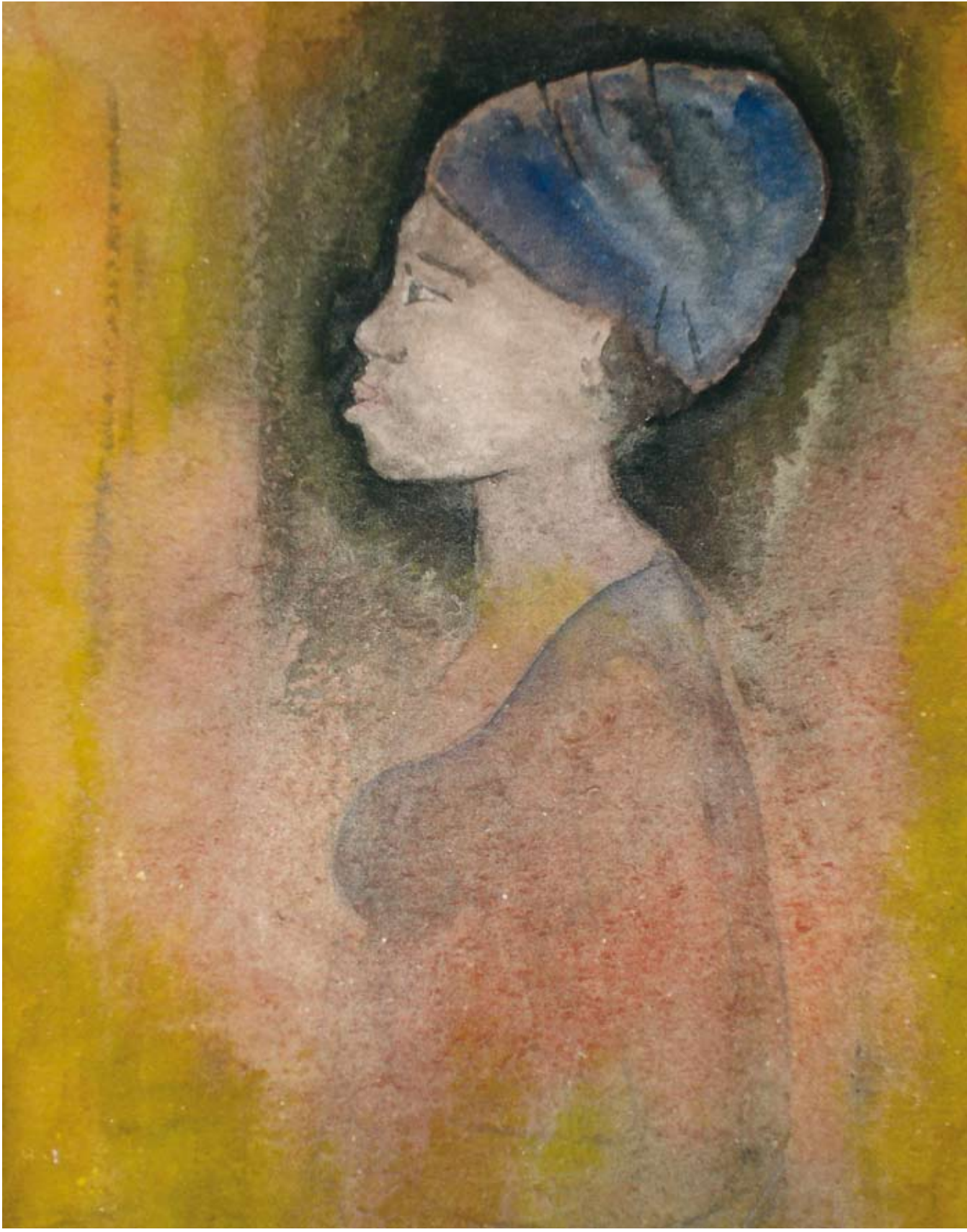

The women empowerment approach

A methodological guide

VROUWEN & ONTWIKKELING

FEMMES & DEVELOPPEMENT

The women empowerment approach

A methodological guide

Research carried out by the "Gender and Indicators" working group
of the Commission on Women and Development.
Document coordinated and drafted by Sophie Charlier and Lisette Caubergs
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Foreword

Interest for the DGDC of this approach

For the DGDC, gender issues - the socio-cultural and power relations between men and women - are core and transversal aspects of our work. The value and necessity of putting gender relations at the centre of the development issue and the fight against poverty could of course be questioned. We see it as an issue of human rights and yet, in our daily work, we regularly come up against national policies or even development programmes which do not sufficiently take into consideration the relations of power between men and women.

It is therefore important to demonstrate how essential the notion of gender is in understanding how poverty is perpetuated and how it affects women differently. It is also crucial to understand the specific dynamics implemented by women, which sometimes fundamentally call into question the adopted development models. It is therefore important to highlight the role women play in development and how they invest in ways of coping. It is also necessary to show how they put strategies in place to increase their power and enter a genuine social relationship of power – in other words, how they achieve empowerment.

To do so, we need methodological tools.

At the DGDC, these issues are dealt with transversally, but are also inspired by the work of the "Commission on Women and Development", a commission that supports development cooperation policy.

We therefore support measures to develop, together with partners from the South, a methodology for the building of specific indicators for measuring empowerment. Our internal coordinators have drawn up a check-list enabling us to compare the development of gender relations in countries where Belgium is present. This being said, we are also interested in a more extensive approach directly linked to the specific realities on the ground. An approach that starts with the specified women and helps us to measure the benefit of the development programmes in the empowerment process.

Martine Van Dooren,
Director of the DGCD/DGOS
September 2006.

1. Introduction

At the DGDC's request, the Commission on Women and Development's working group on indicators has drawn up a dynamic methodology to create specific empowerment indicators in the context of development programmes.

Why such a methodological guide? For two years, we have been thinking of empowerment as a process both:

- **individual**: the acquisition of greater independence and capacity for self- determination, as well as means to allow individuals to broaden their opportunities, and
- **collective**: the capacity of a group to influence social change and move towards a fair and equal society, in particular in its relations between men and women.

This methodological guide is more than another tool or check-list of indicators, some of which could well be collected on site or from literature; we have opted for a methodology that is both systematic and which also helps the specified local populations and/or groups to create with the appropriate indicators.

The parameters of this appropriation vary according to:

- the specific socio-cultural characteristics of each country, region and inhabitant.
- the different types of cooperation stakeholders:
  - those working for development in their community: individuals and their organisations/ associations
  - support organisations: NGOs, state services, training institutes, research departments, etc.
  - financial backers: NGOs, states and multilateral cooperation, religious establishments, etc.

Each of these stakeholders has its own logic and dynamics for gauging the process of change and the results of an initiative. It is therefore useful for each of them to develop their own indicators of empowerment and development. Moreover, these indicators vary according to level (micro, macro) and the involvement of each player. It is for this reason that we have not opted for a list of ready-made indicators but have chosen to draw up a methodological guide to formulate indicators of empowerment which match local realities.
Finally, women's empowerment is does not result from a linear evolution, or from one that is the same for every society; rather, it is a process that can only be constructed with women's and mixed movements.

Our approach for indicators of empowerment was notably inspired by the works of N. Kabeer, who defines an indicator of empowerment as follows: *"Indicators of* empowerment *need merely 'indicate' the direction of change rather than provide an accurate measurement of it… We have seen how single measures, disembedded from their context, lend themselves to a variety of different meanings.*
There is an implicit assumption underlying many of these measurements that we can somehow predict the process of change involved in empowerment whereas human agency is indeterminate and hence unpredictable.
There is no single linear model of change by which a "cause" can be identified for women's disempowerment and altered to create the desired "effect."
To attempt to predict at the outset of an intervention precisely how it will change women's lives, without some knowledge of ways of "being and doing" which are realisable and valued by women in that context, runs into the danger of prescribing process of empowerment and thereby violating its essence, which is to enhance women's capacity for self-determination.

