

CAMBODIA¹

I. Country context

1. Cambodia is a relatively poor country (around \$3,300 per capita in purchasing power parity [PPP] at current dollars) with a relatively high female labor force participation rate (around 80%). Growth has been rapid since the late 1990's averaging 7% annually making the country one of the fastest growing internationally. The country has just attained lower middle-income status (by World Bank classification). Recorded headcount poverty is estimated to have declined significantly in recent years (from 48% in 2007 to 14% in 2014) with relatively little difference between poverty rates for male and female headed households, although many households just above the poverty line remain vulnerable to economic and personal shocks.² Employment growth has been relatively rapid by regional standards and there have been some gains for women, but nonetheless Cambodian society has been characterized as 'traditional' and hierarchical', with stereotypical views on gender roles held widely.³

2. As a result of decades of conflict and recent migration, at least 25% of households are headed by women. Here women have assumed roles traditionally reserved for men. Nonetheless culture and tradition have led to gender identities and social norms which expect women to be 'gentle, emotional, weak, and humble.' Women are trained from a young age to be good mothers and wives and to respect their husband or partner. There is a Khmer saying reflecting these traditional norms - 'men are gold: women are cloth'.⁴ There is some evidence that attitudes are changing with increased economic activity and female participation in the workforce, but girls still see their role primarily in relation to family responsibilities.⁵ Violence against women persists, associated with social norms that encourage a perception of manhood based on dominance.

A. Regional and international comparisons

3. Table 1 summarizes comparative data on Cambodia and other countries in the region. It is the poorest country covered in PPP terms and lags behind the richer countries like Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam, by education and maternal health indicators. In relation to some of the poorer countries in the region like Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and Myanmar, it does poorly in terms of tertiary education, but relatively well in maternal health. In terms of political representation the picture is mixed but Cambodia's share of women in Parliament is a little above the regional average.

4. In international terms by the Human Development Index (HDI), Cambodia ranks at 144 close to the bottom of the medium human development category. However, this hides the fact that its average growth in the HDI at 1.77 % annually is the highest in the medium development category and was particularly high at 2.5 % over 2000–2010.⁶ In terms of tangible achievements by the indicators on which the HDI is based between 1990 and 2014, average life expectancy increased by 10 years, average years at school by 1.7 years and income per capita in PPP rose by around \$2,000.⁷

¹ This assessment was authored by John Weiss (Consultant). Asian Development Bank Southeast Asia Department's comments during interdepartmental circulation were considered in finalizing the same.

² ADB. 2015. *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2015*. Manila.

³ ADB. 2012. *Cambodia: Country Gender Analysis*. Manila.

⁴ Cited in World Health Organization (WHO) National Survey on Women's Health and Life Experiences in Cambodia, 2015; this saying is interpreted as having sexual connotation as gold does not lose its shine or value, but cloth can become torn or dirty. Women must therefore remain pure and compliant.

⁵ See the surveys of minority groups conducted by CARE International (CARE International, Research Report on Employment Opportunities for Indigenous Ethnic Minority Youth in Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia, 2013).

⁶ Data on HDI from UNDP Human Development Report 2015

⁷ Data on Cambodia from UNDP Briefing Note on Countries on the 2015 Human Development Report: Cambodia.

Table 1. Selected Gender Indicators: South East Asia (2013)

	Girls/Boys enrolment ratio by education level			Proportion of Parliamentary seats held by women (%)	Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births	Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary			
Cambodia	0.93	1.03 ^a	0.61 ^b	20.3	170	89.0
Indonesia	1.0	0.98	1.03	17.1	190	87.4
Lao PDR	0.95	0.89	0.88	25.0	220	41.5
Myanmar	0.99 ^c	1.05 ^c	1.23 ^d	10.4	29	98.8
Malaysia	0.94 ^e	0.94 ^b	1.21 ^d	6.2	200	70.6 ^e
Philippines	0.96	1.05 ^c	1.23 ^d	27.2	120	72.8
Thailand	0.97	1.08	1.34	6.1	26	99.6
Vietnam	0.98	na	0.9	24.3	49	93.8
Average SE Asia	0.98	0.99	1.11	17.3	139	na

^a 2015, 2016 figures from Ministry of Education data; ^b 2011; ^c 2010; ^d 2012; ^e 2005.

Source: Asian Development Bank Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2015.

5. In relation to gender, the Gender Development Index (GDI) for 2014 (the ratio of the female to male HDI) is 0.89 which suggest a relatively high degree of gender inequality.⁸ However, the level of gender inequality for Cambodia in 2014 as measured by the GDI is still below the average for the Medium Human Development group of countries. Table 2 gives data on some of the components of the GDI for Cambodia, Lao PDR, and two country groups, the average for East Asia and the Pacific and the average for the Medium HDI group.

Table 2. GDI and its components: Cambodia and comparators, 2014

	Life expectancy		Average years of schooling		GNI per capita \$PPP		HDI		GDI
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Cambodia	70.3	66.2	3.2	5.4	2,526	3,393	0.519	0.584	0.890
Lao PDR	67.5	64.8	3.9	6.1	4,086	5,279	0.543	0.606	0.896
East Asia Pacific	76.0	72.2	6.9	8.0	9,017	13,780	0.692	0.730	0.948
Medium HDI	70.6	66.8	4.9	7.3	3,333	9,257	0.574	0.667	0.861

GDI = Gender Development Index, GNI = gross national income, HDI = Human Development Index, Lao PDR = Lao People's Democratic Republic, PPP = purchasing power parity.

Source: United Nations Development Programme Briefing Note on Countries on the 2015 Human Development Report: Cambodia.

6. Despite the progress implied by the data summarized above, significant gender gaps remain to be addressed in Cambodia. To highlight policy challenges in relation to the goal of gender equality these are discussed under the headings of human capital, employment, and political representation.

B. Human Capital

7. Education enrolment ratios (female to male gross enrolment ratios) for girls versus boys have been improving at the primary and secondary level. For example, the girl/boy ratio at the primary level has risen from 0.84 in 1991 to 0.93 in 2016 (footnote 1). The female drop-out and absence rate is often discussed as a problem and has been highlighted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) in various documents, although the recent Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS) statistics suggest the situation has improved substantially to the point where there is little difference between male and female drop-outs at the secondary level. For example in 2014–2015 the transition rate for girls from lower to upper secondary was 74%, a little above the combined rate of 72%, suggesting

⁸ Cambodia is placed in category 5 (countries with the highest level of gender inequality as measured by the GDI). In the region, Lao PDR is also in this category while no data were given for Myanmar and Vietnam. The GDI was compiled for the first time in 2014 so time series data are not available.

drop-out is more of a problem for boys. From this data, enrolment of girls at lower secondary level is also marginally higher than for boys.⁹

8. Nonetheless large enrolment gaps still exist at different levels of tertiary education and the average ratio of female to male enrolment in 2013 was 0.61 giving a gender gap of 39%. There was a gap in basic literacy of 14 percentage points in 2012 (87% for men over 15 years of age and 73% for women), although this was a reduction from 20 percentage points in 2004.¹⁰ Technical and vocational training remains very modest relative to the size of the workforce and although new initiatives have been trying to change attitudes, it is argued that women are still encouraged to apply for programs that reinforce stereotypical work patterns.¹¹

9. Health services for women have improved. The proportion of births attended by a skilled health professional has risen from 34% in 1998 to 89% in 2013 and as much as 95% of births had at least one ante-natal visit in 2013. Correspondingly maternal mortality per 100,000 live births has fallen from 540 in 2000 to 170 in 2013, although it remains high. The proportion of women in the 15-49 age group with access to contraception has also risen substantially from 13% in 1995 to 56% in 2013 (footnote 1).

C. Employment

10. The labor force participation rate for women in Cambodia is the highest in the region at around 80% in 2012 and the gap in relation to men is 9 per percentage points.¹² The gap has been relatively stable over the period 2001–2012. However this broad statistic hides considerable variation in the employment profile of men and women. The bulk of women still work in agriculture and agricultural households headed by women on average farm smaller plots (1.1 hectares) as compared with male headed households (1.5 hectares), although women's rights on ownership and inheritance are protected. There is also evidence that women farmers received only 10% of agricultural extension services.¹³

11. The share of women in non-agricultural employment, at around 40%, is higher than in some other countries of the region, with women the main borrowers (around 80%) of microcredit. There has been a substantial growth in female employment in the garments sector with migrant workers moving from rural areas for this employment and as a consequence women make up nearly 70% of manufacturing employment. They also form more than 60% of employment in retail, wholesale, accommodation, and food service sectors. Much of the service activity is low earning and women are disproportionately represented in the category of vulnerable employment (covering own account work and unpaid family work). In 2012 the vulnerable employment gap was 11 percentage points (70% of women in vulnerable employment and 59% of men). Women are also considerably more likely to do unpaid family work. Time use survey evidence suggests that while hours worked per day in Cambodia were the lowest in the Asia and Pacific region, women work on average one hour a day more than men (7 hours as opposed to 6). Men work longer on market-based and learning activities, with women spending on average 2 hours more per a day on non-market activities.¹⁴ The figure reported for men from this source appears unrealistically low and there is other data to suggest the unpaid-hours gap is as much as 3.5 hours per day rather than 2. Women are also more likely to suffer from underemployment as the time-related underemployment rate gap is 9 percentage points (41% for women and 32% for men).¹⁵

12. In terms of wages in the formal sector, the unadjusted average of male-female earnings in 2012 implied a wage gap of 20% (footnote 9). However, simple average comparisons hide differences

⁹ Data from MOEYS and Indicators 2015–2016.

¹⁰ ADB. 2015. *Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in Cambodia*. Manila.

¹¹ ADB-International Labour Organization (ILO). 2013. *Gender Equality in the Labor Market in Cambodia*. Manila.

¹² Unless otherwise specified, data in this section are from Footnote 9 document.

¹³ Data refer to 2010 (from document cited in footnote 10).

¹⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2011. *OECD Society at a Glance: Asia Pacific Edition*. Paris. The figure reported for men of zero is likely to be unrealistic.

¹⁵ Time related underemployment is defined as those working less than 40 hours per week but willing and able to work more than this (see ADB-ILO Gender Equality in the Labor Market in Cambodia, 2013).

between sectors and grades within sectors. International Labour Organization (ILO) data suggests that the average gender wage gap between occupations in 2009 ranged from 6% for skilled agricultural workers to 42% for machine operators.¹⁶ Furthermore women workers are disproportionately represented in low wage activities. In 2009, for example, 35% of women and 29% of men were employed in low wage work, defined as work at less than two-thirds of the median wage (footnote 10).

D. Women's representation

13. The political representation and participation of women in political decision taking is still limited, despite some progress over the past 15 years. Twenty percent of seats in the National Assembly were held by women in 2015. In 2013, 1 out of 9 deputy Prime Ministers and 21% of Secretaries of State were female and women comprised 20% of Deputy Governors at the provincial/capital level.¹⁷ At a subnational level in 2012, 18% of commune members were female, but only 4% were chiefs.¹⁸ Through affirmative action there has been a substantial increase in women in the civil service. Women were 37% of all employees in the civil service in 2013, but this has increased to 49% in 2016 with 21% at a decision-making level.¹⁹

E. Conclusions

14. In summary, Cambodia is a poor country which despite its recent relatively rapid growth has a relatively large section of the population both poor and vulnerable. As a poor country there is considerable competition for scarce resources and traditional attitudes and deeply embedded social norms have combined with scarcity to create significant gender gaps.²⁰ As in other countries women's responsibilities within the household take a significant proportion of their time and limit their income-earning opportunities. Time and income poverty can be reinforcing and thus create particular vulnerability in female-headed households.²¹ In addition, in Cambodia women remain disadvantaged in terms of most indicators lacking human capital, decent employment, access to resources, and facing cultural barriers to their progression.²² In terms of the goal of gender equality it is important to reduce time poverty, improve women's access to secondary and higher education, build on improvements to maternal health, overcome barriers to female recruitment to relatively high productivity jobs, and strengthen women's access to resources, particularly credit.

