mainstreaming and equality, showing how the gender principles must be applied in order to be consistent with the framework of these other treaties (specific definition and application of the two principles). An appropriate understanding of gender in the context of these other treaties confirms this approach as it also works to include individuals who fall between the strict definitions of male or female for genetic or psychological reasons, and who would be excluded if gender rights were simply defined as a competition between male and female.

How gender principles are understood in treaties not dealing with gender

The two rights streams – cultural and individual – are well established in the history of international agreements and are often re-referenced. The key places to find them and applications to gender are:

1. Cultural rights to ensure diversity and cultural survival/sustainability

The international system's most basic principle, starting with the idea of 'nations' and the cultures they represent as basic units, is that of protecting cultures and their sustainability. Although protections for the total 6,000 cultures in the world have often been weak, the underlying principle of the UN and of federal systems has been to protect diverse members (at the level of groups) of different sizes. Since gender roles are part of the definition of culture difference, the clear implication is that cultures must not move to a single, common set of gender roles but most look at rights within individual culture contexts. Cultural integrity is to be maintained and not undermined by improper assertion of principles of equality or individual rights. Equality is to be achieved through equality of cultures, not through homogenisation and assimilation of cultures.

The treaty framework that sets this context includes several documents, starting with the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), which established the idea of protecting cultural groups, cultural diversity and difference as a key rights principle. None of these treaties or declarations clarify how gender equality is to be applied in the context of cultural protection. However, the CEDAW treaty does reference cultural protection in the preamble with the same language used in the other agreements, calling for 'self-determination and independence'. Other treaties have reiterated the overall principle of cultural protection as a starting point:

– UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN ICCPR, 1966): under Article 1 and then reinforcing cultural rights under Article 27

- Article 1 – 'All peoples have the right of self-determination … economic, social and cultural development

  – UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992)
    - Article 2 notes the principle for the international community to safeguard for all groups 'the right to enjoy their own culture'

    - Article 8 restates the 'principle of equality'

    - UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples (2007) more recently reasserted that 'indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples' and upheld the principle that 'control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions'

    - Article 1 iterates the 'right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms'

    - Article 3 reasserts the principle of 'self-determination'

    - Article 4 reiterates the 'right to autonomy or self-government'

The Rio Declaration (the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992) is a more recent application of the principle of cultural rights in terms of development. It establishes sustainable development – implying restoring cultures to harmony with their environments in ways that reaffirm cultural practices – as the key development rights principle. The Declaration also forms the basis for the idea of the UN system's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which have also sought to provide some measurements of gender (that are currently misapplied within the context of treaties; see Lempert and Nguyen, 2008).

The implication of these treaties and declarations is that the international community's role (or that of powerful countries or of groups within them) is to *not* intervene to force industrialisation or a single system of production or consumption. The appropriate intervention is to protect cultures and societies against outside harms, to reverse the legacies of colonialism and hegemony, and to restore (or transform) cultures to sustainability within their environments, as well as to then improve human happiness and wellbeing once cultures are fully protected and sustainable. If gender roles and relations are to be changed, doing so must be for those specific purposes within that context. In fact, it makes excellent sense to see the role of gender-based interventions in exactly this way, to promote equality in exactly this form of cultural mainstreaming which restores cultural balances in ways that promote female and male interests.

2. Equity/individual rights to protect differences (symmetry)

The counterpart to international treaties for protections of cultural groups is the set of treaties for individual interest groups promoting political equality. Gender is one area in which equality should be sought alongside several types of individual differences that have also been enumerated in treaties since the UN was founded. The established list in most rights treaties for recognition of classes or individuals needing special rights protections is: 'Race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property [class], birth or other status [state versus citizen]' (Article 2 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights, 1948, and again in the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966). The list of agreements also mentioning gender equality rights include the
  – UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN ICCPR, 1966)
  – UN Declaration of Political, Economic and Cultural Rights (UN ICESCR, 1966) recognising the 'equal and inalienable rights of members of the human family'
More recent treaties and declarations have sought to list areas within societies and cultures in which rights may be denied, in ways causing those societies and cultural systems to fail to achieve their potential. Recent treaties like CEDAW look at categories of individual differences (in this case, gender), listing and specifying inequalities that harm a specific group (in the case of CEDAW, the emphasis is on women and girls as one gender class needing certain special protections, but without excluding the need for protections of other gender categories not covered by the Convention).

Although these treaties can resemble 'shopping lists', lacking any real clarity as to how they are to be implemented within the contexts of particular societies and cultures in ways that meet cultural protection and stability objectives,

they do help to establish equality principles that can be applied to gender. They implicitly reference the need for measuring and achieving equality in three ways:

–   between groups (in ways that end discrimination)
–   within groups (in ways that challenge hierarchies), and
–   across groups (in ways that equalise results and create 'parity' so that no category of individuals is disfavoured, even if the cause of the inequity is not discrimination by another group).

The overall goal is to raise the human condition and individual potential across categories. The CEDAW preamble reiterates this objective as one of making people 'free and equal in dignity and rights' (1979).

While the CEDAW is a specific application of gender rights focusing on one cause of inequality (that between groups: 'discrimination against women'), it is important to recognise, as the treaty itself does, that the overall framework of equality and gender equality is one designed not only to focus on discrimination as a cause of inequality but on 'all the rights and freedoms set forth' in the Universal Declarations on the Rights of the Person 'without distinction of any kind' or of any cause (CEDAW preamble, 1979).

Inequalities may be of any kind, prejudicing either gender or any group whose dignity is affected by reasons relating to gender (that would include transgender and crossgender as well as sexuality) with any kind of unequal result either within a gender group or across genders.

What treaties and pronouncements on gender add to understanding and applications of the two dimensions of cultural rights and individual rights: defining 'gender mainstreaming' and 'gender equality' for specific application

The principles of gender mainstreaming and gender equality that are offered by international committees actually reinforce the two-tiered approach above, though stating it in slightly different terms. To make the principles clearer for application and for testing, it makes sense to restate and repackage them so that the terms and concepts are consistent and explicit. What previous documents have not completed, can be done here simply as a kind of editing for clarity that highlights the approach for application.

For example, the idea of gender mainstreaming offered by the UN ECOSOC firmly sets gender projects in the context of cultural protections and overall 'synergies'. According to the council, changes must offer benefits to both genders, not just one, in a form of competition as a type of test for interventions in the area of gender. Similarly, although the CEDAW focuses on one only of the many gender equality concerns (between groups – discrimination), it also highlights the larger category, including other types of gender equality within and between groups. The concepts above can be packaged in sets of principles relating to the two areas of gender mainstreaming and gender equality.

Once these concepts and the sub-principles are clearly stated, it then becomes possible to take them from the statements of principles format and to turn them into questions to be used in an indicator (see the following sections) to measure how effectively gender interventions actually incorporate these international principles.

Gender mainstreaming

This is defined by the UN ECOSOC as a 'process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned action … so that women and men benefit equally and inequality isn't perpetuated' (1997). It seems like an unusual principle but, once restated, it actually helps to pinpoint where gender interventions are needed and where they may be promoting hidden agendas.

Gender mainstreaming is essentially a form of what political scientists refer to as 'Pareto optimality': the assurance that a change for one group making it better off in the short run is not achieved by making another group worse off in the short run (or both worse off in the long run). The change must not be a 'zero sum' gain that takes away from another group. Any benefit to one group must either be neutral or offer a benefit to another. To take an extreme example, the goal of equality cannot be simply to kill off both men and women or to return them to the jungle to ensure that the end result of equality – with everyone dead or equally debilitated – is achieved. Nor can it be to incapacitate all men or take away their resources and transfer them to women, since that offers no benefit to men. Nor can it be to create new forms of exploitation, instability or unsustainable production, where both groups are or will be worse off in the long run but appear to be better off at the level of simple short-term measures (such as 'incomes', 'representation', some kind of institutional use or 'attendance', or achieving a particular skill). The 'both groups benefit equally' standard is high and perhaps over-strict (any kind of change would probably be doomed if it was stringently applied, since no change benefits everyone equally) but the overall idea is clear. The statement to promote a goal can be understood to

mean that both groups benefit, such that the move towards greater equality is one that benefits society (or a culture or subcultures within it) overall and is motivated by a goal of overall benefit rather than confrontation or retaliation. Once this principle is placed in the context of development with regard to specific interventions, the meanings and applications are clearer.

The CEDAW tries to establish some context for the idea of gender mainstreaming, although this is somewhat unclear. An important statement in the treaty reinforces how this concept is meant to fit with the idea of cultural sustainability and cultural protections that are part of the UN system. The CEDAW recognises that, 'The eradication of aggression, foreign occupation and dominance … is essential for the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women' and reiterates the 'rights of all people … to self-determination and independence'. 'Self-determination' and 'independence' are the terms normally used for cultural protections (and sustainability). The idea of culture protection and transformation to sustainability is a little murky in the CEDAW, since it stereotypes and does not explain the 'traditional role of men', although it does say that 'a change in the … role of men … is needed to achieve full equality between men and women' (1979). If the two statements within the Convention are linked with each other, the logic becomes clear. Social changes in gender roles that end foreign hegemony (one cause of unsustainability and gender inequality in most of the world's 6,000 existing cultures), and that promote a return to sustainable, independent cultures, is one of the treaty's goals in ways making it consistent with other goals of cultural protections and sustainability.