At the same time, equity requires that poorer women and other excluded groups are not just able to gain access to valued goods but to do so on terms of respect and promote their ability to define their own priorities and make their own choices. Such achievements are less easy to quantify since they deal more directly with the renegotiation of power relations and have to be far more sensitive to local cultural nuances. They would have to be monitored through methodologically pluralist approaches combining quantitative and qualitative data, preferably by grass-root-based organisations whose greater embeddedness in local realities and commitment to long term places them in a better situation to combine 'emic' understanding with 'etic' analysis." N.Kabeer [1]

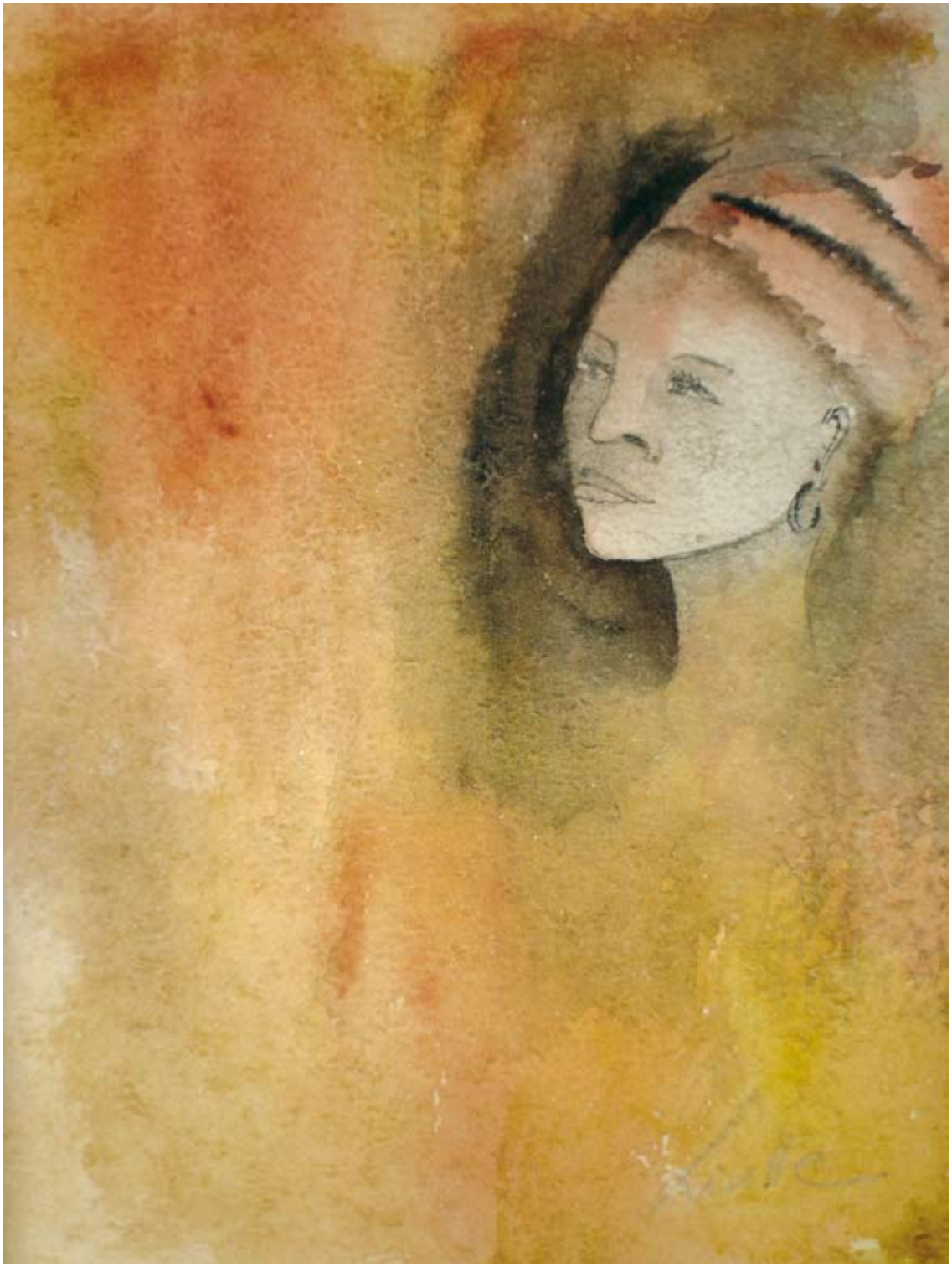
The publication's objective and audience

This publication first of all sets out the theoretical foundations that underpin the concept of empowerment that we have chosen as the central means of measuring the evolution and development of individuals and societies in the framework of development programmes. It is based on the approaches developed by women's movements from the South (in particular DAWN), as well as the theoretical works of Naila Kabeer, Sarah Longwez, Jo Rowlands and Magdalena Léon. It then offers a methodology to formulate specific indicators of empowerment and it presents practical case studies.

This methodology should help programme and project officers (in the public and private sector: NGOs) and development experts responsible for identification, formulation and evaluation work on the ground, to construct with local populations (and/or the groups concerned) a host of indicators able to measure developments in the empowerment process in accordance with local experience and realities. The publication is a kind of micro approach to empowering women at local level. The method should subsequently be applied to other - meso and macro - levels.

The methodology was first introduced at two seminars organised by the Commission on Women and Development. There, we received invaluable suggestions which have enriched our work. The tool was also tested partially or in full on the ground in the D.R. of Congo, Cameroon, Conakry Guinea, Niger and Haiti, as well as in Bolivia.

[1] KABEER N. (2001), « Ressources, Agency Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment », pp.17-57.



2. Empowerment: a new concept[2]?

Introduction

The concept of empowerment is not a new one. References to the term date back to the 1960s, particularly in the Afro-American movement and in Paolo Freire's theory based on the development of a critical conscience.

Since 1985, popular women's movements in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as feminist movements have seen the notion of empowerment as being tied, on the one hand, to the seizing of power, by emphasising mainly the improvement of self-esteem and self-confidence as well as the ability to chose what direction one's life should take; and on the other to the collective power to change gender relations in the economic, political, legal and socio-cultural spheres.

At the level of development bodies, the concept of empowerment was adopted after the Beijing Conference (1995). The Beijing Declaration (section 13), presents women's empowerment as a key strategy for development: *"Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace"*. Unfortunately, the approach as used by development bodies and the offered quantitative indicators tend to reduce its scope to women's ability to take individual responsibility by their own. The indicators do not consider changes in economic and social structures, those that refer to collective empowerment, linked to social change. N. Kabeer (1992, 1994) shows that while it is important to look at the quantitative aspect, for example the number of women holding a management position in a firm or a political mandate, and this is not enough. The notion of empowerment goes further, questioning the roles of different players, men and women, within development policies; and getting people to think about

- conflicts and power,
- but also to examine symbolic referents and deep social structures.
  All of this opens up new doors to development.

Empowerment and power, a dynamic process

Any attempt to understand the meaning of the word empowerment requires us to consider the notion of power.

Mr Foucault's work has helped us to see the notion of power in plural form, as "**powers**". He works from the observation that there is not just one dominant power but multiple "powers", as diffuse as a "constellation of stars". Thus, while male domination expresses men's power over women, women, for their part, also exert an often indirect and invisible power over men. Is this not the very meaning of the African proverb *"Behind every great man, there is always a great woman"*?

Empowerment can therefore be considered as the process to acquire "power" individually and collectively. Among individuals or a community, it designates first and foremost the ability to act independently, but also the means needed and the process of being able to act and make one's own decisions regarding life and

[2] Partly borrowed from an article by CHARLIER S. (2006), « L'empowerment des femmes dans les organisations de commerce équitable : une proposition méthodologique », pp. 87-109

society. Empowerment is thus seen as a process, a dynamic two-pronged construction of identity, both individual and collective. This approach to power has been picked up by several feminist bodies and development NGOs[3], which agree that the empowerment process should be broken down into four levels of power:

- **"power over"**: this power involves a mutually exclusive relationship of domination or subordination. It assumes that power exists only in limited quantity. This power is exerted over someone or, less negatively, allows "someone to be guided". It triggers either passive or active resistance;

- **"power to"**: a power which includes the ability to make decisions, have authority, and find solutions to problems, and which can be creative and enabling. The notion therefore refers to intellectual abilities (knowledge and know-how) as well as economic means, i.e. to the ability to access and control means of production and benefit (the notion of assets);

- **"power with"**: social or political power which highlights the notion of common purpose or understanding, as well as the ability to get together to negotiate and defend a common goal (individual and collective rights, political ideas such as lobbying, etc.). Collectively, people feel they have power when they can get together and unite in search of a common objective, or when they share the same vision;

- **"power within"**: this notion of power refers to self-awareness, self-esteem, identity and assertiveness (knowing how to be)[4]. It refers to how individuals, through self-analysis and internal power, can influence their lives and make changes.

The notion of empowerment thus forms part of the vision to acquire power, to control one's life and make choices. This notion of "making choices" has been broadly debated by A. Sen (2000)[5] and followed up by N. Kabeer (2001), who expanded the notion to *people's ability to have access to things and to make choices*.