II. Government Policy towards Gender Equality

15. Gender equality is enshrined in the 1999 constitution of Cambodia and has legislation on gender protection passed. How far it is implemented effectively is unclear and in some instances, it is clear that equality is not being pursued, such as the operation of the labor market. In 1992 the government ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The 1997 Labour Law prohibits discrimination based on gender and has provisions against human trafficking. In 2005 a law was passed on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection

¹⁶ ILO. 2012. *Decent Work Country Profile Cambodia 2011–2015*. Geneva.

¹⁷ MOWA. 2014. *Nearly Rattanak IV: Five Year Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, 2014–2018*. Phnom Penh.

¹⁸ See MOWA's Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 2014. The CMDGs had modest targets for political representation by 2015 of 15% of Ministers and deputy governors, 18% of Secretaries of State and 25% of local commune members.

¹⁹ Information provided by MOWA.

²⁰ In much higher income economies there are still gender gaps in economic opportunity and political representation. The average gender wage gap was 16% in the European Union and in the United Kingdom (UK), the simple unadjusted gap was 19% in 2015. The gap for full time employees was 9% (see website of Equal Pay Portal). In the UK 25% of Members of Parliament and 35% of civil servants are women (see website of UK Feminista).

²¹ Time poverty distinguishes between necessary time, the hours spent on activities that provide minimum subsistence needs and essential personal and household tasks, and discretionary time that remains in a day. Time poverty is when there is insufficient discretionary time or when there is insufficient time for all necessary tasks leading to difficult personal and household trade-offs. As in most cultures, women have far more unpaid household responsibilities than men; i.e., they are far more 'time poor' (see C. Blackden and Q. Wodon (eds). *Gender, Time Use, and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa*, World Bank. Washington, 2005).

²² Decent employment here follows the ILO definition which stresses factors like a fair income, security in the workplace, freedom of expression and organization, and equal treatment for men and women.

of the Victims and in 2008 a law was passed on the Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation.²³ Lack of implementation of these laws is recognized and the current national gender plan acknowledges that there are 'gaps in the implementation of laws, policies, plans, and programs (footnote 17).

16. In the past, official development assistance was critical in financing development expenditures and this will have given donors considerable influence over the direction of policy.²⁴ How far gender policy was initially donor-driven and how far it reflected genuine national commitment is impossible to disentangle, but clearly the large level of funding, even though its relative size has declined in recent years, gave the donors considerable influence over the direction of policy and will have strengthened the official stance on gender equality. The current government commitment appears strong and official policy stresses inclusive growth with a gender equality component. This was stated most clearly in the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs) which set four key gender targets

- To reduce significantly gender disparities in upper secondary and tertiary education;
- To eliminate gender disparities in wage employment in all sectors;
- To eliminate gender disparities in public institutions; and
- To reduce significantly all forms of violence against women and children.²⁵

17. Despite some progress, none of these broad goals were met by 2015, but the publicity given to the CMDGs and the donor support behind them clearly kept gender goals on the policy agenda. For example the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Update Statement issued by the Ministry of Planning in 2011 reiterated the goal of gender equality and the policy of gender mainstreaming.

18. There is an impressive administrative structure within government to pursue gender goals. The National Council for Women, formed in 2001, is chaired by the Prime Minister and has the Queen as its Honorary President and includes representatives of line ministries. It meets annually and has the responsibility for reviewing policies for their gender impact and compliance with international agreements. The Minister for Women's Affairs is a member of the Council of Ministers and has the responsibility for raising gender issues at the weekly meetings. At a subnational level meeting in 2009 Women and Children Consultative Committees were established at all levels of subnational government with a mandate to develop a plan for communes and local bodies to pursue gender objectives. Policy is coordinated by the MOWA formed as a separate specialist ministry in 2003 and supported initially by an Asian Development Bank (ADB) technical assistance (TA). MOWA chairs and convenes the Technical Working Group on Gender (TWGG) composed of ministry representatives, donors, and civil society representatives. This is expected to meet quarterly and to coordinate gender initiatives. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are co-facilitators of the TWGG and GIZ and UNW chair the sub-group on gender-based violence.²⁶

19. Despite the emphasis on the CMDGs and in particular CMDG 3 on gender equality and the official commitment to gender mainstreaming, gender does not figure prominently in the key national plans. The different editions of the overarching policy document, the Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency, give little emphasis to gender. The goal of growth that is 'sustainable, inclusive, equitable, and resilient to shocks' has the implication that gender equality is part of inclusion, but there is no explicit statement on this in the document. In the

²³ See ADB. 2012. *Cambodia: Country Gender Analysis*. Manila. The 1997 Labour Law has been judged to have limitations in a legal sense. The ADB-ILO report on Gender Equality in the Labour Market in Cambodia criticises it on various grounds, including not explicitly defining an act of discrimination and for having an incomplete definition of sexual harassment.

²⁴ For example, from the Ministry of Planning, National Strategic Development Plan 2014–2018, it can be inferred that aid receipts in 2013 were expected to be over 50% of total budgetary expenditure, although the proportion was projected to fall over the life of the Plan. World Bank's World Development Indicators shows aid covering 42% of 'central government expenses' in 2014, which is well below the 2002 figure of 121%.

²⁵ See Ministry of Planning, CMDG Progress Report 2013. The government added a goal of reducing violence against women to the standard Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3.

²⁶ Details of the administrative structure to implement gender policy are in MOWA, Policy Brief 1, Gender Mainstreaming, Institutional, Partnership, and Policy Context, Cambodia Gender Assessment, 2014.

framework of the Strategy, growth is supported by four rectangles—agriculture, physical infrastructure, private sector development, and capacity building/human resource development. Gender is discussed under one of the subheadings of the fourth category, but relatively little detail is given.²⁷

20. A little more policy detail is given on the goal of improving female access to skills and assets in the editions of the National Strategic Development Plan which operationalize the broad objectives of the Strategy. The current National Strategic Development Plan 2014–2018 has built on and continues with the gender CMDGs. It has a brief section entitled ‘Gender Equity’ which stresses the need to mainstream gender in all government policies and sets out targets that are very similar to the CMDGs.²⁸ Gender outcomes in relation to these goals are included as part of the set of Human Development outcome indicators to be used for the monitoring of the plan. However, possibly because of the existence of a separate national gender plan, the gender section in the National Strategic Development Plan is located close to the end and covers no more than 5 pages out of a text of 236. Also while some of the funding to line ministries will contribute to gender impact, the direct budgetary allocation under the heading ‘Gender Mainstreaming’ is modest at \$114 million out of a total funding allocation of \$7,587 million.²⁹

21. MOWA has its own 5-year gender plan which aims to implement policy in line with the Beijing Platform for Action and to coordinate with gender working groups in the line ministries. Each ministry is expected to ensure that gender concerns are mainstreamed into government development efforts through their own Gender Mainstreaming Action plans, which will be coordinated with the MOWA.³⁰ The national gender plan is intended to operationalize the gender dimensions of the National Strategic Development Plan covering the same period. For example, in 2013 the MOWA launched the MDG Acceleration Framework Cambodia Action Plan which stressed the role of gender equality in contributing to other MDGs and highlighted three key areas to address women’s economic empowerment—jobs training for women, support for women’s micro and small enterprises, and rural livelihoods.³¹ The National Strategic Development Plan 2014–2018 points to this action plan as the strategic document guiding policy on women’s economic empowerment and refers to policies such as technical and vocational education training (TVET) programmes, business development services through Women’s Development Centres, a generally supportive investment climate for women entrepreneurs, and rural farm level interventions, to support the three areas. The current national gender plan 2014–2018 of the MOWA, Neary Rattanak IV, was supported by a series of donor-drafted policy briefs, which in turn were based on detailed background papers. ADB contributed the paper and policy brief on economic empowerment and this in turn formed the basis of the country gender assessment (CGA) for the current country partnership strategy (CPS).³²

22. Despite this impressive administrative commitment the capacity to implement these initiatives remains limited. This is due to various reasons including the fact that many of the gender focal points in different ministries are not in decision-making positions and/or may lack technical capacity in the area. The 2004 Cambodia Gender Assessment questioned how far genuine ownership of gender policies by line ministries was and the effectiveness of the gender focal points. More broadly it also queried how far political will was to effect substantive change as opposed to merely appeasing donors.³³ Significantly in 2004 a progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action commented that while there was a reasonably high level of awareness of gender

²⁷ See Rectangular Strategy III English translation (pp. 41–42, undated).

²⁸ Gender targets cover six key areas—women in public life, share of women in formal employment, female headed households benefiting from a Climate Change programme, girls’ higher education enrolment, expectant mothers visiting antenatal clinics at least four times, and the number of domestic violence cases filed with the police.

²⁹ Ministry of Planning, National Strategic Development Plan 2014–2018.

³⁰ The Update of the National Strategic Development Plan 2009–2013 contained targets for the number of ministries and institutions that had developed their own Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans. Most ministries now have such plans.

³¹ The Foreword explains that this was an inter-ministerial effort with support from UNDP and other donors and coordinated by MOWA.

³² The background paper is published as Footnote 9. It was written by an external consultant with support from the Cambodia Resident Mission gender specialist.

³³ Footnote 12. ADB contributed funding to the CGA which highlighted gender gaps in relation to labor market, education, health, access to resources, and political representation that were central to the CMDGs. The Foreword states that World Bank prepared most of the document and ADB contributed the labor market material.

issues in government there was lack of capacity to implement measures to address these issues. It also pointed out that the MOWA was dependent on donor funding (footnote 18).

23. MOWA still operates with a small budget and is constrained by staffing limitations and the willingness of senior politicians to address the gender agenda. In the past it has concentrated primarily on a 'service delivery' role (e.g., providing gender-related training and technical advice to other branches of government). It has been urged by some donors, such as UNDP, to adopt a greater advocacy stance in persuading other line ministries to take active steps to fully incorporate gender considerations in their day to day operations. This has been agreed and incorporated in the current national gender plan, which talks of a program-based approach whereby the MOWA's role will 'transition to that of policymaker, leading government partners at both national and sub-national levels in gender mainstreaming, by coordinating, planning, mobilizing resources and implementing transformative initiatives'.

24. Nonetheless operational issues remain. The national gender plan refers to the limited capacity in the line ministries and the weak links between MOWA and their technical departments, as some of the key challenges the Plan faces (footnote 17). Line ministries have produced gender mainstreaming action plans (GMAPs) but the effectiveness of their implementation has been questioned.³⁴ Gender mainstreaming action groups (GMAGs) in the line ministries are tasked with the role of gender focal points. However the effectiveness of the system is also undermined by the fact that often it appears that sometimes the key gender focal point positions in ministries are held by staff with other responsibilities as their substantive role and with no additional financial reward for playing a gender role.³⁵

III. ADB Support and Gender

A. Country programs

25. ADB has been active in gender initiatives in Cambodia since the mid-1990's initially providing assistance to the government ministry which became the MOWA. As with other policies, ADB affects gender in Cambodia through three routes: (i) lending operations for projects and programs, (ii) TA, and (iii) policy dialogue. By far the greatest impact has come through individual projects and the TAs attached to these.

26. Over 2005–2015 three ADB country programs were in operation and there are noticeable changes in the way gender issues are presented between these programs. The Country Strategy and Program (CSP) 2005–2009 stressed the Bank's overarching goal of sustainable poverty reduction in support of the government's own National Poverty Reduction Strategy (which included gender equality as one of its goals). The gender assessment in the main text was brief and was based on a summary of the 2004 CGA. This focused on a range of gender gaps in line with the CMDGs in relation to the labor market, education, health, access to resources, and political representation and stressed some of the limitations of the government administration in addressing these. In particular it highlighted the challenge of ensuring equitable gender outcomes from the diversification of the economy when women's involvement in economic activity was constrained by lack of access to education, high levels of illiteracy, and traditional views of appropriate roles for women (footnote 12).