Although recent international gender documents do not explicitly mention culture and sustainability, the reference in CEDAW to 'information and advice on family planning' also partly recognises the need for sustainable development planning in respect of population and consumption (Article 10, h, 1979). An examination of specific applications, including concerns relating to population, consumption, environment and gender roles, makes this abstract reasoning much clearer.

*How the gender mainstreaming principle is applied in practice and how
it is meant to work to screen out inappropriate gender interventions*

Start with the CEDAW preamble and the gender mainstreaming principle, and reiterate that gender equality's overall goal is to fix what is broken in societies that have suffered from colonialism or experienced other damage or change that has made them unsustainable. The gender mainstreaming principle tells us that all cultures have a right to diversity and to different gender roles, and that intervention is appropriate only when something has gone wrong that needs to be fixed, or where a culture is already sustainable but can be further improved. Nothing in these statements suggests that the single 'good society model' has been discovered and an international agreement reached that every society is to be hammered into that form. In fact, the goal is exactly the opposite. The role of gender mainstreaming goes hand in hand with that of other treaties to reestablish the equilibrium of broken cultures and ensure that these can live sustainably with their environments and neighbours. Here is how it works in specific application in development:

Gender roles have shifted in cultures throughout the world in making transitions (for many reasons) and in making contact with outsiders. These shifts have resulted in serious inequalities that hurt both genders in those cultures and/or societies:

- In hunter-gatherer societies that have now been transformed into agrarian societies, the male's hunting role has disappeared, and suddenly women are left with greater burdens but without the male role adapting. This is an unsustainable situation that requires intervention to make both genders better off, meeting the goal of gender mainstreaming.
- Similarly, in the transition from agricultural societies to urban that spurred the women's movement in the industrial world, females were left in the household but without their former agricultural and market work or status. Changes were needed to make both genders better off as a whole (to sustain the society) and in their individual lives and relations. Transformations are now underway in the industrial world that have largely led the movement for gender equality, to attempt to shift unsustainable and imperial/colonial industrial systems to new sustainable forms. A shift in male roles away from conquest and violence will also be required, with other changes in roles and responsibilities that should benefit those societies, the planet as a whole and both genders, thus achieving the goal of gender mainstreaming.
- If gender interventions are appropriate, they will be tailored to these kinds of cultural transformations that result in sustainability in all of these contexts. But where sustainability and restoration is not considered and there is an attempt simply to shift roles to some kind of universal cultural norm, a gender intervention is clearly inappropriate for practical reasons (it does not solve the problem and probably destabilises cultures), and for reasons of international law (it is an illegal intervention that violates sovereignty and stability, in direct conflict with the goal of gender mainstreaming).

The practical applications of the gender mainstreaming principle are not only revealed in overall transformations of means of production in rural and industrial societies. Within complex societies, questions also arise as to adaptations of subcultures in order to protect them. Gender interventions that find jobs for one gender in a minority group but leave the other gender worse off (such as may be the case with African American males in the US, for example, and the resultant social costs) offer examples of violations of the gender mainstreaming principle and its meaning in complex societies where protection of minority cultures is also a concern. Similarly, simple changes in ratios of men and women in a culture, caused by whatever factor, can change relative power (equality) and opportunity in everything from work to marriage. Where minority populations are subject to majority violence and suppression, either resulting in early death or incarceration of a minority population, the implications for gender equality can be great. It is the racial and class politics and violence between males in the society that is the underlying cause of the gender inequality and also of the solution (Charles and Luoh, 2010). Gender mainstreaming thus requires study and planning of the impact of any interventions across genders in subcultures, such that both minority males and females are considered in the context of their subcultures.

In short, the standard test for gender mainstreaming is that there be no additional burdens on any gender to achieve such equality (including no 'double' or 'triple burden' that brings women into the workforce, while still requiring them to perform most of the housework or parenting) or zero sum gains. The goal is also that both genders support the changes so that there will be no backlashes resulting from an intervention.

Gender equality

Even though some disagreement exists about what the best gender inequality measures are, there is a clear understanding that it, like other forms of equality, is measured in at least three categories – between genders, within genders and across genders – and that these are interconnected. The names and simple descriptions of these categories, which would help in applying principles, are missing from international documents. The CEDAW treaty and international community are currently focused on discrimination between genders as a political priority, and recognise the other kinds of gender inequalities but do not name them specifically. Overall, ideas about inequalities between, among and across groups are pretty clear in principle, even if they have not been named in the case of gender in the same way as they have for race and other classes. In fact, addressing only one of the three categories may not in fact solve the overall problems of inequalities that have deeper cultural and social roots. Thus, in practical application in the development context, the three types of inequalities need to be taken together.

In its focus on discrimination, the CEDAW notes that 'discrimination against women violates the principle of equality of rights and respect for human dignity' in the same way that other causes like 'aggression, foreign occupation and dominance' also violate and interfere with 'the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women' (1979). Although the Convention does not expand on the other types of inequalities, or how the international community should measure or address them, it is obvious, for example, that the probable main cause of men's shorter lifespan compared to women's (a violation of the full enjoyment of men's rights) is what the CEDAW preamble notes as 'aggression, foreign occupation and dominance'. It is this militarism, sending men to war, to their deaths and to high rates of physical and mental disabilities, that destroys gender parity in a way not caused by discrimination. But it has deep or deeper roots that may be linked to discrimination. As the CEDAW also notes, the same kinds of remedies may be needed to address the different forms of gender inequality: 'a change in the traditional role of men' (from the preamble) and modifications in the 'social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women' including challenges to 'stereotyped roles for men and women' (from Article 5) (1979).

While it might be enough simply to stop at gender discrimination (inequality between groups that appear to have a direct cause), there is a real danger that dealing with one type of inequality only can trigger other types, and this is what the CEDAW suggests. Correcting one form of imbalance can create others if they are not all viewed together. The CEDAW did not invest in this idea since it also comes out of earlier rights principles and agreements. In fact, that seems to be what the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Person recognises in noting that all forms of inequality should be dealt with together in holistic solutions in order to be effective.

Recent challenges to assuming two clear distinct genders as a result of advances in genetics and psychology, highlights the importance of approaches to equality that do not focus on strict 'male' and 'female' classifications, but on overall equality in a broader sense. Rather than identify gender issues as those of discrimination or inequalities between two genders, it is important to look at all inequalities so as to not exclude any individuals and groups. Hermaphrodites and other genetic crossgender individuals, and those who elect to change gender, are entitled to equality without

being forced to choose a group. Sexual freedoms, within cultural context, are also among those issues relevant to discrimination, and imply freedom without having to choose a particular gender group.

Using standard principles on equality and referring to the treaties, the various components can be labelled that should form part of the analysis and actions to achieve real gender equality:

– *between genders (discrimination)*: a principle clearly stated in the CEDAW. One form of inequality is between genders (intergroup) as a result of discrimination by one gender against another. Therefore,

– *across genders (parity) (causes other than discrimination)*: the second form of inequality across genders (intergroup), arises from causes other than discrimination, including stereotyped roles and social and cultural patterns. Simply put, this category recognises that the CEDAW covers violence by men against women, but allows for the fact that other possibilities for gender brutality exist: that by men against men as a result of gender stereotypes and social and cultural patterns, that by women against women, and that by women against men. The resultant or otherwise existing inequalities can be found in everything from lifespan to social diseases, and mental illness to disabilities, to equal chances to marry or remarry, or to have genetic offspring at a given age, or to be able to fulfil a parenting role. Note that dealing only with violence by men against women does not address underlying problems of brutality of men against men that may actually underlie or be linked with male violence and discrimination against women.[1] Similarly, the measurement of parity helps to protect interests of individuals who fall outside the strict male and female gender categories, and achieves the goals of inclusiveness that advances in science and psychology (and anthropology) recognise in the area of gender.

After looking at relations across genders, it is then logical to look at relations within each gender:

– *within genders*: if intergroup gender inequalities exist, intragroup inequalities are also likely, for whatever cause, inequalities among males and among females that have to do with intragender competition based on race, kinship, genetics or other factors. The popular 'alpha male' and 'queen bee' concepts reflect types of gender inequalities that might also be described as what the CEDAW refers to as 'distinctions … based on sex', as do competitions for work between minority men and women, or ethnic majority and minority women, or patterns of hiring and discrimination that have a gender impact or other inequality within gender (1979). Even if the causes of inequalities within genders are not a result of gender stereotypes, they are also among the hierarchies that the UN Declaration on Rights of the Person seeks to address since they are often the results of other forms of discrimination noted in other treaties. Looking within genders is one way to help highlight and spot these other forms of discrimination in a holistic way.

– *overall equality issues and how they work when applied*: the applications of gender equality principles are also straightforward. After applying a full cultural analysis and determining which social roles and relations are essential to the cultural systems in which interventions are considered, achieving gender equality requires measuring the full set of equality types and then ensuring the interventions do not themselves create new inequalities, including those of the project itself (within the organisation promoting an intervention).