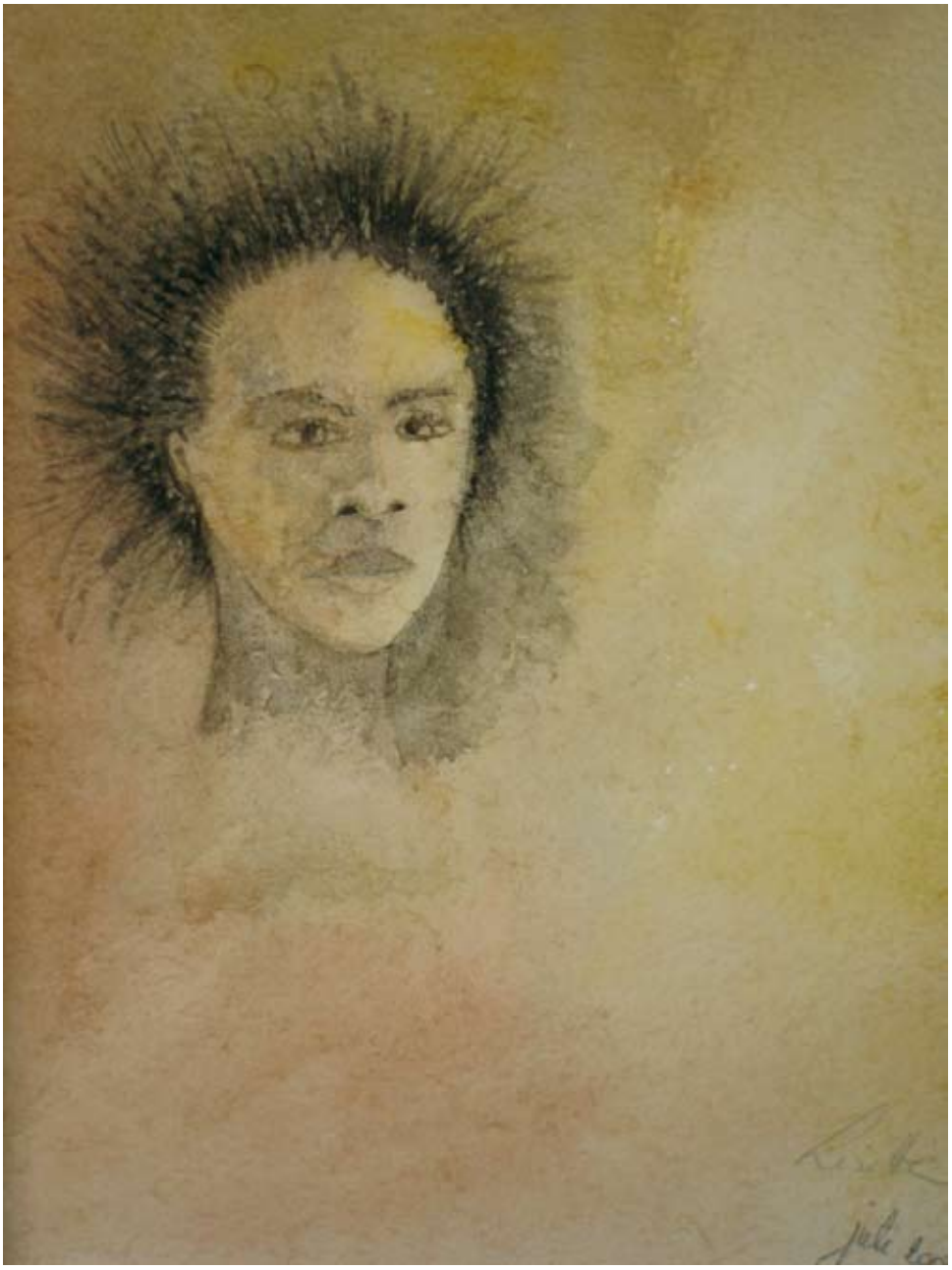
Furthermore, the capacity for empowerment is tied to institutions and laws, what may be done or not. This dimension therefore relates to the cultural aspects of the society in which we live.

The notion of empowerment has often been used as "power over". We suggest also taking other dimensions of power into consideration, that is to say "power within", "power to" and "power with".

[3] These four types of power are inspired notably by documents from Oxaal and Baden (1997), Jo Rowlands (1997), ATOL (2002) and Action Aid (2002).

[4] Here we have picked up on the notion of "self-esteem" which, in psychology, refers to self-love, self-perception, self-confidence, recognition of one's own abilities and others' recognition of one's abilities (others' appreciation).

[5] Sen (2000) defines individuals' ability to "choose their life paths" as a determining factor for wellbeing. He speaks of entitlement as people's ability to gain access to things through the legal means available to society, and the right to acquire material and immaterial goods. All of these define citizenship.



Empowerment includes individual and collective abilities that offer a socio-political space as well as access to and control of different means (resources, power, etc).

An analysis of the empowerment process highlights the way in which opportunities to seize power can be used or overlooked as well as the way in which they can change the immediate or wider environment.

The empowerment approach therefore operates on two levels:

- in relation to its capacity for personal change
- in relation to political and social change.

3. Building of the methodology

Introduction

Taking the aforementioned theoretical foundations, we have developed a methodology to draw up indicators capable in order to follow the process of women's empowerment in the framework of development cooperation. All development is the result of a process of change led by different factors. In international cooperation, this process must be able to be monitored, measured with indicators, and, if necessary, re-directed. It is important to emphasise that the choice of indicators is not merely a matter of technical knowledge, but inevitably reflects social and political choices.

The guiding thread of this guide is the notion of empowerment. Often, it is seen as one aspect among many others such as independence or vulnerability, which is fairly simplistic. Indeed, for us, this notion encompasses several concepts: greater choice in living one's life on the one hand and transforming relationships of power between men and women in view of social justice on the other. This theoretical approach to empowerment as such includes two dimensions: one individual and one collective, which serve as the basis for the construction of the methodology.

The second basic tenet is the AURA methodology (*Auto-Renforcement Accompagné* – accompanied self-reinforcement[6]), developed as part of an ATOL research initiative[7] on empowerment as a means of helping to improve civil society. In this process, the African partners, using the theoretical approach to empowerment as a basis, suggested that the concept of empowerment be broken down and analysed in terms of assets (*avoir*) – knowledge (*savoir*) – capacity (*pouvoir*) – will (*vouloir*). Breaking down the empowerment concept into these four elements has proven to be useful when considering and assessing the results and impact of development programmes. It is for this reason that we have appropriated these four concepts in the drafting of our methodology of empowerment indicators.

[6] Auto Renforcement Accompagné AURA, Guide méthodologique, ATOL, Leuven, 2002
[7] ATOL, Information and Knowledge-Management Services in International Cooperation.

The 4 aspects of empowerment.

ASSETS (power to)

This concept refers to greater economic power in terms of material assets such as income, land, tools or technology. This being said, such economic power is not restricted to the possession of resources and wealth, but also includes better health, more time, access to certain services such as loans, information and training, health centres and markets etc.

KNOWLEDGE AND KNOW-HOW (power to)

This means having more practical and intellectual knowledge or skills, enabling a person or a community to make the most of the opportunities that arise. It refers to management of people (leadership), techniques or procedures, training (literacy) as well as the development of thought and reason as critical analysis skills. Know-how highlights the importance of applying knowledge or the ability to translate one's knowledge into action or resources.

WILL (internal power)

This refers to power within, psychological strength or spiritual power: one's values and fears, self-confidence and self-perception. It is the ability and will to make one's own choices for the future, the awareness of one's own life plans as well as the challenges facing one's community. The concept of "will" also includes the two elements of state of mind (being) and the ability to use it towards others (knowing how to be).