27. CSP, 2005–2009 identified four areas of specialization for ADB relative to other donors—agriculture and natural resources (ANR), education, finance, and transport. In relation to gender it stated that ADB would i) work to strengthen relations between MOWA and the line ministries; ii) introduce targeted interventions to meet gender goals in education, ANR, rural development, and small and medium enterprise (SME) lending; iii) provide support to strengthen the advocacy and analytic role of the MOWA; and iv) work through the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) to establish

³⁴ See Footnote 9 which draws on C. Chea's Making Gender Equality in Public Spheres (MA Thesis 2011, Royal University of Phnom Penh). Some of the ministry GAPs focus solely on employment policy within the ministries rather than on mainstreaming gender in their operations.

³⁵ Information obtained from the Ministry of Planning.

regional cooperation on human trafficking, migration, and sexually transmitted disease. At this stage the concept of mainstreaming gender in ADB operations had not yet been applied and the CSP Results Framework had no specific gender goals.

28. CSP, 2005–2009 was extended by 1 year so the next national program was the CPS, 2011–2013. This followed the broad themes of the previous CSP, but added an additional core sector—water supply and sanitation—to the previous four. As before, the main text had a brief reference to gender issues with a more detailed discussion in a gender appendix. This was a summarized version of a Country Gender Analysis produced by the Resident Mission.³⁶ This is a useful overview of gender issues in Cambodia. Its analysis of challenges updates the previous assessments with the previous headings—economic empowerment, education, health, legal protection, public decision-making, and politics—used to highlight existing gender gaps.³⁷

29. The gender appendix of the CPS refers to the judgment of the midterm review of the previous CSP, which pointed to the lack of capacity to undertake gender analysis on ADB projects and programs, the limited gender awareness, and the persistence of stereotypical views among stakeholders. Reflecting a shift in ADB policy, it gives more emphasis than the previous CSP to mainstreaming gender in as many areas of ADB activity as possible. It points to planned projects over the CSP period 2011–2013 in education, infrastructure, environment, agriculture, and health where gender gains are expected. It also points to ADB’s role in the dialogue on gender in social safety nets and its contribution to the National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable.³⁸

30. CPS, 2011–2013 did not follow the requirements introduced in December 2010 in the Operations Manual (OM) Section C2/OP, which requires that gender issues be discussed not just in the main text but in sector roadmaps and the results framework. The omission of the latter two aspects may have been a timing issue given that the CPS must have been largely written in 2010, although the final document is dated June 2011. Further there were CPS documents for six countries approved in 2011 of which only three fully followed the OM requirement of examining gender in sector roadmaps and the results framework.³⁹

31. On the other hand, the current CPS, 2014–2018 is judged to have fully met the good practice criteria for gender: i) adequate gender strategy in the main text, ii) gender diagnostics in sector assessments, and iii) gender indicators in sector roadmaps and the CPS results framework. From the main text it does not appear that gender considerations have had an impact on the composition of the portfolio, although the suggestion is that they have influenced the details of sector strategy and project design. The gender appendix to the CPS is based on the detailed background paper, Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment, produced for the Neary Rattanak IV. This updates the discussion of gender gaps from earlier assessments and gives a clear and helpful overview of gender issues in Cambodia. It highlights three key factors as obstacles to economic empowerment: i) the burden of family responsibilities and unpaid intra-family work, ii) the low levels of literacy and educational attainment among the poorest women, and c) lack of access to resources like land and credit.

32. The CPS gender appendix has a discussion of how ADB activity over the CPS period will contribute to gender equality. Reflecting the mainstreaming focus, the range of activities linked with gender is considerably wider than in earlier country programs. It now covers ANR including irrigation, TVET, secondary education, governance and public sector reform (with a focus on women’s

³⁶ Although written in 2011 for the CPS, this was published as ADB Cambodia Country Gender Analysis in January 2012.

³⁷ In the discussion of challenges, the 2012 Country Gender Analysis uses the terms gender equity and gender equality interchangeably. It appears that it is equality being referred to as the challenges are linked with the CMDGs, which are focused on equality of outcome.

³⁸ Cambodia has the lowest rating of the Southeast Asian countries covered by an estimate of a social protection index, with a rating that is low even relative to its income level. However, a gender disaggregation finds that social assistance programmes—the main form of social protection in Cambodia—benefit women considerably more than men, the reverse of the finding for other countries (see Sri Wening Hayandani’s Measuring Social Protection Expenditure in South East Asia: Estimates Using the Social Protection Index, ADB Sustainable Development Working Paper Series, July 2014).

³⁹ ADB. 2016. *Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Operational Plan (2013–2020) 2015 Performance Summary*. Manila.

participation in district and municipal structures), tourism, roads, and water supply and sanitation in both rural and urban areas. There is no explicit link between the three obstacles noted above and the CPS program, although inferences can be drawn. Water supply projects can free women’s time from water collection; TVET and education programs raise skill levels. Irrigation, road, and tourism projects can provide income-earning opportunities and access to resources.

33. While projects or programs are not selected for their gender impact per se, a positive gender effect is aimed for in their design. There is a common theme in relation to participation, not just in local political bodies, but also in various forms of user groups, in relation to roads, irrigation and water supply. The CPS Results Framework includes only a small number of gender targets—for formal agricultural employment, education, and partially for microfinance.⁴⁰

34. In summary, over 2005–2015 there has been little change in the thinking around constraints to gender equality, which were understood in terms of barriers to removing gender gaps. However in terms of ADB procedure, documentation, and focus, there has been a clear evolution at the country program level.

B. Projects

35. Over 2005–2015, 59 projects were implemented of which 11 were classified as gender equity theme (GEN) and 25 effective gender mainstreaming (EGM) with a majority of these projects in rural development and education (see Table 3). The proportion of gender mainstreaming projects (GEN plus EGM) in total at 61% is well above the ADB average of 48% for 2008–2015.⁴¹

36. The distinction between GEN and EGM projects used in project categorization is that GEN projects have as explicit project outcome meeting gender equality and empowerment objectives. EGM projects, on the other hand, directly support these objectives by benefiting women but their goal is not gender equality per se. A review of the Reports and Recommendation of the President (RRPs) involved suggests that in terms of project design, gender mainstreaming involved principally:

- A commitment to equal opportunities, including equal pay and equal safety and protection;
- Active consultation with women in project design;
- Targets for number of women employees or beneficiaries ;
- Increased representation of women in project decision taking, including targets for share of female representatives;
- Data disaggregation by gender; and
- Gender training for project staff and typically the use of gender specialist consultants.

Table 3. Number of Approved Sovereign Projects (Loans and Grants) in Cambodia by Gender Classification, 2005–2015

Sector	Gender Equity and Mainstreaming (GEM) Classification					Grand Total
	Effective Gender Mainstreaming	Gender Equity Theme	Some Gender Elements	No Gender Elements	Not classified	
Agriculture, natural resources and rural development	9	4	1	0	1	15
Education	1	4	0	1	0	6
Energy	1	0	2	0	0	3
Finance	0	0	3	5	0	8
Health	1	1	0	1	0	3
Industry and trade	1	1	1	0	0	3
Public Sector Management	4	0	2	2	0	8
Transport	4	0	2	2	0	8
Water and Other Urban Infrastructure and Services	4	1	0	0	0	5
Grand total	25	11	11	11	1	59

Source: Asian Development Bank.

⁴⁰ The microfinance target does not distinguish between male and female borrowers although the bulk of lending is currently to women.

⁴¹ Calculated from Figure 2 of document in footnote 39.

37. All GEN and EGM projects have GAPs with differences in their application by sector.⁴² GAPs provide inputs into the project design and monitoring framework (DMF) and allow attainment of gender targets to be used to monitor project progress.

C. Technical Assistance

38. Soon after the formation of MOWA as a separate ministry in 2001 it received capacity building and technical support from ADB. This support funded the placement of consultants in the ministry to work with national staff to develop in-house capacity.⁴³ Since then there has been a shift in gender TAs away from support to MOWA to project-specific activities. In some instances these TAs were administered by MOWA but it was not in receipt of direct support. As other donors have provided direct support to the MOWA, it is not obvious whether this shift in focus by ADB towards projects has had a detrimental impact.

39. Over 2010–2015, out of 34 TAs approved, 11 are classified as EGM and 4 as GEN. The gender equity TAs are in the education and TVET sectors. EGM TAs are in a range of subsectors covering urban services and water (two TAs), public sector management (four), road transport (two), flood protection (one), and rural electrification (one). None of these TAs has been rated as unsuccessful in a technical assistance completion report (TCR).

40. Several TAs have been highlighted in CGAs as offering potentially important contributions to gender goals. In the 2012 assessment these include: i) a Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) grant to Women's Development Centres in Siem Reap and Kampong Chhnang over 2006–2010 administered by MOWA and designed to train rural women in new skills; ii) a JFPR grant for Targeted Assistance of Poor Girls and Indigenous Children 2002–2006 and TA for Dormitories and Learning Centers for Secondary School Girls 2002–2008, both designed to reduce barriers to girls' secondary education; and iii) Capacity Building of Female Commune Council Networks under the Second Commune Council Development project designed as capacity building for female councilors and training for MOWA staff.

41. The background report on Women's Empowerment which formed the basis for the most recent CGA highlighted two relatively small grants under the Gender and Development Cooperation Fund organized and administered by the Cambodia Resident Mission. One is for a public-private partnership to take over the Siem Reap Women's Development Centre and the other a training program to encourage female employment on rural roads under the Rural Roads Improvement Project.⁴⁴

42. In terms of ongoing TAs, there is one where focus has been changed to incorporate a stronger gender component, the Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Development Planning Project.⁴⁵ Cambodia is a highly flood-prone country and with the potential rise in river and sea levels it is argued that women are more vulnerable due to their more insecure economic and legal position. Cambodia is one of the case studies in a multi-country study and the TA is to prepare feasibility studies for a major investment programme of seven projects and to provide risk screening tools and vulnerability assessments of communities at risk. Funding was increased in 2015 with a major change in scope and the expanded role of gender is to include the development of gender-inclusive monitoring and evaluation systems, the integration of gender into the Climate Change Actions plans of key ministries,

⁴² Guidance notes highlight five key gender design features—sex disaggregated targets; gender sensitive physical infrastructure; policy, institutional, and legal reforms for gender equality; measures to mobilize women; and gender capacity development (see ADB. 2013. *Understanding and Applying Gender Mainstreaming Categories, Tip Sheet No 1*. Manila).

⁴³ This TA was rated *successful* (see ADB. 2007. *Technical Assistance Completion Report on Sustainable Employment Promotion for Poor Women 2002–2005*. Manila).

⁴⁴ Footnote 9, Annexes 1 and 2. The success of Women's Development Centres in providing training in relevant skills has been questioned and the involvement of the private sector is seen as a way of introducing a more market-focused approach (examples of successful cases from this scheme are reported in Annex 1).

⁴⁵ ADB. 2015. *Major Change in Scope in Technical Assistance: Cambodia Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Development Planning*. Manila.

and gender-awareness training on adaptation and the development of gender-responsive pilot projects.⁴⁶

IV. Assessment of ADB Performance

A. Relevance

43. CSP, 2005–2009 and CPS, 2011–2013, and 2014–2018 have each had CGAs to inform programming. These are each useful documents in that they bring together key information on what are widely agreed as key gender gaps.⁴⁷ The most recent gender assessment is not comprehensive in that as part of an agreed division of labor between donors it focuses on economic empowerment, with other donors producing reports on sectors like education, health, and agriculture. The economic empowerment report is well done and as noted above highlights three key issues as constraints to women's economic progress: i) the burden of family responsibilities and unpaid intra-family work, ii) the low levels of literacy and educational attainment amongst the poorest women, and iii) lack of access to resources like land and credit.⁴⁸ These are key obstacles in economic terms and combined with cultural attitudes they go a long way to explaining persistent economic gaps.

44. Nonetheless it is difficult to discover an overarching gender strategy underlying ADB interventions in Cambodia. What appears to have happened over the three programs is that core sectors were identified based on the needs of a low income, largely rural economy with poor infrastructure and within the core sectors questions are asked as to how gender gaps can be addressed. This is a legitimate approach where investment in the core sectors, if properly designed, can have significant gender impacts. This appears to have been the case in Cambodia, where in general the focus of country programming post-2005 on rural areas—covering irrigation and livelihood activities, rural roads, water and sanitation, and flood prevention, as well as on urban water—offered considerable scope for projects that address gender.