Given that the different kinds of inequalities are unlikely to be independent of each other, gender equality interventions first require an examination of *all* the places in which inequalities may occur before focusing on just one area of causes or effects. For example, if violence by males against males is linked to violence by males against females, with impacts that show up in inequalities such as those of longevity, reproductive equality or disabilities, focusing on intergender discrimination of men against women does not address or solve the full problem. It simply tackles symptoms in ways that could ultimately make situations worse.

In the development field, the most consistent way to start the overall measure of inequality is to look at the standard wellbeing measures that the international community has already accepted, rather than prejudging underlying causes or problems and focusing on a gender in specific age category or social role (maternity). The international community already has a list of development measures including men's and women's lifespans, their reproduction opportunities, their disabilities and other comparative health issues, as well as all other social, economic and political rights *and* conditions. Although these are not perfect (measuring current consumption and income, rather than per capita assets calculated in perpetuity, violate the goal of cultural sustainability), some of the objective measures used for looking at cultures and ethnic inequalities can also be uniformly applied to gender as a starting point prior to determining the sources of those inequalities and the places where interventions could achieve gender mainstreaming.

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1   There is an anthropological argument that much of the male aggression in primates and other species is actually a result of competition over women, and over resources to be taken to women and children. Simply dealing with male attempts to control women through legalistic 'rights' approaches misses most of the demographic, economic and social concerns that also underlie harms to males (Wilson, 1975).

Inequality measures in the gender category carry the same faults as those in other categories. The purpose of this article is not to resolve all those problems but simply to rely on the principles and use them as guides.

– measuring political power in the context of gender across, between and within genders, for example, implies examining real sources of power such as the military or police, to ensure that real control of the tools of physical violence in society is equitably distributed both across and within gender categories. It also implies that individuals have as much control over these sources of power as of economic wealth as a form of power (and precursor to the ability to have equal education in the skills required by culture and society). It is thus a mistake to seek to measure political equality through politicised proxy measurements of nominal or ritual power in the form of voting or 'representatives'.

– similarly, in looking at real social equalities, it is important to focus on real variables for the full range of human biological activities and demographics. As the CEDAW treaty notes, 'the role of women in procreation should not be a basis for discrimination'. The implication here is that demographic imbalances in the male and female population and the fact that males' efforts to reproduce (which can be pressured by demographic and economic factors) should be weighted to ensure that men actually do have statistically equal opportunities in all ethnic, class and other categories to reproduce and to raise children (preamble, 1979).

Note that the principle of 'separate but equal' also applies in development interventions. Equality is different from absolute neutrality since it recognises the existence of and the right to differences such as separate health stations or rest rooms for women, in which interventions can play a protective role. At the same time it is also different from retaliatory rebalancing between groups. For ethnic groups, separatism in the name of equality can serve a purpose *if* its goal is to safeguard cultural autonomy by creating space for practising and transmitting culture. But, in contrast to ethnic groups, genders are parts of cultures, not separate. For genders, separation has a value for physical protection and development of identity in certain social roles and education, but it also brings with it the danger of promoting separatism and fragmentation. 'Women's studies', 'Women's museums', 'Men's studies', 'Men's museums' and other segregation of disciplines, public facilities and approaches could threaten to create new forms of inequality and separatism in ways that violate the spirit of dignity and equality, and it is important to gauge these as part of overall gender equality measures.

In looking at gender equality and whether interventions promote it, it is important to measure whether interventions themselves create new hierarchies in being implemented (usually among women who work with rights projects), and whether they create forms of reverse discrimination against men or neglect of other subgroups (including gays and bisexuals).

Indicators in the field and the lack of a project intervention indicator

Although there have been attempts to develop indicators for gender interventions, the indicators in use now are for different purposes than screening interventions to comply with the international principles and treaties reviewed above. The approaches taken can be better described as internal organisational reviews offering subjective diagnostics. They can also be regarded as outcome indicators which violate the gender mainstreaming and equality principles, and seek to promote certain symbolic changes for women without any cultural context or adherence to international treaty principles.

Indicators that are subjective organisational diagnostics

A recent UN review of indicators that were being used in the area of gender listed several attempts within various parts of the UN's system to try to standardise measures of gender projects' quality (UNCT, 2008). While the review noted several approaches that even used 'scorecards', all of these repeated the same structural problems that made them inconsistent with even the UN's own treaty and conference standards in gender. Rather than seek to follow an objective and a measurable standard, accountable to the international community, they all chose to use subjective questionnaires and internal ratings based on the judgments of people involved in the project administration, rather than the public. Though they have various names like 'gender mainstreaming scorecard' (UNDP, 2006a) or 'gender audit' (UNDP, 2006b), or 'scorecard on gender equality' (UNESCO 2004), they did little to advance the UN's earlier attempts to link gender and development in an objective way (UNDP, 2001). Perhaps more troubling is that the most recent of these attempts to incorporate learning from previous approaches, simply politicised the process of gender projects and inserted measurements based on bureaucratic activities like 'producing a gender action plan', 'hiring gender experts', and ensuring that 'senior management meets performance targets in gender', without offering any objective measures of

what they would be required to do to actually follow international requirements for gender mainstreaming and equality (UNCT, 2008). The scorecards may work to promote the profession of gender experts and their funding, but they do little to ensure that experts are actually fulfilling their global responsibilities in a professional way.

Outcome indicators that promote symbolic changes for women without cultural context or adherence to international treaty principles

In principle, an attempt to establish outcome measurements for gender projects is an appropriate step and follows the line of treaties' attempts (including CEDAW, in the sub-area of intergender discrimination) to list categories and then to suggest that there could be measures of success in each category (without actually offering them). Yet, although these goals make sense, they can only work successfully if measurements actually follow the principles of gender mainstreaming and equality that the international community has established. What is happening instead, even in international agreements like the UN system's MDGs (UN Millennium Declaration, 2000), and now in the SDGs that have followed is that certain measures are being offered without any cultural context, and with a selectivity that undermines the holistic, systematic and contextual principles of gender mainstreaming and gender equality. The UN system has itself compiled a partial listing of these indicators in the context of overall governance, though its gender indicators also offer no attempts at consistency with the UN's own treaty framework (UNDP, 2007).

One suggestion that was on the right track, offered at the World Economic Forum in Geneva a few years ago, was a list of 'gender gap' measures in areas like economic participation and opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment and social advances like health and wellbeing (Lopez and Zahidi, 2003). Obviously, in theory, the intergender and intragender equality measures must include actual gauges of political power (including real control of military and police powers, and not just symbolic political power like voting or the number of women representatives); of economic wealth and power including wealth distribution; corporate ownership; oversight of international economic power that influences one's community on a gender basis; and all social measures like life expectancy across and within genders, disabilities of all kinds at all ages including psychological dependencies, reproductive and parental care, sexuality, and more. But it appears the international community has hardly taken even the first step in identifying and using such real measures.

Part of this list is already visible in the CEDAW, although only in relation to discrimination against women. Nevertheless, the 11 categories of potential measures do include political (and government representation) (Articles 7 and 8); economic (access to education, employment discrimination, rural participation) (Articles 10, 11, 13 and 14); social (cultural symbols and other forms, and healthcare access) (Articles 5, 12 and 13); and the specific harms and protections of maternity, trafficking and prostitution, and loss of nationality after marriage (Articles 4, 6, and 9).

Unfortunately, the few specific measures available with the MDGs (meant to serve as key gender equality symbols) and now the SDGs which will replace them are far from legally compliant gauges of gender equality. Moreover, they are presented in such a way that they immediately violate the gender mainstreaming principle that would require putting them in cultural context. If the idea is to use census measures across countries, they fail to offer neutral evaluations of even the most basic development gauges of lifespan and disability/health across genders, substituting only one small subset measure; that of maternal mortality. Further, the key opportunity measure used by the MDGs, that of girls' schooling, has little correlation with economic wealth, political power, or the skills needed within the context of each individual culture in order to be effective functioning adults within it. The schooling measure looks at whether children are forced into state education to learn the skills that the majority culture determines they need to be productive for the state, rather than whether they are receiving the education and skills they would choose in order to make state powers work for them and their resource base fit their needs. Other measures, such as the number of political seats in government, provide only the appearance of ritual political power and symbolic representation rather than real access to the tools of real power. Similarly, the percentage of women in non-agricultural paid employment, and the rate of female poverty take measures of actual wealth and wellbeing out of their cultural context. Making these the targets for assuring gender mainstreaming and equality is highly problematic and likely to cover up much more serious problems in cultural sustainability and gender inequality, if not to make some of them worse.

The UN system's Gender Development Index attempts to fit gender into the development context but also creates a set of internal contradictions. The index appears in the UN's annual Human Development Report and includes quality-of-life measures such as life expectancy (although the UN appears to operate on the assumption that women 'naturally' live five years longer than men), which is an appropriate gauge of inequality demonstrating discrimination against men, and education/adult literacy rate over age 15, as well as educational enrolment, along with a fourth measure of income/purchasing power equity. Nevertheless, these four are not used with the other human development health indicators or of goods consumption within the context of one's cultural preferences for consumption (only as a foreign determination of what should be consumed, as offered by the health development indicators) to indicate comparative

wellbeing across genders. Nor does the UN system use them as a basis for equality projects and programmes, other than in the education category, to fit into the MDGs above and now the SDGs (UNDP, Gender Development Index, 2009).