CAPACITY (internal power and power with)

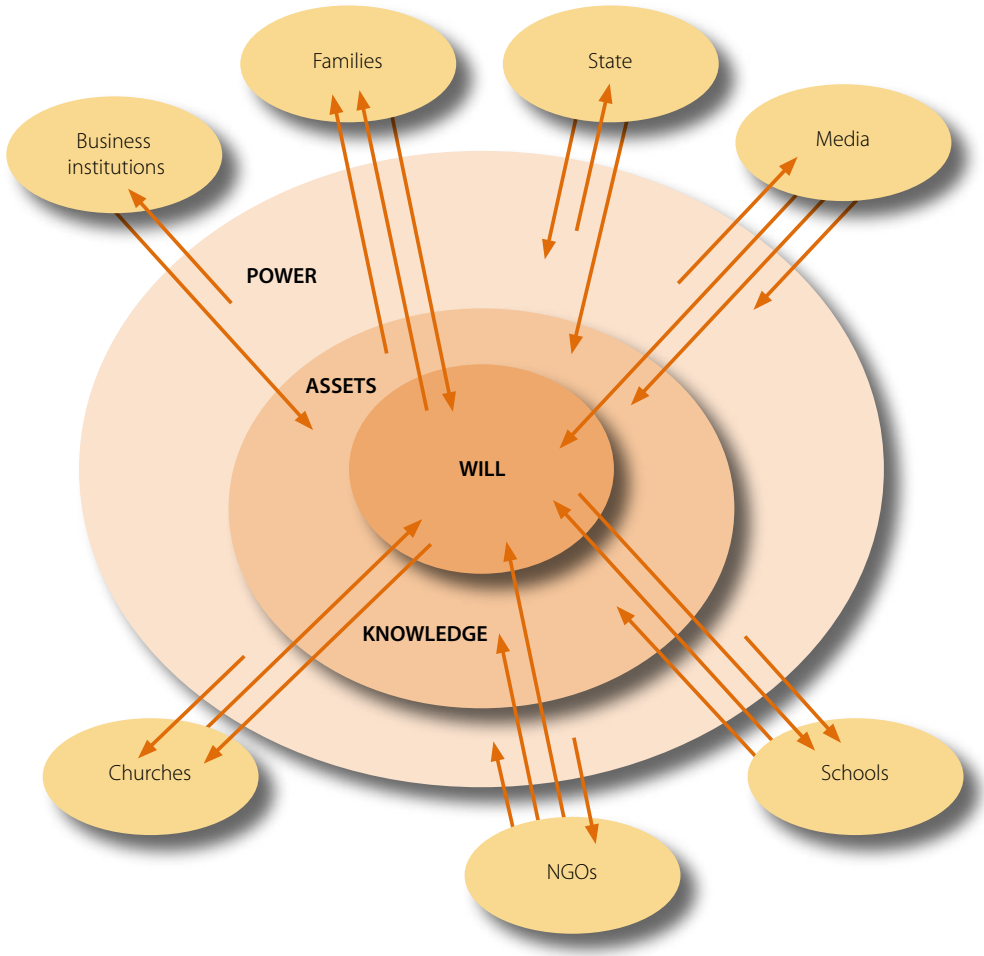
This means having the opportunity to make decisions, take on responsibility, be free to act as one pleases and use one's resources (assets, knowledge, will). Decision-making encompasses several aspects:

- the ability to make one's own decisions; the ability to take part in decision-making; the ability to influence decision-making and control those who make decisions on one's behalf;
- the ability to make decisions for others, and to show authority (in situations where someone has to make the final decision).

Circles of empowerment

In the AURA approach, the different elements of power and the very dynamics of the empowerment process were visualised using circles of empowerment. This diagram highlights the link between the changes in individuals and groups or associations (inside the circles) and the changes in such institutions as the family, the State, religious establishments, educational establishments, the media, NGOs, etc. It is, in fact, the process of societal change.

Institutions have an influence over the development of individuals' and their organisations' knowledge, assets, will and capacity. This relationship can be seen from the arrows pointing inwards. For example, the family considerably influences the development of an individual's self-confidence and self-perception; NGOs influence the development of individuals' and their organisations' knowledge; the State influences people's ability to form organisations and strengthen their social power. Moreover, individuals and their organisations (groups, associations, etc) can influence institutions within society and thus contribute to change. This relationship can be seen from the arrows pointing outwards. For example, a woman can influence her position within her family, a group of farmers can influence markets and better negotiate the price of their products, a parents' association can influence an educational establishment's policies, etc.



Source: ATOL Empowerment research, 2002

It goes without saying that not all of the arrows have the same weight; in other words, the power to influence is not the same at all levels. For example, a person does not have the same power as an organisation (group, association, etc) to influence an institution like the market or the State. In most cases, therefore, the arrows departing from the outer circles (groups of individuals) are more important than the arrows departing from the inner circles (individuals).

It is also worth mentioning that the diagram does not incorporate all relationships of influence, for instance relationships between the different institutions such as the State, NGOs and financial or educational establishments, which of course play a major role in changing society.

3.1. Presentation of the different elements

As an overview of the methodology, the different elements and the link between them are presented as 2 diagrams with 8 boxes from 1.1. to 2.4.
The two diagrams visualise the need for indicators to be developed at two levels:

- Diagram 1: individual level
- Diagram 2: collective level

Each diagram incorporates 4 boxes showing the four important stages in the formulation of indicators:

- Boxes 1.1. and 2.1.: Baseline
  The situation before a programme is launched, in terms of resources (economic, human, and socio-political)
- Boxes 1.2. and 2.2.: Programme input
  What the programme contributes in terms of resources (economic, human, and socio-political)
- Boxes 1.3. and 2.3.: Results of the programme
  The results during and after the programme, in terms of greater choice: at individual level (life plans) and at society level (gender equality)
- Boxes 1.4. and 2.4.: Impact of the programme
  The changes the programme has brought about in terms of quality of life and social justice.

Each of these boxes will be developed and detailed so as to formulate the appropriate indicators.
It is clear that the formulated indicators will differ according to the type of programme and player, which is why, as we have already said, we have opted not for a list of standard indicators but for a guide that enables indicators to be formulated according to the context. These can be quantitative (for example, the number of loans granted to women) or qualitative (such as new long-term activities developed with the help of a loan). For indicators to be a genuine tool for monitoring and assessment, they must be specific and measurable over time. Meanwhile, it is important for them to be recognised and accepted by the different stakeholders. Indicators must be formulated in a participative and progressive manner.

The very act of sitting down to think with the specified women and men is an act of empowerment. Awareness and reinforcement allow those involved to play an increasingly important role in formulating indicators; hence the need to speak of process and development. It is important to follow the process of women's empowerment (at individual and collective level) but also that of reducing the gap between the empowerment of men and women.

"Gender-sensitive indicators have the special function of pointing out gender-related changes in society over time. Their usefulness lies in their ability to point to changes in the status and roles of women and men over time, and therefore to measure whether gender equity is being achieved. Because use of indicators and other relevant evaluation techniques will lead to a better understanding of how results can be achieved, using gender-sensitive indicators will also feed into more effective future planning and program delivery". Source : CIDA[8]

3.2. An individual and a collective level

Working to develop a society means contributing to social change at an individual and at a collective level (society and/or community). It is therefore crucial that the indicators established allow both individual and collective empowerment to be monitored, each reinforcing the other.

Diagram 1: individual level

Indicators at individual level must serve to monitor the way in which individuals (women, men, girls and boys) can carry out their life plans or, in other words, can lead a dignified life in accordance with their own values and criteria. This implies empowering individuals by giving them "greater choice" and helping them to seize opportunities. In the longer term, this is likely to improve "quality of life".

Diagram 2: collective level

Indicators at this level must serve to monitor social change so as to build a fair society which enables its members to form organisations and put in place mechanisms, systems and structures that guarantee women and men the same opportunities and rights when planning their lives. This implies empowering society through "gender equality within society", i.e. the strengthening of social justice.

[8] "CIDA's Policy on Gender Equality", Canadian International Development Agency, Quebec, 1999, 30p.

Diagram 1: Indicators of empowerment - individual level

Baseline	programme input	Having more choices Life plans	
		Results of the programme	Impact quality of life
1.1 Economic resources Human resources Socio-political resources	**1.2** Economic resources Human resources Socio-political resources	**1.3** ASSETS KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW WILL CAPACITY	**1.4** ASSETS KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW WILL CAPACITY

Diagram 2: Indicators of empowerment - collective level

Baseline	programme input	Societal choice Gender equality	
		Results of the programme	Impact social justice
2.1 Economic resources Human resources Socio-political resources	**2.2** Economic resources Human resources Socio-political resources	**2.3** ASSETS KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW WILL CAPACITY	**2.4** ASSETS KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW WILL CAPACITY

BEFORE ← **DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME** → **AFTER**

3.3. Different monitoring and assessment stages

Boxes 1.1. and 2.1.: Baseline

Monitoring a process of change and assessing the results implies understanding the initial situation in order to monitor/measure the changes attributed to the programme. The reference situation is called baseline.