45. Roughly half of the sectoral allocation in CPS, 2014–2018 is likely to be in the gender-sensitive sectors of ANR, rural roads, water, and sanitation. All projects in these sectors are expected to be classified as EGM (Table 4). This is in addition to education and TVET programs where traditionally a gender balance has been sought in project outcomes and all projects are expected to be gender mainstreaming. The expectation in the CPS is that 81% of public sector management (PSM) projects and 57% of finance projects will be gender mainstreaming. It is unclear how realistic these latter proportions are but if implemented as planned the vast bulk of the CPS envelope will be aimed at contributing to gender equality. However, only a limited and inadequate number of gender targets are shown in the results framework.

⁴⁶ Of the series of community-based projects to be funded under the TA through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), a target of 30% is set for projects directly improving the climate-resilience of women (information provided by CARE International Cambodia).

⁴⁷ Another useful document is the one referred to in footnote 10.

⁴⁸ The Cambodia Resident Mission Gender specialist stated that the conclusions of the other sector gender assessments were incorporated in the sector plans of the CPS.

Table 4. CPS Allocation by Core Sector, 2014–2018

Sector	Investment (\$ million)	Share of portfolio (%)	Share of gender mainstreaming projects in sector	Gender targets
ANR	85.6	10.4	100%	By 2018 for formal employment in agriculture, 30% of new jobs created for women; baseline 20% (2013)
Education	90.0	10.6	100%	Gross female enrolment at upper secondary 2017–2018 of 42%; baseline 26.4% (2013; Female completion rate lower secondary 76%; baseline 40.3% (2013)
PSM	159.1	18.7	81%	
Transport	148.1	17.4	100%	
Water and Urban Infrastructure	183.0	21.5	100%	
Finance	35.0	4.1	57%	1.8 million borrowers by 2018 with no breakdown by gender

ANR = agriculture and natural resources, CPS = country partnership strategy, PSM = public sector management.
Source: Country Partnership Strategy, Results Framework, Appendix 1.

46. There is no explicit link in the CPS document between the sector allocation 2014–2018 and the diagnosis of the constraints to economic empowerment in the country gender diagnostics. The 2015 CGA Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment rationalizes the link by pointing to projects planned for 2014 and 2015 to address skills (in education and TVET), time savings (in rural roads and water supply), livelihoods (in ANR and disaster risk reduction), and participation (in governance reform at the subnational level).

47. Similarly, CPS, 2014–2018 lists areas that will address constraints to gender equity and women’s economic empowerment. Projects in ANR will contribute to higher productivity and household income with a participatory focus aiming to ensure women have a greater say over communal resources, projects in education will address enrolment and retention in schools particularly at the secondary level and projects in TVET will address the skills gap. Projects in governance will increase women’s participation in planning and administration at the district and municipal level.⁴⁹ Infrastructure aimed to support tourism will create jobs for women. Rural roads will facilitate access to markets, schools, and health facilities saving women’s time and helping to reduce time poverty, as well as creating some jobs in construction. Water supply and sanitation projects in both urban and rural areas will have positive hygiene and health effects, save women’s time, and in rural areas may promote participation in user groups. This is a very broad agenda of relevance to addressing the time, skills, and resource constraints identified in the CGA.

48. There is no direct link between the CPS list of activities and formal government gender plans and targets. As noted above, the two key current national plans are the Millennium Development Goal Acceleration Framework (MAF) developed to pursue CMDG Goal 3 on women’s empowerment and the Neary Rattanak IV. The GMAPs of line ministries are also relevant for setting gender goals. The MAF has three key strategic interventions: (i) strengthening vocational skills for women; (ii) promoting micro, SMEs for women entrepreneurs; and (iii) improving livelihoods for women in rural areas. It lists a series of measures to address these including strengthening the existing Women’s Development Centres, improving training, offering improved business development services,

⁴⁹ For example the Decentralized Public Service and Financial Management Development Program, approved in 2016 aims to promote women’s participation in local planning and in implementation of projects under a new funding initiative—the Sub-National Investment Fund.

encouraging women’s business associations, establishing links with microcredit institutions, and supporting women’s self-help groups.⁵⁰ The CPS makes no reference to this plan, but elements of the CPS program can be linked with intervention (i) through the TVET and education projects, and intervention (iii) through the various ANR projects with a livelihood component.

49. The CPS was developed before the completion of the current national gender plan, the Neary Rattanak IV. This has four thematic areas, of which economic empowerment is the first. The others are access to social services and protection, cross cutting issues (including political participation and climate change), and institutional strengthening. The economic empowerment area is where there is the most overlap with the CPS, but the discussion in the plan is very general and no priority subsectors are identified. The Action Plan section refers to general measures like improvement in working conditions, vocational training, and provision of business and financial services. Only a limited number of specific targets are identified. The most important of these are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5. Neary Rattanak IV: Key Gender Economic Empowerment Targets

Target	2013 Baseline	2018 Target
Girls completing long-term technical and vocational skills training	8,000	11,000
Gross enrolment rate for girls in upper secondary (%)	27.6	41.9
Gross enrolment of girls in higher education (%)	12.0	20.0
Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births	206	130
Pregnant women visiting ante-natal clinic at least twice (%)	87	95
Women experiencing domestic violence	27,000	15,000
Proportion of women holding decision-making positions in public sector (%)	20	25
Families with access to clean water all year (million)	1.9	2.4

Source: Ministry of Women’s Affairs (Neary Rattanak IV).

50. Of these targets, projects under the CPS should address the skills training, secondary education enrolment, and safe water targets. It is possible also that the CPS governance and PSM activities will help with the target on participation in decision-making. The CPS does not cover higher education and maternal health however, despite the fact that these are two important areas where the country still lags behind the CMDG targets. ADB has left the areas of health and higher education for other donors and it does not appear that as part of the CPS negotiations there was a request from the government to borrow from ADB for these activities.

51. ADB is a key donor in Cambodia given the size of its programme, but it does not appear as a lead donor in relation to gender, partly because it does not provide direct funding to MOWA. Its two gender specialists are highly regarded by other donors, but it does not appear that ADB has a lead voice at the TWGG.⁵¹ Several donors interviewed were unclear what ADB’s position was on key gender issues..

52. As noted above, ADB contributed the economic empowerment policy document that formed a background paper for the Neary Rattanak IV and had made selective contributions to earlier CGAs. Different donors have different emphases, e.g., in relation to gender USAID has preferred to work through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on the environment and gender, while Australian AID (DFAT) has chosen to focus on child protection. The World Bank suspended its programme to Cambodia for a number of years and is only now planning to resume lending. Gender does not figure prominently in its Country Engagement Note, where it is discussed briefly in one paragraph.⁵²

⁵⁰ Government of Cambodia and UNDP. 2013. *Cambodia Millennium Development Goal Acceleration Framework: Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment*. Phnom Penh. This was an inter-ministry initiative supported by donors. One staff member of Cambodia Resident Mission is listed as a member of the expert group advising on the study.

⁵¹ The donor co-chairs of the subcommittees of TWGG are JICA and UNDP.

⁵² Gender objectives are referred to in relation to a land allocation project which aims to give land titles and to provide extension services to women farmers and in relation to a water resources project on the Mekong River, which aims to give women a greater role in community fisheries organizations. In addition, a health project aims to improve health awareness among

53. ADB has not selected a specific angle for its gender work focusing instead on a mainstreaming approach that addresses gender in as many of its projects as possible. This is a legitimate approach in line with current bank-wide strategy and given the nature of the portfolio, has been relevant for addressing key (but not all) gender issues and constraints. However it has not given ADB an entry into wider gender-related policy discussions relevant to economic empowerment on women's employment conditions or obstacles to women's businesses for example.

54. In relation to ADB's contribution to gender at the policy level it is difficult to assess how far individual donors have been influential. Background work for most policy documents is done by working groups with all major donors represented so it is difficult to establish individual contributions. However, ADB has participated in work on some of the key policy programmes such as the National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable, various national education plans, and national gender plans. For example, the Country Gender Analysis published in 2011 argues that through participation in the working group on safety nets and 'extensive written inputs to drafts of the strategy and background notes' ADB 'significantly contributed' to the National Social Protection Strategy launched in 2011. It suggests the strategy has a strong gender analysis with women of reproductive age seen as one of the most vulnerable groups.⁵³

55. For education ADB has supported reform in the sector since 2001, including support for improving the performance and completion rates of girls. Under the Education Sector Development Programme (2002–2007) the MOEYS with support from ADB and UNICEF consultants and in consultation with MOWA developed an affirmative action plan to support girls' education, which is claimed to have had a tangible impact on enrolment and completion.⁵⁴ Under the Education Quality Enhancing Project, scholarships were introduced for 2,500 poor children annually at the upper secondary level, of which 60% were girls, funded by JFPR. This example influenced government policy and since 2013–2014 the scholarship scheme has been continued at the lower secondary level by the government funded from the national budget.⁵⁵ The current Education Strategic Plan 2014–2018 of the MOEYS, was developed with donor support, including ADB. An ADB education specialist was part of the working group reviewing the plan.⁵⁶

56. As discussed above ADB has participated in the preparation of background papers for the various national gender plans. It contributed to the funding of the 2004 CGA and the Foreword states that while World Bank prepared most of the document, ADB contributed the labor market material. For the Neary Rattanak IV, ADB was responsible for the background material on economic empowerment and produced a detailed report on the current position on gender gaps.

57. In terms of knowledge products in recent years ADB's most distinctive contribution is in the area of economic empowerment. ADB's Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment report (2015) written for the national gender plan is a useful comprehensive assessment of economic gender gaps. It was a key input into the development of the policy brief of the CGE 2014 on economic empowerment and of the Neary Rattanak IV. It also informed the summary gender analysis of the CPS 2014-18. It is complemented by the joint ADB-ILO publication on gender in the labor market which includes an assessment of labor legislation, as well as economic data (footnote 10). Neither publication is original in the sense of drawing on primary data, but both are useful reference to those wishing to understand the economic issues relating to gender in Cambodia.

poor women, particularly from ethnic minorities (see World Bank. 2016. Cambodia: Country Engagement 2016–2017 Note, Report Number 104843).

⁵³ ADB. 2011. *Cambodia Country Gender Analysis*. Manila.

⁵⁴ ADB. 2011. *Cambodia: Education Sector Development*. Manila.

⁵⁵ Footnote 18. It is said that 56,500 students are covered by the government scholarship scheme, of which 60% are girls.

⁵⁶ This is a detailed document but surprisingly gender is referred to only very briefly on page 15 as a crosscutting issue. The main text has no exploration of gender specific issues and none of the targets in the main text of the plan are disaggregated by gender. Only in the Annex are there projections of student numbers and completion rates which are disaggregated. There is no indication that gender issues had an influence on the plan. This may be because they are addressed separately in the gender mainstreaming plan of the Ministry but the separation does not appear good practice, especially in a sector like education.

B. Responsiveness

58. Gender equality as an objective does not appear to have had a major role in determining priorities in relation to the composition of the country portfolio. Projects must meet a series of criteria relating to their economic, financial, environmental and poverty impacts; and gender while increasingly recognized as important, is only critical in what are explicitly gender equity targeting projects. Nonetheless as noted above the nature of much activity in ANR projects and rural roads, urban water supply and sanitation, and education, has meant that such projects can be effective in meeting women's needs and can be readily converted into the EGM category.

59. As Table 3 shows the share of GEN and EGM projects 2008–2015 at 55% is 6-percentage points above the bank-wide average, with most of these projects concentrated in ANR (10), water (6), and education (4). Arguably a greater immediate gender impact could have been achieved by concentrating resources on education and health gender targeting projects (GEN) to make up the key shortfalls in the CMDGs, but this would have implied a different approach to portfolio selection and there is no evidence that the government was willing to borrow further for this type of project.