The UN's Gender Empowerment Measure – available annually since 2003, and which can also be used to make cross-country comparisons – has similar flaws. It makes simplistic assumptions that power is correlated directly with certain symbolic positions or with urban incomes, using the flawed measures of percentages of parliamentary seats held by gender (but not of military or police power), percentage of female legislators, senior officials and managers (but not whether industries or political units are themselves gendered), percentage of technical positions held by women, and estimated earned income in female non-agricultural wages. These statistics may indicate how homogeneous women and men are in urban cultures – whether they have been turned into fungible goods and commodities in industrial states – but that is a gauge of cultural destruction and homogenisation, not of mainstreaming or equality (UNDP, 2007).

The problem with many gender equality projects and the real value of an indicator based on international universal principles

Though it is hard to read anything on gender equality without coming across terms like 'patriarchy' and the 'historical legacy of empire', few gender projects in developing countries seek to acknowledge the full legacies of colonialism that have formed the basis for groups currently seeking attention for gender equality through treaties and international law in developed and developing countries. A common critique of these projects is that gender equality measures have been deliberately distorted and the gender mainstreaming requirement has been discarded as part of an attempt to use gender to destabilise cultures and make them even more vulnerable to sales of their resources, factory work, and higher consumption and imports, all of which benefit foreign powers. This abuse of the gender rights ideal as a tool to destroy cultures and to promote outside control is not new; at least one scholar has documented how the Soviet system used this approach with non-Russian nationalities – that industrialising society's attempts to exploit the less developed cultures on its periphery date back to the 1920s (Massell, 1974). However, it is also of importance in areas subject to European and American colonialism, and particularly in the British Commonwealth, where the attack on both missionisation and traditional male chieftaincies is used to disrupt rather than renovate local cultures and political systems.

Cynics charge that most international interventions, particularly in the areas of governance, rights, and democracy are really just forms of preparing foreign systems for trade relationships that extract a developing country's resources (including educated people through 'brain drain', and women's labour for factory work). They also colonise rural and indigenous peoples to make them part of homogenised industrial systems and conforming workers and consumers. Indeed, other indicators in this series largely reveal a pattern of a huge gap between treaty requirements and actual adherence to them. In many other areas it appears that hidden agendas have hijacked international agreements. If that is happening with gender projects, an indicator would likely reveal a similar pattern.

The general gender critique is that colonialism's historical legacy has left most of the world's countries and cultures with patriarchal, militaristic societies that are no longer sustainable within their resource bases. They require cultural reconstruction with gender mainstreaming serving as a key to demilitarisation and harmony with nature, placing them on the paths to cultural survival.

Yet, what appears to be happening in the case of many projects is that the international system seems to reinforce the legacies of colonialism, although in new ways, further destabilising cultures by pushing a universal standard of industrialisation that homogenises societies, instead of dismantling it in the interests of security, peace, sustainability and diversity. Gender projects in the Commonwealth countries of Africa (from Ghana to South Africa), or in the Pacific Islands, including Fiji and its neighbours, for example, target traditional male chieftaincies as signs of patriarchy that need to be eliminated. What they really need to target are the contemporary male chiefs who hold the real power – male military and police leaders, and male corporate leaders – or the government hierarchies where foreign-supported Ministries of Planning working with international financial institutions promote continued militarism, hierarchy and extraction. The end result is to undermine the traditional community organisations that could empower those communities, safeguard local resources, and return to a cultural balance in a way that could reform these institutions. Ultimately, the communities are atomised, with women becoming breadwinners in foreign establishments and with the society permanently in place as a lower rung in the global system.

Moreover, it appears that women's organisations and females in developed countries that are promoting gender equality in the name of poor women in developing countries, have also largely agreed to support this neocolonial industrial agenda in ways that favour the interests of global concentrations of economic power for resource extraction and productivity. The term 'women's rights' largely serves as a euphemism for women's industrial employment for foreign capital, and the state power that serves it, in both industrial societies and the developing world.

Indeed, one interesting feature of rights organisations that I have noted in my work in South Africa, for the European Commission, and for the United Nations in Fiji and the Pacific, is that local organisations focusing on gender equality are often promoted by descendants of Indian labourers and traders, who are keen on promoting these rights but show little or no interest in Native peoples' community rights. This appears to be a legacy of colonialism that still continues in new forms in Commonwealth nations.

Many critics of gender mainstreaming and gender equality approaches have focused on whether hidden agendas have come to manipulate gender equality projects. Some believe there is a Western agenda, or one of postcolonial male elites, to break societies to increase the exploitation of female labour, and to increase labour burdens on women (either by foreign companies seeking to hire women, or attempts to increase the double or triple burden on women in developing countries, in child care, home and employment) that is promoted under the banner of 'women's rights.' Others believe that male leaders use the term 'women's rights' as little more than a slogan to promote symbols of women in leadership roles and to exploit women's labour and political support but without changing power or hierarchies. Some believe that gender equality has really become a vehicle for women to assert political power as a way of confronting men and to promote their own interests (some say anger), whether or not there is any intent of equality or balance. They claim that areas where males could also benefit are purposefully rejected. The focus has shifted away from rights of all individuals to security and opportunity, and from the harms of gender roles and stereotypes (that is, the shorter lives and increased disabilities of males due to male on male violence). Their only concern is the more selfish short-term one of intergender impacts of male violence against females.

Although international agreements and actions promoting gender mainstreaming and gender equality are currently integrated with the goals of international development and poverty alleviation through international frameworks such as the UN's MDGs (now SDGs), and do offer a few outcome measures such as equal access to formal state education, there is a sharp disconnect between the measures of wellbeing and development when applied to disadvantaged societies, and when applied to gender. It raises questions as to whether the determinations do in fact violate other more established, clearly defined rights treaties and international legal commitments. While poverty concerns focus on measures such as life expectancies or reproduction, basic political rights and health, most of these actual gauges of equity across genders and within societies are discarded in favour of focusing on specific goals for girls and women, rather than actual gender equality across the spectrum of measures.

Overall, while gender equality is placed within the system of human rights that are offered in the array of international treaties devoted to the various levels and areas of rights – including, first, cultural protections and sustainability and, second, individual rights within cultures and societies – gender equality rights seemingly exist in an independent category, not integrated and often in conflict with these other levels.

This would also explain why the gender equality measures used by the international community are those of schooling in state-run institutions, preparing women for factory work in the global environment, rather than locally based measures.

Although the international principles of gender equalities are simple and not so difficult to measure or estimate, most projects tend to just focus on specific institutional results or laws and policies, that could easily hide an agenda to promote globalisation and erase cultural diversity and difference, while maintaining systems of military aggression and hierarchy that are also legacies of patriarchy. The fact that women may be rising within these patriarchal hierarchies in the militaristic countries does not suggest that the actual problems of gender inequalities are being addressed in ways that will promote sustainability and equality in the long term. If competition over resources in an unsustainable world forces more militarism, as it would appear (Lempert and Nguyen, 2009), advances in gender equality and safety for women will likely be short lived.

Indeed, even the international development community itself appears to have become gendered, with women playing the dominant role in gender equality projects in UNIFEM/UN Women, UNICEF and UN Volunteers (UNV), while being under-represented in international banks that apparently set the larger international development agenda. Thus, even the evaluation and design of such projects appears to lack neutrality and gender equality that would allow for an objective determination of performance.[2] In developed countries, it also appears that this process has included a segregation of universities and professions in ways that have gendered and politicised the universities, such that gender studies segregates females and delinks the women's movement from challenges to imperialism, militarism and economic inequalities by offering them a separate network in which they can rise and have their own power.

What is missing is both consistency with international laws, treaty standards and equality principles and an anthropological perspective that seeks to ensure that gender equality projects are really about promoting neutrality in both male and female interests within their cultural contexts, clearly focusing on the causes and harms of inequalities. Without such standards being applied, there is a danger that such projects may reflect political gender agendas (of

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2   Major positions in UNIFEM and UNV in recent years have been staffed by women, while heads of the international banks, which have much larger capital and greater financial leverage over global economies and political agendas, continue to be male.

either males or females or both) or cultural biases coming from wealthier, donor nations as to what constitutes gender equality.

It is possible to use a relatively simple indicator to see which projects and organisations, if any, are actually following gender mainstreaming and gender equality principles, and which are actually promoting a hidden and competing agenda in the name of gender, simply by looking at whether the fundamental principles are appropriately measured and incorporated into their objectives systems. Although such an indicator cannot in itself be used to determine the real incentives of each organisation and project to deviate from the standards, and whether individuals in each one have made cynical bargains to compromise standards for their own advancement, or are even aware of what has happened, it does form a basis for asking these hard questions, and to hold projects, individuals and organisations to international standards.