At the individual level (1.1.) and the collective level (2.1.) we analyse the:

- Economic resources: capital, income, land, time, the market, health care, information, etc.
- Human resources: management skills, technical know-how, ability to analyse, knowing how to read and write, self-confidence, self-perception, etc.
- Socio-political resources: being part of an organisation or solidarity mechanism, mobility, involvement in local politics, etc.

On the one hand, it is important to specify the extent to which these resources are controlled, by referring to Sarah Longwe and the different degrees of empowerment[9]. For economic and human resources, we distinguish "access" to resources from true "control", with all the intermediary stages. Women may, for example, have access to land without necessarily having control over it, i.e. the ability to make an independent decision as to how that land should be used. The same holds true for socio-political resources. At this level it is important to specify the extent of control, ranging from simple presence in a group or organisation to involvement in decision-making, in all its forms.

On the other hand, it is important to bear in mind the conditions under which people have access to resources and the way in which they control them. Indeed, access or control can depend on client-based relations of dependence, highly-abusive working conditions or can even exist in a way which gives people dignity and a sense of their own value, or self-esteem[10].
Once data have been collected for the baseline, the information must be broken down according to gender, age, social group and ethnic group, etc.

[9] LONGWE S. (1999), "Women's Empowerment (Framework)", pp. 92-101.
[10] KABEER N. (2001), « Ressources, Agency Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment », pp.17-57.

Boxes 1.2. and 2.2.: Programme input

To achieve the specific objective of a development programme, a range of strategies, resources and activities are implemented. This is also called the programme's input. When monitoring the process to empower women in relation to men, it is necessary to determine how the programme benefits people by improving economic, human and social resources.

- Economic resources: loans, lightening of workloads, technology, land, construction, means of transport, etc.
- Human resources: training, support, coaching, exchange visits, etc.
- Socio-political resources: support for the organisation, structuring, networking, lobbying, etc.

In the same way as for the *"baseline"*, it is important to specify what the programme's contribution is likely to be. It is important to see whether the programme intends only to offer resources and strategies to facilitate access to resources or whether it goes as far as significantly controlling them. For example, as part of a health programme, access to health care can be facilitated by building a health centre. People can also be supported in their management of a health centre. And more specifically, the programme can be used to improve women's ability to create a positive climate for promoting women's involvement in management.
At a collective level, a development programme can help to strengthen civil society so that it can be involved in the development process. One must find out whether organisations are involved passively in political bodies locally or whether they play a full role and take part in the decision-making, paying specific attention to the role of women.

Boxes 1.3. and 2.3.: The results of the programme

This is the level at which we formulate indicators to follow-up and evaluate the programme while it is being carried out and once it is complete. To monitor the contribution to women's empowerment, we use the four aspects of assets – knowledge – capacity – will. We insist on the fact that any increase in assets, knowledge, capacity and will should be seen in the light of women's ability to choose what path they wish to take in life as individuals and to build an equal society as a social group.

- Indicators at the "assets" level must enable us to monitor increases in economic power: an increase in capital or income, better means of production such as land or technology, improved health care for women and their families, the time gained to produce, to spend with children, to relax, more information on the market and prices, improved market flow, etc. For certain aspects, the indicators are based on quantity, while others are more based on quality so as to follow developments. Once again, it is important to consider the aspects of "access" and "control" as well as the conditions under which women and men have access and control over these resources.

- Indicators at the "knowledge" level aim at monitoring the increase in women's knowledge: greater ability to analyse, to criticise both oneself and others, an improved ability to manage human resources and conflicts, knowing how to read and write, knowing how to manage economic activity, a better

understanding of society challenges, knowing how to compare and evaluate services or partnerships, etc. The quality of the knowledge and the enforcement conditions should also be taken into account.

- Indicators at the "will" level will serve to monitor women's increased ability to choose what path they wish to take in life together with an increase in self-confidence, self-perception or an ability to manage their fears. At individual level, it is also their ability to use their values to look to the future.
  At community level, it is a question of strengthening the feeling of belonging to the group in terms of commitment or respect for procedure in relation to a joint society project.

- Indicators at the "capacity" level will monitor women's increased ability to form groups and manage groups or services, as well as their ability to lobby and negotiate and to influence institutions (State, financial institutions, religious establishments, NGOs, etc). The degree, to which women control or take part in the community, from simple presence to genuine involvement in decision-making, is a point to be considered.

Boxes 1.4. and 2.4.: Impact of the programme

The impact indicators will help evaluate the changes that the programme has brought about for women, as well as the reduction in the gap between women and men. We use the four aspects of empowerment: assets, knowledge, will and capacity. As with the results indicators, we emphasise that the impact of empowerment must be seen in relation to an improved quality of life for individuals and the building of social justice in terms of gender equality.

- Indicators at the "assets" level must help us gauge the genuine changes made (after the programme), for example, the carrying out of viable economic activity, allocation of household resources thanks to higher income (girls' schooling, personal care, etc.) and so on. At community level, this would for example involve the creation of services such as mutual funds, child care centres, services to ease workloads, savings funds and loans.

- "Knowledge" indicators must help us gauge the genuine changes made (after the programme) regarding women's ability as individuals and as a community to make relevant choices because of an ability to assess and interpret important information, understand matters relating to the local market or local politics, to discuss inequalities between men and women in the home, and to assess, interpret and formulate the community's essential needs.

- Indicators at the "will" level will serve to gauge what changes have been made (after the programme) in relation to women's choices because of increased self-confidence, lower domestic violence, control over one's sexuality, the courage to say "no", etc. What personal projects have been carried out, what other activities have been undertaken beyond the programme, etc? At community level, commitments can come from women's associations, as actors of change.

- Indicators at the "capacity" level will serve to gauge what changes have been made (after the programme) in relation to women's ability to express their views, claim their rights and take part in decision-making as an individual at different levels (at home, in the community, etc).
  At the collective level, it is a matter of evaluating women's influence and participation in institutions (political, economic, legal and socio-cultural).

Case study: the FINCA project in the Congo / Kinshasa[11]

Improving the socio-economic position of Congolese women

The FINCA project (Foundation for International Community Assistance in the Congo) aims at improving the socio-economic position of Congolese women by increasing their income, fighting poverty and giving Congolese women financial independence. The project is also open to men.

Individual level

Economic resources

- The women seek to increase their income, but have neither the financial means, nor the material nor the training needed to open a small business.
- There is a demand for training and material support as well as access to loans.
- They try to acquire tools such as grain grinders or mills, or even to set up shops and sales outlets.
- They have no access to drinking water.

Human resources

Situation of women: illiteracy, ignorance, isolation, and no representation at any level. This leads to considerable poverty, economic and social precariousness as well as the women's subordination to and dependence on her husband, who acts alone in managing the family income and making household decisions. As a result, a lack of independence, no equity or equality between men and women, and structural inequality, as well as no social or political justice can be observed.

From a health point of view:
Prevalence of sexually-transmitted diseases, e.g. HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis…
Women are instrumentalised and treated with disrespect
Lack of structures and means to support and care for people with AIDS and/or tuberculosis.

Demand for training is targeted especially at

- loan management, lessons in reading and writing
- computer courses, driving classes
- learning how to produce various products: food (jam, pastries, dried fish, juice, alcohol, etc.), cleaning products (soap, disinfectants, perfume).

Socio-political resources

- Health concerns remain central, particularly in relation to HIV/AIDS and reproductive health.
- There is a demand for awareness on:
  - sexually-transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis
  - citizenship
  - family planning
- There is a demand for education on political issues
  Awareness session to encourage women to be involved in decision-making at local and national level.

[11] In collaboration with the npo S. Bolingo (Kinshasa)

1.1 Baseline - Individual level

Economic resources

HAVING resources – Access and control

The situation of women and men in relation to:

- economic resources: land, equipment, capital, time, health, water and energy, the market, the labour market, information and training, etc.
- the extent to which these economic resources are managed: access to and control over resources and associated services (health centres, banks or micro-financing institutions, media, training centres, etc)
- the conditions under which men and women have access to or control over such resources and services and the way in which choices are made

With special attention to social diversity: age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc

Human resources

KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW - Knowledge and Skills
WILL, BEING and KNOWING HOW TO BE - Self-perception and Self-confidence

The situation of women and men in relation to:

- knowledge, creativity, imagination, etc
- the skills and ability to apply and use this knowledge
- the extent to which these economic resources are managed: access and control

The situation of women and men in relation to:

- self-perception and self-confidence
- their will and commitment to contribute to the development process

With special attention to social diversity: age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc

Socio-political resources

CAPACITY - Forming organisations - Networking - Solidarity

The situation of women and men in relation to:

- being able to set up organisations or form networks - mobility
- being able to influence
- belonging to solidarity systems that provide social security
- the degree of management or participation within organisations and networks: participation in terms of being present or taking part in decision-making.