60. Project lending has formed the primary tool for achieving gender goals with TAs normally linked with specific projects. Mainstreaming has been applied by developing detailed GAPs for all GEN and EGM projects. The notes and checklists prepared by HQ gender specialists have provided clear guidance and a targeting system has been introduced in all EGM and GEN projects. In the past, gender was seen as part of the general set of safeguards that projects had to meet and missions often included a social sector specialist not a gender specialist. This has improved over the last 5 or 6 years and in Cambodia the availability of two gender specialists in the Resident Mission (even if one is designated as a social sector specialist) combined with the increased emphasis on gender in ADB policy has meant that the gender aspect of projects now receives far more attention. In general, the effort at mainstreaming gender in projects in Cambodia is impressive in terms of the effort at setting, implementing, and monitoring targets. Evidence suggests that in general the targeting system has been effective with a significant number of project targets met and where targets have been unrealistic, some flexibility in adjusting these.

61. The key targets in most GAPs are proportion or number of women

- participating in local community, user or self-help groups set up in connection with a project;
- employed by a project either in construction, operation, maintenance, or administration;
- in receipt of training from a project; and
- reached as project beneficiaries as consumers, students, or recipients of services.

62. Achieving such targets is a first step to achieving positive results and internationally targets and quotas have been helpful as partial mechanisms towards gender equality.⁵⁷ There is also evidence from cross country reviews of ADB projects that those with well-implemented GAPs tend to have positive gender equality results.⁵⁸ Nonetheless such targets have their own limitations. For example in relation to women's participation in community groups a simple headcount indicator can be misleading if women adopt a deferential role in deliberations or are assigned a stereotypical role within a committee, like a secretary or treasurer, rather than having an active participatory role. In relation to women's employment in construction, while manual construction work may offer additional income and also bring some changes in attitude within the family, it will normally offer work for only limited periods of time at a relatively low wage rate. In the longer term the benefits to women of infrastructure schemes—whether in roads, rail, water and irrigation facilities or rural electrification—will be determined by the changes in economic and social activity created by the physical investment rather than by the direct and limited employment available.

⁵⁷ In Cambodia targets appear to have helped introduce women to the civil service with 49% of civil servants now women and 21% of these in decision-making position (information from MOWA).

⁵⁸ J. Hunt, K. Nethercott, and H. Thomas. 2010. *Gender Equality Results in ADB Projects: Regional Synthesis of Rapid Gender Assessments*. Manila: ADB. For example, for some of the rural infrastructure projects reviewed households report changes in intra-family relations as a result of the opportunities for women to earn income and participation created by the implementation of the GAP.

63. Achieving precise numerical targets is much less important than having an awareness of gender issues and building these into project design. Achieving specific numerical targets is no guarantee of achieving impact, which will depend on the outcomes of projects and how economic, cultural and family interactions allow these outcomes to be shared between men and women. For some projects, for women to benefit in a way that contributes to gender equality may require a 'package approach' which combines physical investment in infrastructure with various targeted support programs involving for example, livelihood training, agricultural extension services, and the provision of credit. There are examples of this type of intervention in ongoing projects in Cambodia in some of the ANR and tourism infrastructure projects, but it could be extended to roads and other infrastructure.⁵⁹

64. In terms of resources for gender work on ADB projects, none of the project teams interviewed suggested that lack of project funds for the gender side of their work was an issue. Adequate national gender consultants are generally available. However, in several cases the quality or lack of gender focal points from the executing agencies was highlighted as a problem. This is part of the wider lack of implementation capacity for gender initiatives within the government and is even more acute the more decentralized the administration overseeing the project is. Project teams also do not liaise systematically with the GMAGs of line Ministries. The issue was recognized by the Minister of MOWA who when asked how ADB could help the ministry in the short-term suggested funding for TA for the gender focal points in the line ministries.

65. It is unclear from the CPS what financing modalities are envisaged for the planned portfolio. Up to now it appears the key vehicle for gender targeting in Cambodia has been individual projects. This is likely to change to some degree as ADB moves to a greater use of more general loans—such as policy-based loans that support specific policy reforms—and results-based lending (RBL) that funds specific government programs. Program loans aim to support governments to develop a reform strategy and then through a program cluster approach provide financial support to implement the strategy. A set of policy changes are identified as 'triggers' to implement subprograms. Policy loans are likely to be most appropriate in broad areas like financial sector reform where major ownership and regulatory changes are required.⁶⁰

66. In relation to gender in Cambodia from the government side there is a clear administrative and legal structure and policy position and the key issue relates to implementation capacity. A general program loan to support gender reform appears neither feasible nor necessary. However there is scope for combining policy reform and project lending in support of gender in sectors like finance, PSM, and education. For example, the fourth Financial Sector Program Loan is to continue the reform process in the financial sector with a view to improving inclusiveness and expanding financial services, including microfinance and micro-insurance. Initially it had one gender target in the DMF (60% of new borrowers to be women), but otherwise there was no reference to gender and the project was classified as no gender elements (NGE). Given the role of women as borrowers of microfinance and the difficulty they have in accessing credit from the formal financial sector this appeared as a missed opportunity.⁶¹ However recent work has focussed on integrating gender more closely into financial sector support and the RRP for this project from October 2016 is classed as some gender elements (SGE).

67. Recent or planned loans in PSM and education combine policy and project elements and this is an approach that could be used more widely but with a stronger gender focus, where possible. As the impact of a project component, including its gender impact will be dependent on the overall policy environment in the sector, the combination of policy and project lending appears as an

⁵⁹ There is a parallel with area development programs designed to address poverty reduction issues; for a review see J. Weiss (editor) *Poverty Targeting in Asia*, Edward Elgar. 2006. World Bank Making Infrastructure Work for Women and Men: A review of World Bank Infrastructure Projects 1995-2009 (pp. 26–28 reports on the use of additional support in infrastructure projects including affirmative action on formal employment, skills training, and microcredits).

⁶⁰ There is experience in Cambodia with what is cited as a best practice program loan for financial sector reform; see ADB. 2011. *Review of ADB's Policy Based Lending*. Manila.

⁶¹ ADB. 2013. *Concept Paper for the Proposed Programmatic Approach, Policy-based Loan for Subprogram 1 Cambodia: Fourth Financial Sector Program Loan*. Manila.

effective use of resources. A recent illustration of this approach is the Decentralized Public Service and Financial Management Program which is composed of a program loan of \$15 million and a project loan of \$20 million. It builds on the previous decentralization program, said to show the benefits of a programmatic approach, which allows coordination and sequencing of reforms.⁶² The aim of the policy loan is to strengthen the capacity of local level administration to deliver public services, while the project loan is to fund local projects under the Sub National Investment Fund (SNIF). The loan is classified as EGM. Gender elements in the policy component are to be through the incorporation of gender in strategic plans for decentralization, as well as quotas for female employment at various local levels. The project GAP has a set of detailed targets that aim to ensure that gender issues are part of the criteria for supporting projects under the SNIF.

68. Similarly the Upper Secondary Education Development Program combines a program loan of \$15 million with a project loan of \$30 million.⁶³ The aim is to improve education quality at the upper secondary level, with separate targets relating to female students and teachers. The project has a very detailed set of GAP targets. Broadly the program component is to help reform the overall system and design a new curriculum, while the project covers activities like upgrading schools, constructing houses for teachers, providing textbooks, capacity building, and data management. This combination of policy and project lending appears an effective use of resources and one that could be followed more generally.

69. The newer financing model of RBL may also create the opportunity to sharpen the focus on gender issues in government programs. RBL aims to streamline assistance and reduce transaction costs by funding government expenditure accounted for under the country's own system. Disbursement-linked indicators could have a gender component. It is straightforward to build gender targets into planning for education or health, since enrolment and completion rates in education are disaggregated along gender lines and health data on conditions relevant to women are always collected. For ANR, irrigation, or water projects numbers of women or female-headed households reached provides a simple measure.

70. In some infrastructure sectors like roads and electricity it would be more difficult to identify quantitative indicators of progress in gender to which the allocation of funds could be linked. Targets for kilometres of roads or kilowatt hours of power have no gender dimension and the measures of interest such as women's time savings or changes in household practices, such as use of fuel, are extremely difficult to collect at the national level. Where ministries already have good Gender Mainstreaming Action plans, targets from these could be built into RBLs. However this modality is new and its further application will depend on the review of bank-wide pilot projects to be conducted in 2016.

C. Results

71. The primary impact of ADB on gender over 2005–2015 has come from its project activities and the series of GAPs designed to incorporate gender targets into project design, with specific targets varying between sectors. Of the projects in Cambodia implemented over 2005–2015, PCRs are available for 13 projects with a project validation report (PVR) for one of these. Of these, 10 were deemed *satisfactory* or *highly satisfactory* and 3 *less than satisfactory*. Of the projects reviewed only four were classified as gender mainstreaming (GEN and EGM) and one classified as with some gender elements (SGE), and the evidence on their impact is reviewed here. Of these, the less than satisfactory projects were Tonle Sap Rural Livelihoods (GEN), Tonle Sap Rural Water and Sanitation (GEN), and Road Asset Management (SGE). Some of the earlier projects have been found to lack the necessary focus on gender with a lack of clear GAPs or inadequate or unrealistic targets. However progress has been made and the reviews of gender project performance by the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC) have found that majority of projects in Cambodia are implementing their GAPs and achieving their targets.

⁶² ADB. 2016. *Report and Recommendation of the President on the Proposed Policy-Based Loan and Project Loan for Subprogram 2 Cambodia: Decentralized Public Service and Financial Management Sector Development Program*. Manila.

⁶³ ADB. 2016. *Report and Recommendation of the President on the Upper Education Sector Development Program*. Manila.

72. As part of a review of the effectiveness of the gender classification system, SDCC reviewed 170 projects in the effective gender mainstreaming (GEN and EGM) categories with a PCR completed over 2010–2015 rating them for their gender impact. This exercise reviewed the available secondary material and assessed both overall gender impact in qualitative terms, as well as quantitatively relative to the project GAP. A successful rating required 70% of planned GAP activities to be completed and 75% of GAP targets to be met. Table 6 summarizes the results for projects in Cambodia.

Table 6. Cambodia Gender Ratings

Project	Year of approval/Cost	General rating (PCR/PVR)	Gender rating (SDCC)	Comments
Northwester Rural Development	2001/\$27 million	Successful	Successful	Revised gender strategy produced. Training for project staff. Targets for female participation and employment achieved.
Stung Chinit Irrigation and Rural Infrastructure	2000/\$16 million	Partly successful	Not determined due to lack of data in PCR	Gender specific elements not reported.
Commune Council Development Project	2006/\$7.8 million	Successful	Successful	Gender design features built into project. Digitization of records helpful in providing legal protection.
Health sector support	2002/\$20 million	Successful	Successful	Gender strategy fully complied with, although there is a lack of gender disaggregated data. Utilization of maternal and child care services increased significantly.
Second Education Sector Development Project	2004/\$20/25 million	Successful	Successful	No separate gender appendix. PCR does not give detailed reporting against the GAP. But significant improvement in female participation at different education levels.
Tonle Sap Environmental Management	2002/\$11 million	Successful	Unsuccessful	PCR lacked gender analysis. Sex-disaggregated data not collected.
Agriculture Sector Development Program	2003/\$29.7 million	Successful	Successful	PCR covered gender results poorly with lack of disaggregate data. Project contributed to gender mainstreaming in Ministry of Agriculture, with GAPs.

Project	Year of approval/Cost	General rating (PCR/PVR)	Gender rating (SDCC)	Comments
Tonle Sap Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project	2005/\$18 million	Partly successful – highly relevant, but less efficient, less effective and less likely sustainable	Successful	Detailed targets for women’s participation in the GAP were achieved.
Tonle Sap Sustainable Community Livelihoods		Partly successful - less effective and less efficient.	Successful	GAP targets largely achieved
GMS Tourism Development Project	2002/\$ 35 million	Successful	Highly successful	Gender strategy for women’s participation in tourist activities fully implemented.
GMS Regional Communicable Diseases Control Project	2005/\$30 million	Successful	Unsuccessful	GAP was prepared late and only partially implemented. No systematic documentation of gender impact
Northwest Irrigation Sector Project	2003/\$18 million	Successful	Unsuccessful	Gender impact modest with relatively low women’s participation in user groups. GAP lacked targets and there was weak monitoring.