The accountability indicator for gender mainstreaming and gender equality

To make it easier for organisations and contributors to democratisation to differentiate between effective and ineffective (or hidden agenda) approaches, the indicator below with three categories (and 10 simple questions) can be used quickly, even by non-experts, as a litmus test of gender mainstreaming, gender equality, and project management in this area. By asking these ten easy 'yes or no' questions and then counting up the results (possible 10 points), one can determine the relative value of a project or intervention using the following scale:

Scale:

8–10 points	Comprehensive approach to gender mainstreaming and gender equality in line with established rights treaties and principles
5–7 points	Partial solution that promotes a specific group or is only partly sustainable
3–4 points	Unsustainable quick fix
0–2 points	Project with hidden, culture destabilising or retaliatory gender agenda

Note that the indicator is not an absolute scale since it is not offered as a social science research tool but as a project evaluation and selection tool. It is best used to show the relative value of different projects, with some leeway offered in judgments for calibrating the indicator for the user's specific needs and for application to meet countries' specific needs. Like most indicators, answers to each question would need to be 'calibrated' to ensure that different observers make the exact same determinations. To do so would require a longer manual for standardised, precise answers across observers.

Also, the indicator's purpose is not to measure gross-benefit or cost-benefit. It is not intended to weigh the economic or other value of promoting one gender or both. Nor is it an economic calculation. It is merely designed to test the relative consistency of an intervention with key international values that define gender mainstreaming and gender equality.

Although some questions are complex, in an effort to keep the overall number low and to still allow for a spread of scoring results, it is possible to expand this indicator by splitting up such questions or by adding others. The advantage of asking more questions is that it ensures the issues are fully understood and taken into account.

Measures/sub-factors

Below is an explanation of how anyone can apply the test to any project by asking the 10 questions and recording the scores. Most questions are clear-cut: 'yes' (1 point) or 'no' (0 points or negative points for harms), but in cases where a judgment call has to be made, you can opt for a 'debatable' (0.5 points for benefits and 0 points for harm).

The performance measures can be placed in the following categories:

1. *Gender mainstreaming: consistency with the cultural protection and sustainability objectives of rights treaties* – whether both genders are better off at the cultural level; the society as a whole; and the cultures within the complex society (3 points possible for 3 questions)

2. *Gender equality: consistency with measures of equality implied in rights treaties to promote comprehensive and sustainable gender equality* – whether the project is really doing comprehensive balancing of genders (5 points possible for 5 questions)

3. *Measures and implementation meet professional standards for development interventions* – whether the project is really analysing root causes of problems and targeting them to achieve measurable results (2 points possible for 2 questions)

These categories are set out below:

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1. Gender mainstreaming: consistency with the cultural protection and sustainability objectives of rights treaties: can be used for screening whether both genders are better off at the cultural level, the society as a whole and the cultures within the complex society. A project that does not score more than a point in this category is already partly suspect as being driven by an outside agenda to use gender as a means of either destroying a culture and exploiting its labour force for the benefit of foreign powers or local elites, or to promote one gender's special interests or psychological needs without real concern for the overall society, or some combination of these two. (3 questions and a potential score of 3 points).

Question 1. *Restoring cultural sustainability and protecting the culture is the priority goal and is recognised as the way to achieve benefits for men and women, with gender issues placed in this context in project design (design phase).* Gender interventions are part of a clear model of cultural transition in which women's and men's roles are specified and (re-)balanced to fit the culture. Gender roles specifically fit that culture in a sustainable way and a clear understanding exists of how those roles work in a balance of population, consumption and productivity on a resource base. Where transformations have occurred to create imbalances in rights and gender roles (e.g. transitions from hunting and gathering to agrarian societies, leaving an imbalance), a simple understanding exists of this transformation and how a rebalancing creates benefits for both sexes. There is a straightforward statement of what broke the culture that needs to be repaired or why the current transition and transformation is appropriate, and how the new system will work. There are no attempts to improve health, reproduction, survivability or productivity that are not introduced in ways fitting a cultural balance (see Lempert and Nguyen, 2008). If changes are sought in an already industrialised society, an implicit understanding exists of how transformation to a more productive and also less militarised society through changing gender roles and interaction will lead to sustainability.

Scoring: Yes – 1
Debatable – 0.5
No – 0

Question 2. *No culture changes are sought or expected in either the target culture or subcultures unless these are specifically to target unsustainability of that culture or subculture, or to provide benefits once sustainability has already been achieved. Mainstreaming is planned and studied at the level of subcultures in complex societies. Specific research is done to avoid harms for specific project interventions (project intervention phase).* Each specific intervention is tested for the overall culture/society and for all subcultures in that society to ensure that it fits into a clear social transition model in which roles of ethnic groups in the system are specified and rebalanced without any negative impact on any gender of any culture (e.g. minority males and minority females of sub-cultures within the context of the larger society, such as urban minority males or rural minority females). The focus on either individual or gender empowerment is not used to jeopardise any other rights (individual or cultural) in ways that could make the overall system unsustainable or reduce overall diversity within it, and the project takes active steps to prevent imbalance (e.g. the approach to women's rights is not designed to industrialise the society and eliminate a previous culture that could be restored to sustainability in a different way. It is not ultimately linked to factory labour for women in support of foreign investment and does not target cultural institutions like chieftaincies as forms of inequality without looking at ways to restore and improve them. There is no targeting of cultural practices from an ethnocentric perspective – such as circumcision – without looking first at minimal interventions that would fit the culture and sustainability, such as improving the safety of such practices).

Scoring: Yes – 1
Debatable – 0.5
No or not relevant – 0

Question 3. *No zero sum gains occur across genders as a result of an intervention: interventions that improve relative power or opportunities do so in a way that increases the overall benefit of both groups (intervention phase).* No change is achieved by harming one gender group or sub-group that is perceived to be advantaged without finding a 'win-win' approach for all, and there is no harm to any particular demographic segment (e.g. young males on the job market) or ethnic segment (e.g. black males in US) that has not unduly benefited from any inequalities. There is no attempt to disable or handicap one gender or to perpetuate systems that do in order to achieve balance that will benefit the other gender. The project has measured and can claim that there will not be any backlash in response to the change in power, or that there will be any other use of power to subvert an apparent change in control (e.g. through an informal or other formal system that will reverse a change such as extra-legal violence or other coercion and control), or that will result in an eruption of tension or social violence that could be worse than the power imbalance. There is a clear attempt to work with the incentives and behaviours of the abusive/advantaged group for change and to look at benefits and burdens for all, rather than to push sacrifices on to weaker groups.

Scoring: Yes – 1
Debatable – 0.5
No or not relevant – 0

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2. Gender equality: consistency with measures of equality implied in rights treaties to promote comprehensive and sustainable gender equality: can be used for screening whether or not the project measures equality in its design phase (3 questions) and then actually promotes its implementation appropriately (2 questions). A project that does not score more than 3 points in this category is suspect as being driven by an agenda to favour one group's specific ideological or psychological interests or benefits – be they greed, power, retaliation, or even just protections in response to fears – rather than to actually promote overall equality. The project may have a rational and protective basis for that group and may fill a valid need, but it is not meeting the gender equality test (5 questions and a potential score of 5 points).

Question 4. *Comprehensive equality is the focus, measured in terms of intra-group in genders as well as inter-group and without focus on the cause in overall design phase of a project before selecting or shaping interventions. In addressing one area of gender inequality, the project looks at the impact on other areas of gender inequality as well as other types of inequalities (racial, ethnic, economic) even if they are attributed to other causes or are in other categories (design phase).* The focus on either individual or gender empowerment is not used to promote one gender's specific agenda or to act on one group's psychological impulses (e.g. greed, desire for power, desire for autonomy, anger, retaliation) but is a direct result of comprehensive measures of inequality and imbalance of all forms leading to an objective choice of strategic solutions in the overall equality context.

Scoring: Yes – 1, if the project shows awareness of this and protects against harm
Debatable – 0.5
No or not relevant – 0

Question 5. *One set of (social welfare) measures fits standard development and quality of life goals such as life expectancy (right to life), health, reproductive opportunities, with those measures made objectively across genders in as many areas as possible before limiting the measures or using only a few narrow targets (design phase).* The full development measures checklist for quality of life and development within each cultural context is considered for both genders as part of basic project design and activity. Such measures include: men's longevity compared to women's, male disabilities including psychological dependencies and addictions; men's reproductive rights and actual genetic transmission; quality of sexual relations and emotional life; quality of childraising and socialisation, from multiple perspectives. Measures of violence, abuse and coercion and their effects are conducted fully across genders and within genders, looking at the multitude of causes and inequalities. Measures of consumption that are based on urbanisation models rather than being placed in cultural context (television sets and media and access to other consumer goods) are used only in societies where such consumption fits sustainable development, without seeking to impose a single consumption pattern across cultures and genders as a measure of equality.

Scoring: Yes – 1
Debatable – 0.5
No or not relevant – 0

Question 6. *A second set of measures, of economic and political power/ opportunity wealth, focus on real power and opportunity rather than ritual or shadow measures: equal ability to coerce action of others and equal access to wealth/opportunity to offer positive incentives for the skills and access need in that society (design phase).* Equality measures in the areas of political power and economic opportunity are also conducted across and within genders in ways that go beyond symbolic, shadow or ritual measures or litmus tests. The full checklist of military and police power and equal accountability of institutions wielding this power, within and across genders, as well as to economic wealth, power and skills for political access and influence are measured before choosing specific interventions to promote equality. Voting, political representation, state schooling in the skills of obedience to authority rather than the tools of competitive power and economic survival consistent with one's cultural group are ritualised sources, not real, and use of such measures earns no points.