With special attention to social diversity: age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc

Case study: the FINCA project in the Congo / Kinshasa[12]

Improving the socio-economic position of Congolese women

The FINCA project (Foundation for International Community Assistance in the Congo) aims at improving the socio-economic position of Congolese women by increasing their income, fighting poverty and giving Congolese women financial independence. The project is also open to men.

Collective level

Economic resources

- Women's groups exist, but they have few material and financial means to operate. There is a demand for capital and access to loans. These women do, as a group, have access to loans from international institutions, but the risks are such that they prefer not to apply.

Human resources

- Given that women lack training and education, the group itself is relatively weak. They raise the need for technical training in relation to the group's activities, notably on micro-loans. They need to be better informed of their rights as a group and how to apply for micro-loans, but also of the consequences and means of reimbursement.
- They believe that being part of a group is a way of getting training and information, but also that it can serve as a reliable network.

Socio-political resources

- They believe that their association is isolated from decision-making processes and ask to be involved. They ask for decision-making awareness meetings (collective strategy development). They want the group to be able to defend their rights by the political authorities over the long term.
- They feel that women are under-represented in politics. They hope that the group can act as a platform to train certain "leaders" who, supported by other women, could then run for the presidential and vice-presidential elections. This requires the setting up of collective training on political issues.
- They highlight the lack of punishment following incidents of domestic violence. The group currently lacks enough training and information to defend women's rights. They need to receive training and develop political strategies to ensure that the law is applied and thus to defend women's rights.

[12] In collaboration with the npo S. Bolingo (Kinshasa)

2.1
Economic resources

Human resources

Socio-political resources

2.1 Baseline - Collective level

Economic resources

HAVING resources – Access and control

The situation of women and men as a group within an organisation or the community in relation to:

- economic resources: human potential, equipment and buildings, capital, information and documentation, training, etc.
- the extent to which these economic resources are managed: access to and control over resources and associated services (banks or micro-financing institutions, media, training centres, etc)
- the conditions under which groups of men and women have access to or control over such resources and services, and the way in which choices are made

With special attention to social diversity within groups of women and men:

Human resources

KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW - Knowledge and Skills
WILL, BEING and KNOWING HOW TO BE - Feeling of belonging to the group

The situation of women and men as a group within an organisation or the community in relation to:

- knowledge, creativity, imagination as a group
- the skills and ability to apply and use this knowledge
- the extent to which these economic resources are managed: access and control

With special attention to social diversity within groups of women and men

Socio-political resources

CAPACITY - Forming organisations - Networking - Solidarity

The situation of women and men as a group within an organisation or the community in relation to:

- the ability to influence institutions (the State, financial establishments, educational establishments, religious establishments, NGOs etc).
- the degree of management or participation within the community: participation in terms of being present or taking part in decision-making.

With special attention to social diversity within groups of women and men.

Case study: Increasing Women's Monetary Revenue (ARMF), Dosso, Niger

The project on "Increasing Women's Monetary Revenue in the Department of Dosso" (*Augmentation des Revenus Monétaires des Femmes de Dosso* – ARMFD) in Niger, implemented by the "Belgian Technical Cooperation" (BTC), aims at raising rural women's socio-economic position by improving their economic and financial situation.

Individual level

In terms of INPUT at individual level, the programme[13] has drawn up strategies and foreseen funds and activities at the following levels:

Economic resources:

Lightening workloads:

- The programme has provided funds to install community services (mills, wells, drainage systems, etc.) to lighten women's workloads. This equipment is available for use by all women in the village and aims at saving time for women individually.

Loans:

- Under this section, the programme provides funds to groups, but women benefit from the profits individually. They learn how to apply for funds and how to get tasks done in time.

Human resources:

Training:

- Improving technical and management skills: training is given to "intermediary women" (local leaders) in management and crop-enhancing techniques, etc, which they, in turn, pass on to women from groups and the village as a whole.
- Improving analytical and research skills: women (and men as resource persons) are asked to participate in research-action groups (RAGs) to address community problems and resolve them appropriately.

Awareness:

- This section is aimed at men (husbands, village chiefs, custom chiefs) and women, who come together to discuss the restrictions women face in carrying out an economic activity (mobility, overwork, etc.), getting involved in community activities (cultural restrictions) and in managing the family budget (control over income, allocation of funds).

Socio-political resources:

Organisation:

- Improving solidarity and mutual support: group work raises women's social position as individuals, giving them opportunities to get to know each other better and find ways of helping each other.
- Boosting confidence and self-esteem: group work leads to an appreciation of individual skills, experimentation and participation in new activities.

[13] Programme ARMF - Rapport d'instruction technique et financier, BTC/CTB, 2000 (ARMF program – Technical and financial instruction report)

1.2

Economic resources

Human resources

Socio-political resources

1.2 Programme input - Individual level

Economic resources

HAVING resources – Access and control

- Material support: access to loans – equipment – water canalisation – health services - agricultural input – market – employment – documentation – information – media – etc.
- Who for: M / W; other social differences: age, social class, ethnicity, religion?
- Access and/or control?
- Conditions for access and control?

Human resources

KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW - Knowledge and Skills
WILL, BEING and KNOWING HOW TO BE - Self-perception and Self-confidence

- Type of knowledge reinforcement: training – learning through action – coaching or supervision in the application of knowledge – etc.?
- Type of supervision in the reinforcement of self-perception and self-confidence, appreciation of individuals, reinforcement of vision, will and commitment
- Who for: M / W; other social differences: age, social class, ethnicity, religion?
- Who by: M / W leaders – supervisors?

Socio-political resources

CAPACITY - Forming organisations - Networking - Solidarity

- Facilitating individuals' access to formal or informal groups or associations
- Who for: M / W; other social differences: age, social class, ethnicity, religion?
- Who by: M / W leaders – supervisors?
- Degree of participation: presence of participation in decision-making

Case study: Increasing Women's Monetary Revenue (ARMF), Dosso, Niger

The project "Increasing Women's Monetary Revenue in the Department of Dosso" (*Augmentation des Revenus Monétaires des Femmes de Dosso* – ARMFD) in Niger, implemented by the "Belgian Technical Cooperation" (BTC), aims at raising rural women's socio-economic position by improving their economic and financial situation.

Collective level

In terms of INPUT at collective level, the programme[14] has drawn up strategies and foreseen funds and activities at the following levels:

Economic resources

Lightening workloads:

- In setting up community equipment (mills, wells, drainage systems, etc.) the programme aims not only at lightening women's workloads, but also at increasing the prestige of women's groups because it is they who provide services to the village.

Loans:

- With the help of loans, groups can invest in common property which will benefit their group or village. They also learn how to gain access to micro-financing establishments as a group.

Human resources

Training:

- Improving groups' management skills by training women leaders and intermediary women: they receive specific training in how to fulfil their role within the group.

Awareness:

- This section aims at making other women aware of the problems they face as a social group within the community but also of promises for co-operation with men in the village.

Socio-political resources

Organisation:

- Improving mobilisation skills: the aim of group promotion is to help women better defend their interests, have access to resources (loans, information, etc) that they would not have access to as individuals, and take part in activities that they would not be able to do by themselves.
- Improving women's groups' skills and prestige: research-action groups (RAGs), made up of members of the community, share and solve common problems together using local resources and expertise, with advice from resource people and technical services etc.

[14] Programme ARMF - Rapport d'instruction technique et financier, BTC/CTB, 2000 (ARMF program – Technical and financial instruction report)

2.2

Economic resources

Human resources

Socio-political resources

2.2 Programme input - Collective level

Economic resources

HAVING resources – Access and control

- Material support: access to funds/subsidies/loans – equipment/buildings –communication/ transport – documentation/information/training etc.
- Who for: groups of women – groups of men - M / W as a group within an association or the community
- Access and/or control?
- Conditions for access and control?

With special attention to social diversity (age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.) within groups of men and women

Human resources

KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW - Knowledge and Skills
WILL, BEING and KNOWING HOW TO BE - Feeling of belonging to the group

- Type of help in becoming "educational organisations": training – coaching
- Type of help in the reinforcement of the feeling of belonging to the group – will and commitment - values
- Who for: groups of women – groups of men - M / W as a group within an association or the community
- Who by: M / W leaders – supervisors?