GAP = Gender Action Plan, GMS = Greater Mekong Subregion, PCR = project completion report, PVR = project validation report, SDCC = Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department.

Source: Asian Development Bank, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department.

73. Out of 12 projects reviewed, 3 are rated *unsuccessful* in gender terms, 1 is deemed to have insufficient information for a rating, while 8 are *successful*, of which 1 is *highly successful*. The Tonle Sap Environmental Management project to provide greater community control over natural resources and to improve livelihood options for 50,000 households was rated as *satisfactory* in both a PCR and PVR. Although the judgement of successful impact at the household level was validated the project had no GAP and no gender disaggregated targets in the DMF. The unsuccessful rating in gender terms reflected this lack of gender analysis, rather than any specific evidence that the project failed to reach women within the households covered.

74. The GMS Regional Communicable Disease project which included five provinces in Cambodia was rated *unsuccessful* in gender terms by both SDCC and the PCR, which rated the project as *satisfactory* overall, but not satisfactory in relation to gender. In the PCR the project was judged to have a significant health impact reducing disease incidence from dengue and avian influenza.⁶⁴ However although a large number of female staff and health workers were trained the project is rated *unsatisfactory* for gender equity, as it only partially complied with gender and ethnic minority covenants. While women might be expected to benefit disproportionately where they are more at risk to communicable disease, the PCR’s judgement was that executing agencies did not specifically target women and ethnic minorities in outbreak control measures. Initially gender disaggregated indicators could not be provided and the engagement of consultants came too late to fully integrate gender and ethnic concerns in project activities. The review of the GAP in Appendix 7 of the PCR points out that it took time for project management units (PMUs) to realize the importance of gender issues, and that the gender focal points in the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the project were ‘largely

⁶⁴ ADB. 2013. *Completion Report: Cambodia: GMS Regional Communicable Disease Control Project*. Manila.

ineffective', although progress is noted with 'MOH staff becoming more sensitized towards gender issues.' The PCR stresses the importance of integrating a GAP into project design more.

75. The Northwest Irrigation sector project was rated *partly successful* in a PCR and *less than successful* in a PVR. A key gender feature was to be the involvement of women in farmer user groups. The PCR states that the initial signs were encouraging and that women were actively involved in skills and management training, but that subsequently their role was limited to routine administrative tasks. SDCC rated the project as *unsuccessful* in gender terms in relation to relatively low women's participation in user groups and the lack of precise targets in the GAP. On the other hand two projects Tonle Sap Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project and Tonle Sap Sustainable Community Livelihoods Project, discussed below both experienced problems in implementation, but were deemed to have met a sufficient number of GAP targets and to have had a sufficiently broad positive gender impact to be rated by SDCC as *successful* in gender terms. To clarify the implementation of specific aspects of GAPs in these and other projects, targeting is discussed below under four headings— participation, employment, training, and beneficiaries.

1. Participation targets

76. In terms of women's participation, success in part depends on the degree of complexity of a project. Some of the earlier rural participatory projects in Cambodia appear to have had mixed success in involving women. Detailed evidence on this is available from PCRs for the Tonle Sap Rural Livelihoods and Tonle Sap Rural Water and Sanitation (both GEN projects). The Tonle Sap Rural Water and Sanitation Project was an ambitious project to improve the health and sanitation of rural communities in five provinces around Tonle Sap lake, one of the poorest areas of the country. The objective was to provide clean water to over half a million people and access to improved sanitation to around a quarter of a million. Women in the catchment area are particularly affected by the time spent in collecting water and in their role within the household in terms of cleaning and child-minding.

77. The PCR in Appendix 2 covers the GAP and its results and makes it clear that there was a proactive approach with gender issues central to project design.⁶⁵ The Report and Recommendation of the President (RRP) had a short GAP with more details in the Project Administration Manual (PAM). The project was in fact cited as a model for integrating gender in project planning and the experience on the project contributed to the national rural water and sanitation strategy adopted by the Ministry of Rural Development.⁶⁶ In terms of gender targets the PCR concludes these were broadly achieved. In relation to the participation target related to the role of women in water user groups, the 50% target of trainees as board members of water user committees was not achieved with the actual percentage 43%, but the PCR accepts specific reasons for this and notes that the objective of at least one female per board was met. It states that the target 'is considered to be achieved'. By the end of the project 5,700 water user committees had been established each with 5 board members, 2 of which were women. Overall 43% of board members were females with women typically given roles as treasurers or with technical responsibilities, rather than as chairpersons or vice-chairpersons. Regular data recording on a gender disaggregate basis was carried out by the project implementation units and compiled in quarterly reports.

78. The PCR concludes that the gender objectives of granting women access to safe water and improved sanitation has made a difference in their lives. It has also allowed their participation in the operation and management of water and sanitation services. The weaknesses of the project (as of 2012) appeared to be i) the fact that many water user groups were non-functional with local communities reluctant to pay fees to cover running cost or to provide their time; ii) cultural and family imposed constraints on the ability of women to play an active role in user committees; and iii) limited understanding of gender issues among staff of the Ministry of Rural Development. The review by SDGG based on published information and the PCR classified the project as *successful* in gender terms.

⁶⁵ ADB. 2011. *Completion Report: Tonle Sap Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project (Cambodia)*. Manila.

⁶⁶ B. Chrishna. 2009. *Assessing the Implementation of Three Gender Action Plans*. ADB, Phnom Penh.

79. The Tonle Sap Sustainable Livelihoods project was another ambitious participatory project covering 5 provinces and 37 communes with 316 villages. It provided funding and support to communes to cover social infrastructure, income-generation, and fisheries management. From a gender perspective the project aimed to give all women a greater stake in and, through their female representatives, influence over communes. The DMF of the project had no specific gender targets but in the RRP the GAP has the expectation that by the end of year 4, at least half of all commune planning and budgeting committee members should be trained women representatives. In relation to the construction of social infrastructure, the GAP makes it clear that equal pay is anticipated and that half of unskilled construction jobs should be reserved for women. In addition training in participatory and gender responsive project monitoring is to be conducted in all villages served by the project.

80. The PCR in Appendix 9 reviews the implementation of the GAP, although as only a few targets were provided initially there is a difficulty in cross checking between planned and actual outcomes. Overall nearly 1.5 million people are said to have benefitted from the project, of which 54% are women. Anecdotal evidence is cited of active female participation in social infrastructure activity, far higher than for males. Evidence is provided of membership of commune project owner group committees where a little under 25% of members are women and of commune councils, where 15% are women. The target from the GAP of half of commune planning and budgeting committee members being women is not assessed, but there is a reference to that fact that not all communes have such a committee and where they do there is not always a female member. There is reference to geographical variation in female representation on such committees and the case of Pursat province is referred to where out of 52 commune planning and budgeting committee members overall, only 4 are women. Implementation of the GAP was rated *partially satisfactory*.⁶⁷

81. For both these Tonle Sap projects it appears that an ambitious participatory approach was adopted. Part of the failure to achieve all participation targets must be linked with the difficulty of engaging the local communities in the ways designed by the projects. Where water users groups or commune planning and budgeting committees do not function at all whether due to lack of community engagement, poor project preparation, or a misunderstanding of the social dynamics of the area, it is not very meaningful to seek to impose targets for female participation. Hence the failure to achieve some gender targets is likely to be part of a broader problem of project implementation.

82. Some projects have come close to meeting participation targets. The Tonle Sap Poverty Reduction and Smallholder Development project approved in 2009 and still ongoing aims to improve agricultural productivity for 630,000 households in 5 provinces through community-driven infrastructure and capacity development. The project is classified as effective gender mainstreaming and the most recent progress report monitors progress against the GAP.⁶⁸ In relation to participation the GAP has a target of one in three members of the commune project procurement committees being women and overall this is close to being achieved (a figure of 28% is reported). Women hold 47% of the membership in the livelihood improvement groups and 22% of households represented are female-headed (the GAP target is 25%). Fifty-three percent of the management committee members are women (the target is 33%). They also make up a clear majority of all those attending training.⁶⁹

83. The GMS Flood and Drought Risk Management and Mitigation project approved in 2012 and still ongoing aims to reduce drought and flood risk to communities over an area of 16,000 hectares. It is classified as EGM. As in other projects the GAP focuses in part on women's participation in the community groups to implement disaster risk management. As yet there is little firm evidence on progress but initial information reported suggests that interest among women is relatively high and

⁶⁷ This rating was not accepted by SDCC, which rated the project *successful* in gender terms.

⁶⁸ MAFF. 2016. *First Quarter Progress Report on Tonle Sap Poverty Reduction and Smallholder Development Project*. Phnom Penh.

⁶⁹ However, the report also commented that although many women attend meetings, "they have been reluctant to make decisions without consulting with their husbands."

that at least 50% of those participating in the initial commune meetings on the project were women.⁷⁰ Similarly Southeast Asia Regional Department (SERD) reports as of 2015 found relatively high participation ratios for women in self-help group savings groups and agricultural committees for the Tonle Sap Lowlands Rural Development project, in water user groups in the Second Rural Water Supply Project, and in livelihood improvement groups in the Tonle Sap Poverty Reduction and Smallholder Development project.⁷¹

2. Employment targets

84. A common employment target is for the employment of women as unskilled laborers on project construction, particularly in rural areas where women have traditionally undertaken heavy physical work in agriculture. One of the main targets for infrastructure projects relates to the proportion of labor employed in project construction and maintenance who are women, with a typical target of 40%. The evidence on the success of this target is mixed. There is a view that some of the employment targets are both unrealistic—because women prefer factory work to outdoor manual labor—and arbitrary—as they may be set as part of a negotiation with the executing ministry. There is evidence suggesting that women are willing to take on outdoor manual work on projects given the opportunity and where the option is explained clearly to them. For example, the Second Rural Roads Improvement project has been supported by a TA funded by a Gender and Development Cooperation Fund grant which employed an NGO and a social marketing firm to explain the opportunities of construction work to rural women. This is widely perceived as a successful initiative, which attracted a significant number of women workers to road construction and maintenance.⁷²

85. Some projects have reported difficulties in recruiting and employing women for manual work. In the Tonle Sap Poverty Reduction and Smallholder Development Project, female employment on construction activities funded by the project appears problematic. A recent progress monitoring report states that there are currently no accurate statistics on the labor recruited by contractors and that some women prefer not to undertake this type of work. There is no data on whether the gender equality wage policy is being implemented. In addition, it is stated that ‘the contractors are using heavy machinery for construction and they do not hire many casual laborers.’ Data is recorded on women’s employment on maintenance activity such as grass planting. Overall this is put at 28%, which is only just below the GAP target of 30% (footnote 68). Problems as of 2015 in recruiting up to the GAP employment targets are also reported for the Water Resources Management Sector Development project and the Provincial Roads Improvement project. At the time of monitoring, women were only 13% of those employed on irrigation construction (against a GAP target of 30%) and 11% of those employed on road construction (against a target of 30%).⁷³

86. An uneven pattern across the country is to be expected given that labor market conditions are likely to vary depending upon migration patterns and the opportunity for female work outside family farms. This renders standard employment targets of a given proportion of female workers undesirable with local conditions needing to be allowed for.

3. Training targets

87. In general projects appear to have met targets for female training, although some of the original targets may have been unrealistic and did not take account of the demands on women’s time. The PCR for the Tonle Sap Rural Water and Sanitation Project reports that the 50% target for women’s participation in technical training on operations and maintenance was missed with an

⁷⁰ Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology. 2016. *Project Performance Monitoring System GMS Flood and Drought Risk Management and Mitigation Project*. Phnom Penh.

⁷¹ Data supplied by SERD.

⁷² A total of 49,505 person-days employment was said to have been generated for women from phase 1 of this project (Gender in Rural Transport Workshop, Hanoi, April 2016, powerpoint presentation by Sonomi Tanaka and Chandy Chea). This project has been cited in several ADB gender documents as an example of good practice because of its efforts to explain the opportunities to women. It is noteworthy that despite this success, the employment target for women in construction was revised downwards from 40% in phase 1 to 20% in phase 2, and the actual employment target for phase 1 was not achieved, indicating the difficulty in attracting women workers.