Scoring: Yes – 1
Debatable – 0.5
No or not relevant – 0

Question 7. *Equality is not promoted through isolation or segregation of genders or creation of new systems or sub-systems that serve one gender but that exclude another, or that increase a burden on the disadvantaged gender. The principle of 'separate but equal' is applied only for physical protections. No additional gender burdens are created in an effort to solve a problem (e.g. no double burden on women) (intervention phase).* The project does not promote 'women's museums' or 'men's museums' or 'men's studies' or 'women's studies' or 'women's banks' or 'women's unions' as part of government, other less visible gendering of institutions or government (e.g. social services or 'family' ministries or agencies devoted to 'women's affairs,' alongside military, police, finance and planning arms that are male) in ways that segregate common human endeavours such as governance, social science, education or exploration and create competitions, rather than integrating perspectives into a holistic and common endeavour. There is no attempt to exclude one gender from roles (military, childraising) that would perpetuate violence or other action that results in inequities unless there is a specific reason to do sp to protect cultural diversity and sustainability. No 'double burden' is created for women or girls, making them 'equal' by adding labour outside or inside the home in order to increase labour force statistics or to require political participation in order to improve symbolic political equality measures.

Scoring: Yes – 1, if the project shows awareness of this and protects against harm
Debatable – 0.5
No or not relevant – 0

Question 8. *The project creates no new hierarchies among either gender for implementing the project or as a result of the project with a fixed interest in such hierarchy and offers safeguards to ensure there is equity in its own implementation (intervention phase).* The project does not copy or merge with existing inequalities in class, race, or other areas recognised by rights treaties, in a simple effort to create equity among genders. There is no replication of power structures that exist in the advantaged gender among the disadvantaged gender that would replicate the same kinds of hierarchies, discrimination, inequalities and abuses, or the potential for them in new organisations, agencies or departments that represent that gender. No new agencies are created in which women can exclude or harass men, e.g. in parallel to that power wielded by men over women. Instead, changes focus on ending such hierarchies and abuses and the potential for them, overall. The opportunity of a disadvantaged gender to compete for positions on an equal basis does not require that they adopt the same ideologies or agree to the same kinds of abuses that were perpetuated by the advantaged gender, and allows them clear opportunity to transform those positions and systems in ways that promote real accountability and equality and that reverse legacies of colonialism, aggression and dominance.

Scoring: Yes – 1
Debatable – 0.5
No or not relevant – 0

3. Measures and implementation meet professional standards for development interventions: this can be used for screening whether the project and spending really have any substance and fit into this category, and could potentially have substantive benefit. A project that does not score more than 1 point in this category is already partly suspect as being driven by an outside agenda to achieve a symbolic change or to prop up a governmental system or hierarchy, rather than to address the real causes of gender equality and to achieve results (2 questions and a potential score of 2 points).

Question 9. *Project design measures root causes of a problem in gender inequality in ways that go deeper than the proximate causes (individuals causing harm) and that links to the deeper structure of the society, its incentives, and its sustainability. Measures address these underlying root causes, systems and problems related to gender inequality in a standard logical framework analysis in ways that deal with the needs of both genders and of the society and that changes incentives and behaviours, rather than just treating symptoms through resource transfers (design phase).* The project does not simply pick either a symptom or a statistical measure as its target (women's education, incidence of violence, economic wellbeing) but addresses specific root causes in the context of the society where intervention is sought, in looking for a comprehensive solution to a problem (e.g. women's education in an agricultural society is not the key to making it stable and correcting the problems of transitioning from a nomadic or a hunter-gatherer society. The measure fits an industrial society but not an agricultural one).

Scoring: Yes – 1
Debatable – 0.5
No or not relevant – 0

Question 10. *There is a measurable outcome in some area of gender imbalance that reverses an inequality of political power, social opportunity (health, education) or security, safety and dignity of the person that occurs across or between genders and is appropriate within the cultural context (intervention phases).* The project has a specific measure of inequalities and achieves specific output results in that area, rather than simply offering inputs like training, capacity building, awareness, signing of treaties or changes of laws.

Scoring: Yes – 1
Debatable – 0.5
No or not relevant – 0

How some organisations score

After understanding how the test works, it is easy to apply to every new case in just a few minutes and with the close agreement of all using it. Below are more than a dozen examples including many standard approaches now widespread in the field. They show how different organisations and projects score, from best to worst. My own ranked assessments using the same determinations for all projects are also summarised below. Rather than score specific projects in particular countries, some are generalised in project categories common in the field, demonstrating the range of scores they earn depending on which particular features specific donors and proponents include in certain types of projects.

Note also that some gender projects, potentially scoring highly in terms of promoting democracy by increasing the political power of one gender relative to another, may score extremely poorly in terms of whether it actually follows the gender mainstreaming and gender equality principles. This is because the focus on political or economic power redistribution may either destabilise the overall society or perpetuate/create other existing inequalities. The democratisation indicator I have designed (Lempert, 2011) is meant to measure those achievements, while this indicator serves a completely different role.

Note that even though not every question applies to every kind of project, the scoring is still designed to yield a spread that leads to categorisation and comparison and that also shows how some category projects can do better or worse depending on their attention to specific project features highlighted in the scoring system.

Before reading these results, consider the following. Most 'self-rating' systems using indicators grossly over-inflate results because of the natural tendency to look uncritically at one's own projects (the reason there is a need for clear and objective grading standards) and to avoid considering several organisations at once when rating those that one favours. Any rating instrument needs to be calibrated; that is, tested for consistency using the same test question multiple times on multiple bodies in order to reveal differences. Each observer doing the test ultimately reaches some internal consistency after a number of tests, but different observers are likely to come up with varied results because they are 'harder' or 'softer'. The scores below are those consistent with my judgement and are an example of strictly applying

the ideas, such that weaknesses are revealed as areas where improvement is needed. If such a tool is ultimately adapted by professionals and subjected to multiple tests, there would ultimately be a consensus on the scaling and the rating system.

Note that while it might seem difficult to hold entire organisations to this standard (beyond simply individual projects), this is exactly what strategic planners and organisational experts who measure governmental and NGO performance are required to do in order to determine whether these bodies are efficiently fulfilling or even adhering to their missions. In some cases, where organisations are challenged for violating their charters or public purpose, or going beyond their legally established objectives (*ultra vires*) this is the kind of test which could be used to determine whether organisational charters should be revoked, management replaced or establishments changed.

Models of comprehensive gender mainstreaming and gender equality in line with established rights treaties and principles: ***8–10 points:*** few examples fall into this category. They are distinguished by the fact they are not simply sops to women but fully integrate gender concerns into the goals of sustainable development as a matter of course, without setting up a parallel structure.

- **Terra-Lingua, a linguists' organisation working with indigenous peoples to simultaneously protect their environments and cultures** – although founded by a woman, Terra-Lingua has no explicit gender agenda, its approach to cultural protection and development in ways that restore cultural stability and incorporate the international gender mainstreaming and gender equality principles directly into its projects ***scores 6 points on its general projects and up to 10 points on specific projects*** that identify a gender inequality which has distorted the culture needing to be remedied in order to rebalance a native culture with its environment. This is ecofeminism without the label. Organisations like this reinforce the truism that the 'good' of establishing sustainability of cultures in their environments for long-term benefit is a universal one that naturally incorporates all of the universal rights goals in an appropriate way.

Partial solutions that promote a specific group (generally targeting women's rights in a specific social context): ***5–7 points***: most gender projects, promoted directly by women are in this category.

- **Women's suffrage movements and early feminist movements for developed, industrial societies, including contemporary advocacy group movements like the National Organization for Women (NOW) that focus on political equality:** in industrial countries, the women's movement is an example of one that altered the culture and institutionalised those changes and measures for a single group, but in ways that promoted cultural stability (including population balance) and had the original goal and potential of improving conditions for both genders. It can be scored ***up to 7 points*** overall (losing points on questions 4, 5 and 6) for its comprehensive effects. Although it loses points for not looking specifically at overall equality issues within and across genders, it worked in ways that could be considered mainstreaming. In developing countries, however, similar projects often erode traditional cultures or promote less comprehensive changes in ways that are designed to push women into the labour force and increase consumption for foreign businesses, making them failures that might earn only a few points (such as the approach of UNIFEM/UN Women, measured below).

- **Code Pink, a female political movement for peace and equity:** though Code Pink is a political movement with positions that change as a result of members' choices and is not an organisation working specifically on development projects outside of the US, the attention it brings to the issues that were at the core of the ecofeminist movement (targeting American militarism-imperialism and hierarchy and promoting overall goals of social equity) could earn the organisation a score of ***around 6–10 points***. Since its goals with respect to indigenous peoples and their cultures, and with regard to specific inequalities relating to men are not clear (it seems partly torn by its wish to advance women's political careers, so it is hard to award points in these categories (mainstreaming, men's equality).

Projects offering benefits but that are an unsustainable quick fix dealing with symptoms or specific problems: ***3–4 points:*** most international projects that start with a sector approach to health, or to productivity gains as part of poverty reduction, include gender components that offer some additional opportunities for women or that may improve certain political inequalities. However, these are only incidental quick fixes that do not put societies on paths to sustainable development where gender issues would also be fully addressed in depth.