With special attention to social diversity (age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.) within groups of men and women

Social resources

CAPACITY - Forming organisations - Networking - Solidarity

- Support in structuring and managing groups and/or organisations
- Support in setting up networks –lobbying techniques
- Who for: groups of women – groups of men - M / W as a group within an association or the community
- Who by: M / W leaders – supervisors?

With special attention to social diversity (age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.) within groups of men and women

Case study: groups of artisans and peasants in the Bolivian Andes

We worked with groups of artisans (groups made up mostly or solely of women) and peasants (mixed groups) who, during workshops, established together a series of results indicators to measure the importance of women's empowerment. The investigations were carried out in the Bolivian Andes[15] .

Individual level

- **Will**

  This includes indicators for measuring self-esteem and self-confidence.
  What comes up most often in this regard is the development in self-perception, in self-love. Recognition of one's own abilities, but also through the eyes of others – a positive view of one's abilities. The feeling of being a subject, a person that the group needs and who is indispensable.
  In addition, various factors of change were established in terms of personal development and self-sufficiency (in relation to the husband, brother, father, etc.), the use of time (particularly for personal matters), etc.

- **Assets**

  A series of tangible elements generally stand out:
  - Income: increase in individual income. But the women also wonder about the use of this income. For what purpose? For the family in general? The children? (Food, the children's school equipment, etc.) Or for oneself (clothes, hobbies etc.)?
  - Material objects: I own production tools (e.g. the weaving loom), the house, land (who does this belong to? If, for instance, the house belongs to both, what documents prove it? Who has the power to decide, etc?)

- **Knowledge and know-how**

  At individual level, what mainly come up are the training programmes that women have had access to: literacy, specialised courses (management, accounting, improving production, design, etc). A series of courses that help people broaden their individual skills (sometimes to go for another more worthwhile, less tiring, better paid job). Know-how often means knowing how relationships work: acquiring the skill to negotiate with others – one's partner, one's family, etc.

- **Capacity**

  Changes in gender relations and responsibility to which women traditionally have had no right.
  Be it at group level, community level (municipality, union, neighbourhood committee, etc.) or family level (relationship with one's partner, other members of the family).

[15] The approach and results were largely described in the thesis written by S. Charlier (2006), *L'économie solidaire au féminin: quel apport spécifique pour l'empoderamiento des femmes? Une étude de cas dans les Andes boliviennes.*

1.3

ASSETS

KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW

WILL

CAPACITY

1.3 Programme results - Individual level

ASSETS

- The benefits (income, health, free time, etc.) to women/men from the programme's activities: access to production factors (loans – land – water – technology – etc.) – lighter workloads – access to health care – access to markets – etc.
- Access to and/or control over benefits? The choice over how to use the benefits?
- Conditions for access and control?

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between M and W and to social diversity: age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.

KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW

- Knowledge and skills women/men develop from the initiatives, information and training provided by the programme: mastering a technique or managing loans – how to manage a water board – how to treat or prevent illness – how to analyse a problem – how to think critically - how to analyse and understand one's own situation and that of others as M/W – how to defend one's opinion and interests - etc.
- Quality and conditions of application of the gained knowledge: M and W

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between M and W and to social diversity: age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.

WILL

- Improving one's self-perception, self-confidence, and outlook through programme initiatives, training (e.g. literacy) and follow-up: coping with fear – changing behaviour – initiatives taken – changes in relationships - etc.
- Improving personal commitment for the sake of the group – in one's community

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between M and W and to social diversity: age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.

CAPACITY

- Having the opportunity, as an individual M/W, to get together and improve social security through the programme's initiatives
- Having the opportunity to take part in decision-making as individuals in a group
- Quality of participation: being present – knowing how to truly make an impact

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between M and W and to social diversity: age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.

Case study: groups of artisans and peasants in the Bolivian Andes

By participating in a solidarity economy organisation, the women feel they have developed collective empowerment. They highlighted the following factors[16] (picked up under the different dimensions of power):

Collective level

- **Will**

  This includes indicators capable of measuring the group's capacity for critical awareness. Such as the realisation that gender problems are not only individual but societal, cultural and political.

- **Assets**

  It is interesting to see that the relationship between individual and collective empowerment is circular. Indeed, on one hand, the organisation helps individuals get training, and on the other, by getting training, individuals strengthen the organisation's position. What happens is that the organisation is then gradually able to bring about socio-economic change.

- **Knowledge and know-how**

  The members contribute to the running of their organisation, which has gradually developed the capacity to take action in the different areas: economic, socio-cultural and environmental.
  The organisations are recognised and have become real partners.

  Indicators include the organisation's ability to negotiate on the local and international market (ability to meet the needs of the international market). Or the organisation's ability to lobby decision-makers. We will measure the results of this lobbying for the members of the organisation (e.g. access to social security, reform of agricultural policies in favour of peasant agriculture, etc.). The indicators also include the organisation's ability to influence legislation.

- **Capacity**

  Developmental changes have occurred (micro/local and meso-macro/national, international); social changes (changes in gender relations) and political changes (women's representation in political bodies). Indicators include: women's responsibilities at local level (in political bodies, unions, etc.), women's participation in local projects, consideration of women's needs on the political agenda, etc. Another social change: the perception and recognition within the organisation (or community, neighbourhood) of the equal roles that women and men can play

[16] The approach and results were largely described in the thesis written by S. Charlier (2006), *L'économie solidaire au féminin: quel apport spécifique pour l'empoderamiento des femmes? Une étude de cas dans les Andes boliviennes.*

2.3

ASSETS

KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW

WILL

CAPACITY

2.3 Programme results - Collective level

ASSETS

- Improving the situation of groups or groupings of men/women in terms of economic resources (human potential, funds, etc.) through the programme
- Access to and control over resources
- Conditions under which groups of men and women have access to or control over these resources

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between groups of men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.) within groups

KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW

- The results of improving the learning, creativity and imagination of organisations or groups of women/men through the programme: better group management, better group communication, negotiation and thinking
- Improving the quality of and conditions for applying the knowledge gained as a group of women or men

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between groups of men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.) within groups

WILL

- The results of strengthening the feeling of belonging to the group: improving a group's outlook, will and commitment through the programme: complying with procedures, payment of subscriptions, responsibilities and tasks, solidarity initiatives, etc.

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between groups of men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.) within groups

CAPACITY

- The results of improving the ability of organisations or groups of women/men to influence institutions (State, financial establishments, educational establishments, religious establishments, NGOs etc.): negotiation and lobbying skills through the programme: negotiations on markets and prices, helping to manage community services (e.g. water canalisations, a market, etc.)
- Improving community management or control: participation in terms of being present or in terms of being involved in decision-making.

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between groups of men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.) within groups.

Case study: Supporting women's groups in Bangouya, Guinea

An impact study ten years after ACT launched the Project to Support Women's Groups in Bangouya in Conakry Guinea[17] lays the foundation for illustrating impact indicators.

Individual level

- **Assets**
  The project undertook to improve food security at several levels: by increasing farm production on the one hand and by preserving farm produce on the other. The storehouses built by the project serve first and foremost the group members as individuals, although women and men who are not members also find them useful. What resulted was a greater availability of grains and food. Well-guarded, the stocks are sheltered from thieves and fire, but also from families who may try to draw from them.

- **Knowledge**
  Problems with group management, accounting and the use of other management tools have shown just how important literacy is. Male accountants in the group have been increasingly replaced with women who have been taught to read and write. In some areas, children with no schooling have taken the place of adults in literacy centres. The reason for this phenomenon is that the operational organisation is not as rigid as the state school system. The population has seized this opportunity because it gives great importance to children's education.

- **Capacity**
  Commitment within the group gives women greater freedom to move around and get activities done, even outside of the project. The men have confirmed that the position of women who are members of a group has changed within the home. Communication between women and men on family decisions has improved and women are more taken into consideration thanks to experiences within the group. The same is true of mutual help and solidarity. Before the project, it was often difficult to organise the kilé, the communal work in the field; group work has now eliminated any problems in organising this activity. Mutual support has also taken on new dimensions, as seen in one case where the group reimbursed a loan taken out from the *Crédit Rural* by a hospitalised member.

- **Will**
  Society's acknowledgement of the groups and their visibility during events has contributed to greater self-perception and self-confidence among the women who are members of the group. When inaugurating a shop, the female president of the group gave a magnificent speech. Women's involvement in household decisions is also one of the indicators of greater confidence.

