

ISSUE 1: January 2010

Welcome to the first *Africa Gender Equality Action Plan* progress update.

Following the launch of the *Africa Gender Equality Action Plan* in September 2009, DFID has been working hard to ensure that the commitments we set out to achieve will be met by 2012.

Here we give you some of the highlights from DFID's work over the past six months.

For further information on the work that DFID is doing on gender in Africa, please email [genderinafrica@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:genderinafrica@dfid.gov.uk)



# NEWSLETTER

## ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA

DFID has gender firmly on the development agenda. The *Africa Gender Equality Action Plan 2009-12* builds on progress made in promoting gender equality in public services, and looks at how DFID programmes can: increase economic opportunities for women; facilitate their social and political empowerment; ensure progress is made towards eliminating gender based violence; and strengthen DFID's and its partners' capacity to deliver on gender equality. This newsletter profiles a range of work underway in these areas and outlines some of our future priorities.

### Tax Relieved

Phase one of Ghana's [Business Sector Advocacy Challenge Fund \(BUSAC\)](#), supported by DFID and other partners, has funded 60 women-only associations, helping them to advocate for the better application of tax rules.

Sunyani Market women were convinced that the way their tax was being collected made their burden disproportionate and unreasonable. They feared that business activity in the market would be adversely affected. With BUSAC support, the women were able to hire a consultant and, following constructive discussions with the Ghanaian Internal Revenue Services, harmony and goodwill has replaced the acrimonious relationships and confrontations that were the norm between the market women and tax officials.

### Radio Teacher

Parents in Somalia value education, but face significant financial and cultural obstacles to sending their daughters to school. In conjunction with DFID and UNICEF, [BBC Radio Teacher](#) is teaching literacy to 4,000 women in Somalia.

By highlighting the barriers to girls' education - particularly the notion that girls need to stay at home to work in the household - Radio Teacher is also challenging women's perceptions of gender roles.

### Scaling Up Savings

In Northern Uganda almost 46,000 women now have improved access to financial



Women in Sudan are engaging in the Darfur Peace Process, supported by DFID's Darfur Dialogue and Consultation Programme

services as part of DFID and CARE International's SUSTAIN programme (Scaling Up Savings to Augment Income Nationally).

Members of the programme have typically saved around US\$ 60,000 (£20) in the year up to June 2009.

### Increase the Peace

Empowering women to participate in political processes is fundamental, especially in fragile states. In Sudan, [Femme Africa Solidarite](#) (FAS) is working on integrating gender issues into the peace process in Darfur. A Sudanese Women's Forum, comprising a diverse range of gender NGOs, has been established and an action plan prepared to help women participate in the negotiations effectively. The project is backed by the DFID-supported Darfur Dialogue and Consultation Programme - a key forum for civil society participation in the peace process in Darfur.

Elsewhere, DFID Rwanda is providing support to UNIFEM for

gender awareness in peacekeeping through the regional conflict fund, increasing the number of women in the Rwandese battalions going to Darfur.

### Healthy Equality

The MDG Health fund in Ethiopia is now operational. In order to ensure the maximum benefit for women, the Government of Ethiopia's Ministry of Health is prioritising the procurement of long term contraceptive implants, and the strengthening of human resources to deliver obstetric care.

In-keeping with our commitment to increase women's access to safe motherhood services in Nigeria, DFID is providing support to the National Primary Health Care Development Agency for the finalisation of the Midwifery Service Scheme. The programme is designed to send an additional 3,000 midwives around the country, including into rural areas, where access to midwifery services is limited.

**"We recognise that poverty will not come to an end until women have equal rights with men. This is not about doing something extra. It is essential to OUR SUCCESS"** [Africa Gender Equality Action Plan 2009-12]

For more information about DFID's work to promote gender equality in Africa, email us at:

[genderinafrica@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:genderinafrica@dfid.gov.uk)

Or visit: [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)

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## Building Capacity

DFID is working with the Nike Foundation to develop two 'Girl Hubs' in Kenya and Nigeria. The project aims to bridge the gap in work supporting women and young children by unleashing the development power of adolescent girls. Hub goals are:

- To advocate for policy change in areas affecting adolescent girls;
- To advise and equip the designers and implementers of large scale poverty reduction and economic growth programmes and national strategies, including developing world governments.

In Southern Africa, SADC countries are still far from achieving the targets set out in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance is producing the SADC Gender Protocol Baseline Barometer, with support from DFID's Governance and Transparency Fund (GTF).

The Barometer is based on an extensive questionnaire covering the key theme areas of the Protocol. Over the next few months, starting in the DRC, alliance partners in each country will hold meetings to discuss country reports, where they will score their countries and set priorities for the next year. The baseline data will help civil society target national governments and regional bodies to deliver on the Protocol commitments.

## Future Priorities

- Reports show that 25% of the beneficiaries of Mozambique's land fund project are women. DFID is seeking to increase the number of women gaining from the project by at least 10%.
- In Malawi, discussions are underway with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to develop systems and tools for tracking gender aspects of the Agriculture Inputs Subsidy Programme that involve civil society organisations.
- DFID will be providing support to the Zambian Governance Fund in order to strengthen civil society's capacity to hold government to account on gender equality.
- DFID provides £6m to Tanzania's election programme. Over 17% of these funds will be used to implement gender sensitive voter education and capacity building to aspiring female candidates.

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# SPOTLIGHT: Violence Against Women

In the recent White Paper, *Eliminating World Poverty: Building Our Common Future*, DFID reaffirmed its commitment to tackling violence against women. Whilst we celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women at the end of last year, we recognise that more needs to be done to protect women from the most extreme forms of discrimination and gender-based violence.

Uganda's Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention, which DFID has supported since 2006, helped to bring Uganda's first Domestic Violence Bill before Parliament in November. The Bill, which builds on successful local initiatives, will provide guidelines to police and courts on handling cases of violence against women. The Centre's involvement in the drafting of the Bill ensured the definition of 'domestic violence' includes emotional and economic abuse. The Bill is currently awaiting Presidential assent.

In Sierra Leone, DFID continues to support the International Rescue Committee's 'Combating Violence Against Women and Girls' project. The project aims to raise awareness of the 2007 Gender Acts among stakeholders, including the police, Family Support Units and journalists, and build the capacity of key institutions to enforce the new policies.

To help end violence against women in Zimbabwe, DFID is co-funding the Gender Support Programme – a basket fund, managed by UNIFEM, to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The programme gives grants to initiatives such as the Musasa Project and the Zimbabwe Young Women's Network for Peacebuilding. These organisations formed a partnership to pilot project to help victims of politically-motivated sexual violence.



*The Musasa Project, Zimbabwe*

Since March, when the pilot was launched, Musasa has worked with more than 100 men and women to raise their awareness of, and build their capacity to care for, women and girl victims of politically motivated and targeted sexual violence. The project also offers therapy and peacebuilding training to communities, contributing to the process of national reconciliation and healing, and to the empowerment of women. The two organizations were recently invited to partner with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development – an opportunity which will increase the project's long-term sustainability.