- **Integrated community development projects of foreign NGOs and of development banks and country donors that have gender components such as women's credit collectives or women's health care (including maternal health) or that focus singly on these gendered inputs:** NGO projects that promote integrated development in sustainable ways in minority communities to empower those communities and improve their governments can meet gender mainstreaming and equality requirements with **3.5 points** (earning an extra point on question 1 and another on question 6 for promoting general political equality), while the standard international bank and international donor project that is described as promoting gender equality actually undermines cultures and other forms of equality with a score as low as **1.5 points** (earning 1 point on question 3 and a debatable, half point on question 10); similar to other international projects with a hidden agenda in which gender is used only symbolically to promote the exploitation of female labour, including that of girls and aged women.

- **HIV/AIDS projects with truck drivers on condom use:** this health intervention does not specifically address the achieving of gender equality or sustainability, but because it deals with sexuality and issues that relate to power imbalances that lead to lack of caring in terms of health protections and family planning for both men and women, it actually addresses the issues of relationship inequalities and **can score 4 points** (on questions 2, 3, 8 and 9). This project is a quick fix, dealing with only one health issue and a rapid remedy, rather than larger issues of gender in the context of sustainability and equality.

- **Pre-marriage counselling for couples and spousal abuse interventions for couples:** though this is not a development project, or geared at solving larger social inequalities, counselling projects that work on improving relationships and dealing with psychological issues which probably have deeper cultural roots can earn up to **4 points** (questions 3, 7, and 8, and partial points on 9 and 10) for promoting equality in relations and creating benefits for both genders. This is a quick fix with positive benefits which does not deal with most of the larger social issues.

- **Self-defence classes for women:** empowerment projects which build self-esteem and deal with some of the underlying psychological causes of unequal power can score up to **4 points** (questions 6, 7, 9 and 10) for their ability to address inequality and to provide measurable benefits for women. However, such projects do not achieve gender mainstreaming and do not focus on larger inequality issues and are really a short-term approach to dealing with symptoms of larger underlying problems.

- **Anti-trafficking projects:** another quick fix that deals with the symptoms of an underlying gender problem between both sexes that these projects never seek to address (such as imbalances in male and female births, social inequalities, male inadequacy) and at best scores **2.5 points** (half a point on question 10 for results, and points on questions 7 and 8 for not creating new harms). Help is provided to some female victims but women continue to be victims because the projects are afraid to touch on the real root causes.

Failures that appear to have hidden, culture destabilising or retaliatory gender agendas: **0–2 points**: international organisations working in women's rights areas are largely promoting an agenda that applies to the specific interests of particular groups of urban women but that have merged this agenda with one that is destructive and exploitative of other cultures in the name of women. In fact, most gender projects are already identified as women's projects with a specific agenda to promote women, and largely to encourage urbanisation and Westernisation of females along a single model, rather than to achieve gender mainstreaming or overall equality. These projects are numerous, with just a few scored below:

- **UN system and international donor agreed MDG and governance/human rights-based approaches to gender** – the international community's use of MDGs, including specific gender measures like girls' schooling and women's health, has subverted international treaty agreements and replaced them with a short, politicised and symbolic list of goals that violate those treaties, and scores at best **2 points** (some potential benefits for women and girls earning a point in question 10, and implementation that does not explicitly create new hierarchies, question 8). Although the MDGs are supposed to package the sustainable development goals, the focus has been lost and environmental protection is simply another point on the checklist. The UN system's current 'human rights-based approach' focuses on short-term claims of benefits to competing groups in ways that end up postponing poverty, using up resources

to feed growing populations in ways that promote trade, and undermining sustainable development planning and cultural diversity, rather than changing tax structures to reduce the power of elites. The UNDP makes no attempt to measure root causes of inequalities or to measure development standards for both genders, and the MDG checklist to replace them has become symbolic.

- **United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM/UN Women):** although UNIFEM/UN Women does achieve positive results in some contexts in ways that benefit girls and women, and is able to score ***up to 1.5 points*** on development professionalism, its goal is not gender equality or mainstreaming that follows international principles but is, instead, an attempt to promote certain hierarchies and strategies for women that appear to best fit an industrial and globalising agenda. It scores zero in the categories of mainstreaming and equality. While UNIFEM/UN Women may be equalising some results for women in a few health areas like AIDS and in some economic results, as well as changing some laws in women's favour, this is a selective approach to gender equality, rather than an overall balance, in a way that creates new hierarchies. This may be consistent with CEDAW but is inconsistent with the overall goals of gender equality and development established in the framework of rights treaties. It may seem ironic, given that this organisation is viewed as being the leader in UN principles, but is not surprising given that most UN agencies seem to fall into similar traps of achieving the complete opposite of what they claim. This is largely the result of donors manipulating their agenda and their role being politicised by recipient country officials, leading them astray from their international mission and agreements.

- **Women's NGO support projects in countries with a civil society:** these projects typically twin organisations and models from urban donor countries with developing countries in ways that seek to promote women's entry into the labour force for the benefit of donor countries, with little or no attention to gender mainstreaming or root causes of inequalities. They score the same as UNIFEM/UN Women, ***1.5 points***, achieving positive benefits for urban women but few points in following internationally agreed gender principles.

- **Women's studies (gender studies) departments in universities:** although different universities structure these departments in diverse ways, the overall nature of the approach is to segregate genders and to promote a specific agenda, with scores of ***0 to 2 points***. Since the aim of gender studies was largely to empower women in the university by establishing a separate department, rather than to improve social sciences in ways that improve understanding of sustainability and equity in general, these departments score poorly on gender mainstreaming. Some programmes, however, may be evolving to look at the larger scope of equality issues and the root causes and could earn ***2 points*** (on questions 5 and 6). As a development initiative, they probably do little in terms of overall social change other than provide a few jobs for women.

- **UN system 'rights' projects (UNICEF, UNIFEM/UN Women, UNDP, UNHCHR), that implement CEDAW and other gender treaties:** projects to promote signing of and reporting on international treaties, and awareness of those treaties that are the mainstay of UN system rights projects, ironically score ***0 points***, even though the treaties themselves carry the essential components of international agreements. The focus of these projects is on selling the treaties and completing the reporting, without standardised applications meeting the criteria for mainstreaming or equality that reflect the treaties' actual principles. 'Progress' is self-reported by countries in ways that meet specific political agendas rather than sustainable development or larger equality goals. In many cases, the reporting is designed to promote certain symbolic changes for women and for female labour in the international system in parallel to the MDG approach.

- **Women's museums:** although the content of these museums can seek to promote equality or stability, generally the goal is a purely symbolic one of recognising women's contributions. Consequently, such projects score at best ***1 point*** in that they can contribute to added knowledge and enjoyment for both men and women. These museums offer little in the way of mainstreaming or solving root cause problems of inequality.

- **Anti-female genital mutilation projects:** these appear to be more about promoting a colonial agenda of Western women for narcissistic goals of individualism and pleasure that coexist with the

commodification of women's labour in urban societies than in actually addressing the gender needs or inequalities of men and women where these ritual practices still exist. These projects rarely if ever show any concern for improving the actual emotional or physical relationships between genders, the quality of human relations or of emotional wellbeing. Such projects earn *0 points*. Women may gain health and enjoyment benefits from them, but mainstreaming and equality are not the goals.

- **UNDP climate change and gender:** recent projects that have tacked 'gender' onto a hot funding area like climate change in the hope of increasing appeals to donors, offer little in the way of gender mainstreaming or solutions to inequality and score *0 points*. In turning something that is a general problem into one that suddenly becomes a gendered one, these projects are little more than scam approaches to funding and sham approaches to important problems like climate change and its real causes (over-consumption, fossil fuel use and more).

- **Women's handicraft collective and similar income-generation projects run by several international NGOs, such as Oxfam:** these projects which attempt to develop women's productivity (and often child/girl labour and elderly female labour in the home) as a tool to combat poverty, while providing income-generation activities for females, are not efforts to mainstream gender, nor are they geared towards solving underlying social inequalities. They thus score *0 points*. Their real goal is to exploit female labour in international markets and to break local economic systems.

- **Women's union capacity building in authoritarian patriarchal states that have created these government-run institutions (under UNIFEM/UN Women):** capacity building, the typical tool in the contemporary arsenal of government to government (bureaucrat to bureaucrat) transfers of public money, scores *0 points* as a gender initiative. When applied to gendered government agencies in developing countries, it avoids gender mainstreaming and women's marginalisation is reinforced by the patriarchal governments that have created such institutions in order to coopt women and avoid addressing real equality issues in urbanising countries (Vietnam and other Soviet countries). Rather than promote advocacy and address real causes of disempowerment, these projects help reinforce the use of such ineffective organisations as forms of government exploitation of women, increasing their double and triple labour burdens.