⁷³ Data supplied by SERD.

actual of 40%. The PCR notes that given the fact that there were a range of technical courses covered and that in some instances training was for categories of officials where there were no female officials, the original 50% target was 'in retrospect not realistic.' At least one woman per user group received training in operations and maintenance.

88. The Road Asset Management project was rated *less than satisfactory* in a PVR due to i) failure to meet outcome and output targets in terms of kilometres of road rehabilitated, and ii) doubts over the funding for continued maintenance.⁷⁴ The gender focus was principally through HIV prevention and awareness training and improved safety. HIV and road safety training was delivered as planned and the rating of *less than satisfactory* progress was not linked with the specific gender dimensions of the project. In the Tonle Sap Poverty Reduction and Smallholder Development Project, women are recorded as making up a majority (around 60%) of those undertaking training on livelihood activities and women were over 40% of those undertaking training in relation to irrigation management and water use in the Water Resources Sector Development Programme and the Second Rural Water Supply Project.⁷⁵

89. Specialized forms of training are central to TVET programs. The Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project approved in 2009 and closed in 2015 aimed to deliver industry-relevant training in key areas of mechanics, construction, information and communication technology (ICT) and business, and generally to improve non-formal training. In Cambodia female TVET enrolment is low relative to men and concentrated in traditionally female-dominated occupations. The project GAP included a range of specific targets (such as share of female in enrolment for particular courses and as TVET trainers) as well as broader non-specific targets, like the creation of gender sensitive training material and the use of social marketing to encourage girls to think of non-traditional occupations.

90. A review of the gender impact of the project in 2015 commented on its 'improved access to quality training courses in relevant industry sectors through 39 regional training centres.'⁷⁶ It showed that as of 2014 many specific targets were being met or were close to being met; for example the key overall target of at least 50% of enrolment in each of the 39 Provincial Training Centres being composed of women was met with an overall figure of 55% in 2013–2014.⁷⁷ Nonetheless the review points out that some of the detailed GAP targets are very high, particularly in relation to female participation in non-traditional areas like mechanics and construction, and do not consider the reality of TVET in Cambodia. In addition it highlights the lack of a specific budget to implement the GAP at the level of regional and provincial training centres.

4. Beneficiary targets

91. Women are identified as separate beneficiaries in mainstreaming projects across a range of sectors. Again while not all targets have been met there is evidence of a positive gender impact. The Emergency Food Assistance Project introduced in 2008 in response to the economic situation of that year provided food to vulnerable households in six provinces and supported the input needs of smallholders and marginal farmers. Although it was not classified as a gender mainstreaming project and did not have a GAP, gender issues were recognised in project design and incorporated in the terms of reference of consultants working on the project.

92. A review of the project commented on its positive gender impact, although some of the data reported do not indicate any specific gender targeting.⁷⁸ Free rice was distributed to 68,000 households, of which 33% were headed by females. Of the 20,000 households participating in the cash for work scheme, 23% were female-headed and of the subsidized rice seeds and fertilizer made

⁷⁴ Roughly 64% of the targets were achieved (PVR-441 Cambodia: Road Asset Management Project, 2015).

⁷⁵ Data supplied by SERD as part of project monitoring (as of 2015).

⁷⁶ ADB. 2015. *Summary of Gender Equality Results and Achievements, Cambodia: Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training*. Manila.

⁷⁷ It should be noted that while the target was met overall, it was not met in 13 of the 39 centers.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Finance (MOF). 2008. *Emergency Food Assistance Project: Summary of Gender Equality Results and Achievements*. Phnom Penh.

available to farmers, 19% went to female-headed households. The project encouraged women's equal participation in community decision-making and the OM 'encouraged' a 50% share of women in project committees that were to implement the cash for work scheme. A survey of the implementation of the project in 2011 found women to be around 15% of committee members.

93. The project was extended in 2012 through additional financing and this time was classified as EGM with a detailed GAP. A review concluded that all substantial GAP targets, both specific and general, were achieved and significantly exceeded appraisal estimates.⁷⁹ Now women's participation in and access to benefits from the project appeared higher than in the original project. For example 34% of project committee members under the cash for work program were female.⁸⁰ Of the individuals participating in the cash for work program 50% were women and women were 53% of the individuals receiving subsidized seeds and fertilizer (the GAP has a target of 50% of beneficiaries). As part of the project the NGO Plan International worked with communities to establish self-help groups to improve livelihood opportunities, nutrition, and hygiene with a view to their transformation into agricultural cooperatives. Sixty-five percent of the membership of these groups was composed of women. Overall the project is said to have reduced food insecurity through significant higher rice yields (by up to 50%), increased family income, and empowered participating women farmers.

94. In education, targets for scholarships allocated to girls (60%) and female trainee teachers in the Enhancing Education Quality Project have been met and the proportion of women in teacher training courses has increased, although there was a decline in numbers recruited.⁸¹ The Third Education Sector Development Project approved in 2012 is still ongoing. This aims to improve the quality of lower secondary education, improve attendance, and reduce drop-out rates, particularly among girls. The interventions are wide-ranging including constructing or rehabilitating school buildings, provision of teacher housing in remote areas, improving hygiene and sanitation facilities in schools, and reforming the curriculum and the school management system. Gender issues arise both in relation to increasing the number of female teachers and school directors and in addressing some of the issues thought to influence the female drop-out rate, such as lack of proper toilet facilities in schools, a weak employability focus in the curriculum, and poor teaching of basic subjects.

95. A progress report on the project suggests little specific information is available as yet on the project's gender impact.⁸² However this is much less of an issue in a project such as this as the project DMF has explicit targets for girls' enrolment and retention. Here the picture reported is mixed. Nationally the completion rate at grade 9 in 2014–2015 is higher for girls (41.8%) than boys (38.9%), but it is still low and falling relative to a baseline of 2010–2011. However the secondary enrolment rate for girls (55.3%) is higher than for boys (51.3%) and is rising relative to the baseline. For provinces targeted by the project female enrolment at lower secondary level in 2014–2015 is higher than for boys.

96. Projects can also benefit women without any formal GAP targets. For example, the Commune Council Development project was to support the commune council system established in 2002 to introduce a degree of political decentralization. The project provided both the physical infrastructure for council offices, as well as capacity building for officials and councilors, and introduced a computer-based civil registration system.⁸³ The introduction of a formal system of civil registration for births, deaths, and marriage is seen as a major step forward in strengthening women's entitlement. While the project GAP is very general without precise targets, the PCR reports that 89% of the population (more than 50% of which were women) were granted birth certificates under the project, which should strengthen their legal right over property and land. The PCR rates the overall project as *highly successful*, but provides no comment on achievements against the GAP. The separate gender rating by SDGG rated the project as *successful*.

⁷⁹ MOF. 2012. *Additional Financing Emergency Food Assistance Project: Summary of Gender Equality Results and Achievements*. Phnom Penh.

⁸⁰ This is an overall figure and in three provinces was below the target.

⁸¹ Data supplied by SERD as part of project monitoring (as of 2015).

⁸² The Third Education Sector Development Project, Second Quarterly Progress Report (April–June 2016) commented that some of the targets in the GAP are 'obscure and difficult to measure.'

⁸³ ADB. 2008. *Completion Report: Commune Council Development Project (Cambodia)*. Manila.

97. Similarly projects classified as gender mainstreaming need not be the only projects to benefit women. For example, the First Financial Sector Program Cluster had no specific gender focus, other than part of the aim was to strengthen microfinance institutions and women are known to be the predominant borrower of micro-credit. The PCR reports rated the project as *highly successful* and reports that the number of microfinance borrowers rose from 410,000 in 2001 to 470,000 in 2006.⁸⁴ Similar results and ratings are obtained from subsequent sub-programs which note a significant rise in the number of microfinance borrowers, which surpassed 1 million in 2010.⁸⁵ Given the predominance of women in microfinance the expectation must be that they would have benefitted disproportionately from the success of the project.

98. In summary, the information from PCRs, PVRs, and project progress reports indicate progress on targets, but cannot tell definitively how projects are impacting on gender.⁸⁶ However, it indicates that a very serious and largely effective effort is being made to introduce gender concerns into project planning and design and that the system for gender mainstreaming is being implemented relatively effectively in a substantial proportion of the ADB portfolio in Cambodia.

D. CPS Results Framework

99. While the current CPS program is clear in rationalizing how new projects can potentially help meet gender goals, it is relatively weak in relation to the wider impact of ADB activity on gender. The CPS Results Framework has only three gender targets, two in education and one in relation to agriculture (see table 4). Of these only the education targets in relation to girls' secondary enrolment and completion rates can reasonably be linked with sector programs. The CPS targets also bear little relation to the targets in the Neary Rattanak IV (see table 5) with the only overlap in the secondary education target.

100. In general there is a relation between the CPS sector allocation to programs in water, TVET, education, and governance to the targets of the national gender plan, as progress in those sectors should contribute to meeting the goals of access to safe water, numbers trained, secondary enrolment, and possibly participation. It is always difficult to attribute progress or lack of it in relation to national level targets to the actions of a particular donor, even one whose program is large. Nonetheless some of the ADB projects cover large numbers of households, so we would expect that ADB projects in water, education, and TVET would have a positive impact on the respective targets in the Neary Rattanak IV.

101. ADB's gender initiatives have been based primarily on building gender targets into the design of its project and in a majority of cases there has been success in achieving a significant number of these targets. However, meeting targets does not in itself guarantee impact. This is less of a problem for GEN where project targets are more directly related to improved outcomes, such as girls or enrolled farmers reached. However for other projects many gender targets can be thought of as project 'outputs' rather than as project 'outcomes', which reflect changes in the status, income, or welfare of women. We cannot be sure how employment, training, or participation in a project will affect the position of women in the long-run without more detailed evidence, although the expectation is that the effects will be positive. For example, a project which improves a road will affect women's welfare in a number of ways many of which will not be reflected in the project's gender targets for employment or participation. Critical will be the time and travel cost savings created by the project and the use to which these are put by the women affected. Similarly for an irrigation or flood control project, while targets may reflect the numbers of women trained or participating in the project, what matters for long-run impact will be the change in crop yields or the flooding avoided and how women benefit from these.

⁸⁴ ADB. 2008. *Completion Report: First Financial Sector Program Cluster (Cambodia)*. Manila.

⁸⁵ ADB. 2011. *Completion Report: Second Financial Sector Program Cluster (Cambodia)*. Manila.

⁸⁶ This is not an issue of lack of effort on the part of project teams, but relates to the need for a rigorous impact assessment, at least allowing for double difference comparisons of before/after and with/without scenarios, before definitive judgements are possible.

102. Assessing results fully at the project level in relation to gender impact, as opposed to meeting specific targets, requires more detailed information than is normally available. A rigorous impact assessment is required to isolate the project's effect from all other factors at work. This type of rigorous impact assessment is usually carried out as a standalone research study. It is done only infrequently for ADB projects usually from a poverty reduction perspective, although, where poverty reduction is studied it is possible to add a gender dimension.⁸⁷ No such study was found for Cambodia and in the absence of detailed impact assessments it is difficult to be definite about the results of ADB projects.

103. To partially address the question of impact as part of this study focus group discussions and a beneficiary survey were conducted for a case-study project the Rural Roads Improvement Project. The results were analyzed separately. The project is seen as best-practice case in the sense that considerable effort was made to explain to both women participants and project contractors the benefits of using female labor on both road construction and maintenance. As discussed above there is evidence that this was successful in that a significant number of women were employed.