[17] Projet de l'ONG ACT (TRIAS) 1987-97 – « Femmes pionnières de Guinée », K. De Boodt, L. Caubergs, Karthala, 1998

1.4
ASSETS
KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW
WILL
CAPACITY

1.4 Impact - Individual level

ASSETS

- Having more choice when developing economic activities – women compared to men – once means of production and market diversification have been improved
- Having more choice when dividing up household funds because of M/W's higher incomes, e.g. schooling for girls, personal care etc.
- Improved savings in terms of being able to "prepare for the future or retirement", etc.

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.).

KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW

Men/women can make more informed choices because of their skills in:

- Assessing and interpreting important information: health and available services, the importance of sending children to school and of schools themselves, the different loan systems, etc.
- Understanding local (and national) politics by being better able to understand and interpret information
- Understanding market-related issues: price-setting, monopolisation of sectors, etc.
- Discussing inequalities between M/W at home

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.).

WILL

- Having more life choice as a woman/man through improved self-confidence, reduced domestic violence, control over sexuality, the courage to say "no" etc.
- Having more choice and the will to take part in other community activities outside the programme because of improved self-perception and self-confidence

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.).

CAPACITY

- Having fresh possibilities as individual men and women to be involved in the community, take part in other group initiatives, express one's opinion, claim one's rights, take on responsibilities, to travel, choose how to live, etc.
- The opportunity to take part in decision-making as an individual at different levels: in the home, the community, at regional and national level
- Quality of participation: being present – knowing how to truly make an impact
- Being able to control those who take decisions on one's behalf etc.

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc.).

Case study: Supporting women's groups in Bangouya, Guinea

An impact study ten years after ACT launched the Project to Support Women's Groups in Bangouya in Conakry Guinea[18] lays the foundation for illustrating impact indicators.

Collective level

- **Assets**
  Groups' economic activity has increased as part of projects on market gardening, peanut production or storage. Despite difficult diversification in rural areas, women have taken the initiative to start up new collective activities such as the *kilé* as a means of generating income, or poultry rearing as a community business. This has helped spread the risk and contribute to community initiatives such as road repairs.

- **Knowledge**
  The difficulties faced in acquiring loans from the *Crédit Rural* (micro-financing institution) have made women from the Union's board realise that women need support in this area. Although everyone has been tempted by the loans, not all women are able to manage large sums of money. The women on the board have acted as intermediaries between the *Crédit Rural* and the groups, providing advice and analysis on the advantages and risks of applying for a loan. The women, as a group, have also understood the policies and mechanisms of micro-financing institutions. .

- **Capacity**
  At the start of the project, 38 groups were created and supported; over the ten years, however, 67 self-promoting groups with 1959 women and 385 men have been set up. These new groups have been set up without any help from the project itself. They were the result of the so-called "bush-fire" effect. The groups formed Unions which claimed and obtained two seats at the Chamber of Agriculture that was created at that time. Following Sékou Touré's regime, a less interventionist policy generated momentum. Being members of a group enabled women farmers in Bangouya to benefit.

- **Will**
  On the social front, the group of women has achieved recognition. The entire population has commented that the group was the initiator of development in their community. Many men have wanted to form groups to enable their village to move forward. At village councils, the "women's open-mindedness", as one elder put it, has been recognised, which has given them a bigger public voice. A final indicator is the conduct of women who are members of the Unions' boards, who defend the interests of the groups and step in if the groups are facing difficulties.

[18] Projet de l'ONG ACT (TRIAS) 1987-97 – « Femmes pionnières de Guinée », K. De Boodt, L. Caubergs, Karthala, 1998

2.4

ASSETS

KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW

WILL

CAPACITY

2.4 Impact - Collective level

ASSETS

Improving social justice by developing community initiatives:

- Creating services: mutual health funds, nurseries, savings and loan funds, services to ease workloads: water canalisations, nurseries, mills, public transport, etc.
- Access to means of production: land, capital, inputs, information, training, etc.
- Access to markets as a grouping, M/W's cooperative

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between groups of men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, religion, etc.) within groups.

KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW

Improving social justice through group thinking and learning so as to:

- Assess, interpret and express the community's essential needs: health, schooling, access to funds (lenders, loan establishments, etc.)
- Understand local (and national) politics by being better able to understand and interpret information
- Understand market-related issues: price-setting, monopolisation of sectors, etc.
- Understand gender-related issues – gender inequalities

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between groups of men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, religion, etc.) within groups.

WILL

Contribution to social change in the community because of:

- The commitment of associations or groupings of men/women as actors of change: an outlook focused on social justice, and the materialisation of groups' roles in this process

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between groups of men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, religion, etc.) within groups.

CAPACITY

Contribution to social change in the community because of:

- The greater ability of organisations or groups of women/men to influence institutions (State, financial establishments, educational establishments, religious establishments, NGOs etc.): negotiation skills – lobbying: obtaining services for the community (e.g. a market, women staff at a health centre, boarding school for girls, etc)
- The participation of M/W's groups in decentralising community management and in local and national politics; the extent to which participation is managed in terms of being present or taking part in decision-making.

With specific attention to reducing inequalities between groups of men and women and to social diversity (age, social class, religion, etc.) within groups.

Conclusion

The Belgian law on international cooperation stipulates that « *La coopération internationale belge a pour objectif prioritaire le développement humain durable, à réaliser par le biais de la lutte contre la pauvreté, sur la base du concept de partenariat et dans le respect des critères de pertinence pour le développement.*[19] "

In this context, Belgian international cooperation is directly in keeping with the spirit of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) which stressed that "…the advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. They are the only way to build a sustainable, just and developed society. Empowerment of women and equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all peoples".

Nevertheless, numerous studies have shown that, as a group, women still have less access than men to education, production resources and economic and social opportunities. They suffer more from inflexibility and inequality in the division of tasks and roles attributed to men and women, and participate less than men in decision-making. These inequalities between men and women therefore present a barrier to development.

How can women's and men's rights and opportunities be rebalanced? How can women be empowered, not just at economic and social level, but also at individual level?

With an initial presentation of the theoretical approach of the empowerment concept, *the methodological guide for the women empowerment approach* is intended first and foremost as a practical tool that will help the various development players along with local populations to construct a host of indicators capable of measuring development in the empowerment process, in accordance with local experience and context. Indeed, it will enable these players to present the realities of women and men and to take a closer look at the challenges of empowering women.

Finally, we wish to advise readers to use this methodological guide in such a way that women's empowerment becomes a reality and that women can be involved in the development of their community by sharing know-how and knowledge, and with respect for themselves and others.

[19] Art. 3. de la Loi du 25 MAI 1999 - Loi relative à la coopération internationale belge.
Translation: *"The primary objective of Belgian international cooperation is sustainable human development, to be achieved through the fight against poverty, based on the concept of partnership and compliance with relevant development criteria."* Art. 3. of the Law of 25 MAY1999 – Law on Belgian international cooperation.

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Others publications of the CWD

Available in format PDF on the site (or just ask the secretariat of the CWD)[20]:
http://www.dgos.be/en/themes/topics/gender/cwd.html

- Presentation brochure (september 2000)
- The Gender Approach in the Financing for Development - Acts of the Seminar of 12th October 2001
- Taking One Step Closer To Equality Between Women and Men (december 2001)
- Memorandum - Gender Integration (june 2002)
- The Gender Approach in the Financing for Development (february 2003)
- Proceedings of the International Conference of 10th October 2003
  "Women go beyond the Millennium Goals"
- Proceedings of the International Conference "JAMMU. A better health for young girls"
  (20, 21, 22 November 2003)
- Brochure "Women go beyond the Millennium Goals" (april 2005)
- Evolutions in development thinking and policy: new opportunities for gender equality?!
  PRSPs and SWAPs from a gender perspective (may 2007)

[15] These documents and others are available in French or Dutch.

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Diagram 1: Indicators of empowerment - individual level

Baseline	programme input	Having more choices Life plans	
		Results of the programme	Impact quality of life
1.1 Economic resources Human resources Socio-political resources	**1.2** Economic resources Human resources Socio-political resources	**1.3** ASSETS KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW WILL CAPACITY	**1.4** ASSETS KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW WILL CAPACITY

Diagram 2: Indicators of empowerment - collective level

Baseline	programme input	Societal choice Gender equality	
		Results of the programme	Impact social justice
2.1 Economic resources Human resources Socio-political resources	**2.2** Economic resources Human resources Socio-political resources	**2.3** ASSETS KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW WILL CAPACITY	**2.4** ASSETS KNOWLEDGE and KNOW-HOW WILL CAPACITY

BEFORE	DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	AFTER