Scoring of UNIFEM/UN Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women for each of the indicator's 10 component questions:	

Preliminary information for assessment	

UNIFEM/UN Women's Organisational Mission (Claim) and Mandate	UNIFEM/UN Women claims to be 'dedicated to advancing women's rights and achieving gender equality'. It is an international organisation funded by member states in what it describes as 'contributions.'
UNIFEM/UN Women's Activities in practice (from its website)	The organisation currently works in four areas: – economic security for women, which it describes as a 'right' rather than as a political goal that is different from gender equality – ending violence against women that is caused by men (as something viewed as separate from violence caused by women against women or by men against men that may then be passed on to women as a root cause) – reducing HIV/AIDS among women and girls (though the incidence is yet higher among men, particularly homosexuals) – 'advancing gender justice in democratic governance in stable and fragile states' The mechanisms to achieve this are: legislation and implementation of laws (in areas like land and inheritance rights, labour laws and criminal laws on violence). The measures of success are: 'gender equality,' 'empowerment' and 'rights.'
Overall analysis of UNIFEM/UN Women as an actor promoting gender mainstreaming and equality	Mainstreaming is *not* a goal of the organisation. It is not focused on protecting cultures but instead on changing key laws such as inheritance and labour laws without considering the overall impact on sustainability or culture. There is no focus on whether men or society as a whole will be better off or whether there will be a backlash. The goal is simply advocacy for legal changes that politically promote women in ways that match a model of individual rights in industrial societies. The real goal is women's political empowerment, not addressing the root causes of problems for women. The focus is on symptoms and on specific subgroups of women who are poor or who are infected with AIDS without focus on the cause. Gender equality is defined in terms of political power and in a way that sees inequalities as something caused by men against women, with a zero sum gain of interests. There is no attempt to ensure equality of condition within the genders or across genders.

Analysis		
Question	**Indicator**	**Scoring**
I.	***Gender mainstreaming: consistency with the cultural protection and sustainability objectives of rights treaties***	*UNIFEM/UN Women's goal is to benefit women, to represent women, to empower women, and to achieve measurable results through activities that promote women. Without any overall attention to the cultural context and to promoting joint benefits to men and the societies/cultures as a whole in which it works, it is clear that UNIFEM/ UN Women is **not** doing gender mainstreaming.* ***0 points***
1.	*Restoring cultural sustainability and protecting the culture is the priority goal and is recognised as the way to achieve benefits for men and women, with gender issues placed in this context in project design (design phase).*	UNIFEM/UN Women does not implement any overall cultural sustainability measures on its own, nor does any part of the UN system, even though it is specifically UNDP's role and responsibility to do so by treaty and mission and UNIFEM operates within UNDP. Country plans continue to follow investment approaches for productivity gains or use the MDGs as shadow litmus tests for sustainable development in which the gender measures are only one part and no real overall balance is measured. ***0 points***
2.	*No culture changes are sought or expected in either the target culture or subcultures unless it is specifically to target unsustainability of that culture or subculture, or to provide benefits once sustainability has already been achieved. Mainstreaming is planned and studied at the level of subcultures in complex societies. Specific research is done to avoid harms for specific project interventions (project intervention phase).*	UNIFEM focuses on a specific shortlist of changes (rights and outcomes for women) that have no direct link to sustainability in larger societies or subcultures. Although health and economic benefits to women as well as political rights can certainly be appropriate in some cultures for achieving sustainability, and are unlikely to result directly in cultural destabilisation in the way health, consumption and employment measures may, this does not meet the mainstreaming definition. Moreover, specific rights and economic changes promoted by UNIFEM could result in unwanted cultural pressures that change cultures, particularly in the area of labour and land use rights, or at least may not fit appropriately into overall cultural context. ***0 points***
3.	*No zero sum gains occur across genders as a result of an intervention: interventions that improve relative power or opportunities do so in a way that increases the overall benefit of both groups (intervention phase).*	The very purpose of UNIFEM is to advance women's rights and to represent them rather than to measure men's needs and benefits. Though gender equality is defined as part of the mission, the activities all have specific benefits for women with no attempt to promote benefits for men at the same time. The impact of UNIFEM's approaches may be particularly beneficial for some of the societies in which it operates, but they do not meet the mainstreaming criteria. ***0 points***

8.	*The project creates no new hierarchies among either gender for implementing the project or as a result of the project with a fixed interest in such hierarchy and offers safeguards to ensure there is equity in its own implementation (intervention phase).*	Although UNIFEM does hire men, it is by its very definition a parallel organisation that follows the same UN system hierarchy and administrative regulations without any real challenges or modelling of more egalitarian, open or democratic procedures. ***0 points***
III.	***Measures and implementation met professional standards for development interventions***	*Though there are several questions as to UNIFEM's professionalism and whether politics (and particularly gender politics) undermine those results, the organisation can demonstrate achievement in some of the particular targeted areas it has selected, and in some countries those results are important and planned.* ***1.0 to 1.5 points***
9.	*Project design measures root causes of a gender equality problem in ways that go deeper than the proximate causes (individuals causing harm). It also links to the society's deeper structure, its incentives and its sustainability. Measures address these underlying root causes, systems and problems related to gender inequality in a standard logical framework analysis in ways that deal with the needs of both genders and the society and that change incentives and behaviours, rather than simply treat symptoms through resource transfers (design phase).*	UNIFEM, like most organisations in the UN system, largely focuses on delivering inputs to specific government partners and selling such campaigns to donors, with weak or no focus on root causes of problems or on changes needed to achieve real results. It is evident (see above) that UNIFEM's approach to legal change is weak and that it picks partners based on commonalities (women-headed departments and bureaucracies) rather than on whether those groups are the appropriate targets and keys to change. Nevertheless, since it does take a multiple focus, working at some levels of law and empowerment, and combines social and political approaches, UNIFEM partly understands root causes, linkages and overall transitions. Its approach is at least debatably effective. ***0.5 points***
10.	*There is a measurable outcome in some area of gender imbalance that reverses an inequality of political power, social opportunity (health, education) or security, safety and dignity of the person that occurs across or between genders and that is appropriate within the cultural context (intervention phase).*	UNIFEM's results and strategies may be poor given the limitation of its strategies and tools, but it is still likely to be achieving some changes, particularly in increasing the role of women in the labour market in ways that continue the industrialisation and commoditisation of people in modern society. That may be appropriate in some of the cultural contexts in which UNIFEM works. Since health and violence measures cannot easily be hidden, there is at least some feedback on measurable projects. Depending on the country, the score will either be debatable or full. ***0.5 points to 1 point***

Total:		**1.0 to 1.5 points. Project with a hidden, culture-destabilising or retaliatory gender agenda.** **Though UNIFEM/UN Women does achieve positive results in some contexts in ways that benefit girls and women, its goal is not gender equality or mainstreaming that follows international principles but is, instead, an attempt to promote certain hierarchies and strategies for women that appear to best fit an industrial and globalising agenda. Though UNIFEM/UN Women may be equalising some results for women in certain health areas like AIDS and in some economic results, as well as changing certain laws in favour of women, this is a selective approach to gender equality rather than an overall balance, in a way that creates new hierarchies. This may be consistent with CEDAW but is inconsistent with the overall goals of gender equality and development established in the framework of rights treaties.**

Where to go from here: solutions

The irony of exposing the flaws in gender projects today is that the field may now be so politicised (partly along gender lines) that almost any attempt to apply standards might be tagged 'gender biased' and 'politically incorrect.' Even though the indicator presented here seeks to follow gender objectives as closely as possible to what was part of the early feminist rights perspective (largely in line with the ecofeminism goals that this author shares, believing them to be part of both men's and women's global aspirations), so many 'experts' are now invested in protecting current approaches that any kind of standardisation is difficult. The indicator seems to suggest that many organisations doing work in gender today have actually substituted the interests of globalisation, in which they are given a new role, for the original one of protecting women (and men) in ways that would safeguard their cultures and societies and promote a more peaceful, diverse world. What seems to be symbolised in developed countries by the rise of women to political leadership positions in military and economic relations may also be their cooptation into the very hierarchy of domination, patriarchy and unsustainable consumption that international treaties and women's movements sought to challenge.

'Experts' (mostly female) who are in a position to make changes have little incentive to do so because the bargain that seems to have given gender organisations a role in promoting globalisation enables them to benefit by taking out their anger against certain groups of men. Limiting the focus of gender equality to discrimination by men against women deters attempts to redress any other inequalities or abuses of power within societies or the global system. This bargain can easily interfere with women's ability to see how their long-term interests really benefit from the original standards that were set for mainstreaming and equality. Similarly, within societies where gender projects actually reinforce exploitation of women's labour and bodies under the cloak of equality there is even a lack of consciousness of the problem. There, women who may be supporting such reinforcement of inequity are making personal gains from doing so.

Overall, many of the people in place in current systems working in the field of gender appear to have now become an institutionalised part of the problem of gender inequality and not the solution. Their understandable fears concerning attempts at standardisation and reforms in general unfortunately make them resistant to pushing the universal humanitarian goals that are in their/our interests. An indicator can facilitate change but, like other improved tools, it must be in the hands of those willing and able to use it.

In the name of gender equality, we now appear to be locked into a system of institutions and approaches that achieves something completely different. There is little incentive to change even in the face of disappearing resources and increasing militarism to protect them. The only way that change can really occur is if both women and men, interested in oversight and a better world, begin again to look carefully at the international principles that are also human aspirations and what needs to be done to make those a reality without being trumped by other agendas. This article offers one tool that can at least facilitate that endeavour.

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