104. The focus group discussions made it clear that participants were pleased with the road primarily for time and cost saving reasons and because it created economic opportunities. For women there was recognition of the time saving benefits in relation to travel to and from markets, health clinics, and weddings. After the project some were no longer stopped from travelling by their husbands due the difficulty in using the unimproved road. Relatively few participants appeared to have been employed in the construction and maintenance of the road and this employment opportunity did not appear to be viewed as a major benefit. Many felt that local people were not employed on the road either because much of the work was mechanized or because the contractors already came to their village with a team of workers, either from outside the area or from a commune where construction had already commenced. Accidents and bad driving were perceived to have become a problem with women worried about speeding drivers putting their children at risk. Nonetheless, from their answers it appears the participants felt their lives improved due to the road.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Conclusions

105. The rapid rate of economic growth experienced by Cambodia over the last 15 years has had a major impact in reducing poverty and changing economic structure. It has also allowed some progress in reducing gender gaps in economic, social, and political terms. There has been progress in meeting the CMDGs although significant gaps remain in higher education, the maternal mortality rate is still high, political representation for women has improved only modestly, violence against women remains relatively high, and stereotypical cultural attitudes are slow to change. The government is formally committed to gender equality under the Constitution and has created an impressive administrative apparatus to mainstream gender equality in all its operations. The National Council for Women chaired by the Prime Minister with the Queen as Honorary President is the overseeing body for gender and all ministries are required to coordinate with MOWA and create their own mainstreaming action plans. Various plans, both at the national and sector level, are intended to target gender goals. Unfortunately the capacity to operate this impressive structure is very limited. National plan documents are normally produced with donor support and the capacity of line ministries to conduct serious gender work is limited. The funds in the national budget specifically earmarked for gender work are modest, so that within line ministries gender initiatives must compete with other uses of funds.

⁸⁷ The main approaches are random experimentation, a difference-in-difference regression analysis, and propensity score matching. Each requires good baseline data for project participants including measures of consumption or income and data on household and area characteristics. An example of this approach with a subset of gender related questions is the analysis of the ADB Microfinance Project in Pakistan, the Khushali Bank (see H. Montgomery and J. Weiss. 2011. *Can Commercially-oriented Microfinance Help the Millennium Development Goals: Evidence from Pakistan*. World Development).

106. ADB supports gender in Cambodia primarily through its projects. Its TA support is largely linked with projects and its role in policy dialogue on gender has been limited. A majority of ADB projects in 2005–2015 have been classified as EGM and have been concentrated in sectors like ANR (including irrigation), water, transport (rural roads rather than highways), and education where, with well-designed projects, there is the potential for benefits to reach women. In these projects the process of creating and implementing GAPs appears to have been conducted carefully and consistently and monitored effectively. Where there are weaknesses, it is principally in the capacity of executing agencies to provide adequate gender focal points, rather than in project teams. Reports on completed and ongoing projects suggest that there has been considerable success in meeting the targets specified in GAPs.

107. However there are also limitations to this project-based approach. In some projects the choice of the most appropriate targets for the GAPs is unclear and the feasibility of achieving them uncertain. Targets should be specific to the conditions of an individual project. Infrastructure projects typically include a proportion of women to be employed as construction workers. What is a sensible employment target can vary based on labor market conditions in the project area. Similarly some targets for women in decision-making bodies on projects need to allow for lower levels of education completion, particularly among older women, as well as intra-family household responsibilities, and the fact that leadership roles are often filled by from existing committees, where female representation is low, so few female candidates are eligible to be considered. In addition, achieving specific numerical targets is not the same as achieving tangible gender outcomes and meeting a given target does not guarantee success in the sense of a contribution to lowering gender gaps. The focus needs to be more on ensuring gender issues are fully integrated into project design rather than on the achievement of a specific numerical target. This is a Bank-wide issue and there is no evidence that procedures in Cambodia are particularly unsatisfactory, as compared with other developing member countries (DMCs).

108. ADB does not appear to have had an overall gender strategy in Cambodia. Both the government and ADB subscribe to an 'inclusive growth' model with gender by definition as part of inclusion. The policy issues appear to have been viewed by ADB in relation to the constraints on reducing gender gaps with the most recent CGA locating these constraints to economic empowerment under one of three generic headings covering intra-family responsibilities, lack of education and skills, and lack of access to resources. The core sector interventions in relation to gender in the current CPS can be rationalized in terms of meeting one or more of these constraints, although this is not done explicitly in the CPS. This lack of an adequate overview is also clear from the CPS Results Framework which has only three gender targets, of which only the education targets can be linked with projects, and which bear little relation to the targets in the National Gender Plan, the Neary Rattanak IV. It would be useful in the future to integrate the analysis of the CGA more fully into the CPS. Use of a short Appendix which is largely fact-based does not do justice to the underlying analysis.

109. In terms of project coverage over 2005–2015, 9 out of 59 projects are classified as GEN of which 3 were in ANR and 2 in education. Insofar as these projects are successful the expectation is that they will have a greater direct impact per dollar on women's position than other projects. Hence a shift in the composition of the portfolio towards such projects could have had a greater impact on gender equality. Project selection decisions in ADB are based on a number of criteria—economic and financial viability, environmental sustainability, and poverty and social impact. Gender, while an increasingly important element, is not the sole criteria and appeared to be a key objective in only a limited number of projects. The logic of the mainstreaming approach is that as far as possible the projects selected should do no harm in relation to gender and as far as possible should create gender benefits.

110. In relation to the CPS portfolio 2014–2018, a number of the key gender constraints are addressed by projects. In relation to human capital development girls' enrolment and drop-out rates at the upper secondary level are the central target of the Upper Secondary Education Sector Development loan and various TVET programs aim to raise women's skills, although there is still only

limited enrolment. A number of ANR projects aim to raise rural household income while targeting women farmers.

111. In summary, for Cambodia the evidence suggests that at a project level the standard ADB procedures for gender mainstreaming have been applied effectively. Meeting gender targets from projects can be a first step to reduced gender gaps and greater empowerment. Going forward ADB should aim to strengthen national systems of gender mainstreaming by working actively with GMAGs in line ministries and at a project level by aligning GAPs as closely as possible with GMAPs. It also should consider ways of widening its impact by engaging further in policy dialogue on gender, by strengthening government capacity for gender work and working more closely with the other donors, who have a strong commitment to gender equality.

B. Recommendations

1. Use new financing modalities to promote gender

112. The bank-wide shift away from project-based lending to more general policy loans or RBLs offers an opportunity to diversify the approach to gender pursued in Cambodia. While projects offer the opportunity of setting precise targets it may be more influential to combine project and policy loans to ensure that there is consistency between policy and project level goals. This process is being applied currently in education and PSM loans and could be extended to other areas like finance (targeting numbers of female borrowers and issues like collateral) and energy (targeting connections for female headed households). Insofar as a line ministry has an effective GMAP this could provide a starting point for discussions on how gender can be built best into a reform program. Despite the limitations of GAP targets the mainstreaming approach to project lending should continue to be the primary vehicle for ADB gender interventions. However, where possible it should be complemented by a programmatic approach which combines policy-based and project loans.

2. Strengthen public sector capacity for gender work

113. There is widespread agreement that despite the impressive structure to pursue gender goals in Cambodia technical capacity to deliver and monitor the implementation of gender initiatives is very limited within the public sector at national, sub-national and local levels. In the past ADB has provided technical support to the MOWA through training and the placement of consultants. Currently the need appears to be greatest in relation to staff with gender responsibilities in key line ministries and at local government levels. This technical assistance should aim to facilitate the delivery of existing ministry Mainstreaming Action Plans and strengthen the design of future plans. In addition TA support to project executing agencies can include provision to link with GMAGs in line ministries to ensure that project GAPs align with ministry GMAPs. TA support for line ministries was one of the suggestions made by the Minister for Women's Affairs in discussion with the IED Mission. Another suggestion was to involve MOWA staff as part of review teams for ADB projects. They could work with executing agency staff in drawing up the GAP, whilst at the same time developing their own sector expertise. How far this latter suggestion is feasible would need to be explored, but the general point is that whilst the MOWA has developed its technical capacity for sector work, there is awareness that it still lacks technical expertise in depth across different sectors. Without strong partners within the government there will always be a limit on what ADB project lending can achieve in this area and further TA support for the government appears important.⁸⁸

3. Strengthen donor coordination on gender equality

114. Cambodia receives support from many sources—multilateral, bilateral, and NGO. Most donors are concerned with gender issues to varying degrees. The donor TWGG is intended to ensure coordination on donor initiatives. It is unclear how effective this mechanism is. Donors provided the background papers and policy briefs for the Neary Rattanak IV and support the revised 'policy advocacy' role of MOWA. In principle a significant proportion of total development assistance to

⁸⁸ Provision of TA to support government counterparts is one of the suggestions of the External Forum on Gender and Development, Sixteenth Session (20–22 June 2016, Manila).

Cambodia is intended to meet gender goals, but there is no overall audit of how effective it has been.⁸⁹ ADB is perceived as one of the lead donors in programs for education and decentralization, but not in gender, it appears. As a key donor in Cambodia, ADB could play a more active role in the TWGG. This could involve as a starting point identifying a clearer division of responsibility between donors within the gender field and taking the initiative in a compilation of what are agreed as aid programs with demonstrable gender benefits and an agreed list of indicators to monitor progress. These indicators could build on the targets from the Neary Rattanak IV and the Sustainable Development Goals, but might involve other specific measures. Funding support would need to be provided for data collection. This data would allow discussions on a clearer division of responsibility and funding commitments on gender. The issue of donor coordination is timely because of the planned revival of World Bank support to Cambodia after the suspension of new loans in 2011.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ UNDP suggest that annually around \$250 million in total is identified by donors as intended to contribute to gender equality, but that evidence on its allocation and impact is very limited.

⁹⁰ Previously, a division of labor between ADB and the World Bank had been agreed with. For example, ADB withdrew from health with the World Bank increasing its loans to the sector, but ADB funding water supply and sanitation projects, which have health consequences.

List of Persons/Organizations Met

Ministries and Government Agencies

Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training

Tung Sopheap, Deputy Director General, Technical and Vocational Education Training
 Nong Kanika, Director of Policy and Strategy
 Hou Sokunveary, Chief Office
 Heng Selhk, National TVET Specialist
 Bun Sary, National TVET Consultant
 Leng Sohanthy, Chief Officer of Institute Management

Ministry of Rural Development

H.E. Chan Darong, Director General for Technical Affairs
 Nuon Pich Nimith, Director Deputy, Department of Rural Water Supply
 Song Sophal, Project Manager
 So Chan Leakhena, Gender Officer
 Hor Bolar, Environment Officer
 Tip Sophark, Environment Officer
 Srey Samay, Gender Officer
 Hang Sopolik, Settlement Officer
 Chhun Sophea, Environment Officer
 Dorn Dara, Environment Officer

Ministry of Public Works and Transport

H.E. Pheng Sovicheano, Secretary of State

Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology

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 Jose Galvez, Team Leader/Water Resources Specialist
 Benilda Tayag, FWUC International Training Specialist
 Bak Bunna, Project Manager
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 H.E. Ms. Bunchheth Veasna, Permanent General Secretary, Cambodian National Council for Women
 The Chhuhak, Deputy Director General

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

H.E. Sen Sovann, Deputy Secretary General
 Liv Leang Hy, Deputy Team Leader/Agribusiness and Marketing Expert

Ministry of Interior

Daniel Kobb, Policy Advisor

Ministry of Planning

H.E. Duong Sarun, Undersecretary

Ministry of Economy and Finance

H.E. Vong Sandap, Undersecretary of State, Member of Supreme National Economic Council
H. E. Ros Seilava, Undersecretary of State, Steering Committee of the Public Financial
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Biranchi Kumar Choudhury, Staff

Ministry of Tourism

H. E. Sok Sokun, Director of Planning and Development Department
Sary Bun, Gender and Ethnic Minority Specialist

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

H.E. Nath Bunroeun, Secretary of State, National EFA Coordinator
Qung Borat, Deputy Director General

Development Partners

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U.S. Agency for International Development

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Plan International

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CARE Cambodia

Joanne Fairley, Country Director

Gender and Development for Cambodia

Ros Sopheap, Executive Director

Social Business Khmer

Khnel Bora, Executive Director

Cambodia Resident Mission

Samiuela Tukuafu, Country Director
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Januar Hakim, Senior Portfolio Management Specialist
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Chandy Chea, Gender Specialist (Staff consultant)
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