

Does development work for women, or do women work for development? Making sense
of the language and logic of women's empowerment and gender equality programs at
UNDP Zimbabwe

by

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DEDICATION PAGE

To Wes: thank you for the constant support, advice, and providing all the snacks and drinks I needed.

To Alice: thank you for the encouragement, the long discussions, and the feminist rants.

To my family: thank you for always being unwaveringly confident that I could pull this off.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the internal factors that influence the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s approach to women's empowerment and gender equality. Applying methods of content analysis and participant observation, this research explores and critiques the way in which women's empowerment and gender equality are understood by UNDP Zimbabwe. This paper argues that, despite variation through the levels of organizational policy, UNDP Zimbabwe takes an overwhelmingly instrumentalist approach to understanding women's empowerment and gender equality. UNDP Zimbabwe consistently justifies women's empowerment and gender equality initiatives on the basis that they generate economic growth and promotes ineffective technical solutions to gender inequality. Three key factors that contribute to this instrumentalist approach are identified: the marginalization of gender equality experts within the organization; the simplicity of diffusing policy related to instrumentalist norms; and the organizational imperative to avoid political risk in order to promote an identity as a 'neutral' organization.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COPAC	Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DANIDA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
DFATD	Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development of Canada
DFID	Department for International Development of the United Kingdom
GAD	Gender and Development
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GM	Gender mainstreaming
GNU	Government of National Unity
GSIC	Gender Steering and Implementation Committee of the UNDP
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IPF	Indicative Planning Figure
JGP	Joint Gender Programmes
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDGR	Millennium Development Goals Report
MFP	Market Fairs Project
MFSC	Market Fairs Steering Committee
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PGNs	Practical Gender Needs
ONHRI	Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation, and Integration
RBM	Results-Based Management
SGNs	Strategic Gender Needs
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNAIDS	United Nations AIDS
SHD	Sustainable human development
SMART	Specific, Measureable, Available/Achievable, Relevant, Timely
SPBSL	Support to Peacebuilding and Increased Access to Sustainable Livelihoods
WID	Women in Development
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZUNDAF	Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework

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Chapter One: Introduction

“In view of the growing economic crisis in the Third World...continued neglect of women’s productivity was a costly mistake that planners could no longer afford to make. The issue was not so much that women needed development, but that development needed women. It was this kind of argument which, in the end, was most persuasive among the development agencies, since it appeared to feed directly into their concern with the efficient allocation of resources.” (Kabeer, 1994, 25)

I. Introduction

“Investing in a girl — before she is married, out of school, pregnant and HIV positive — is the ultimate solution to end poverty, not a cure for its symptoms” (Nike Foundation, 2014). While this investor-focused pitch might sound at home on a pamphlet for a financial management firm, it also captures the shifting attitudes towards women and girls in the field of international development. The renewed spotlight on women, particularly women's economic well-being, has been promoted by a wide variety of stakeholders: microfinance organizations such as Grameen Bank, Kiva, and Women Advancing Microfinance International; corporate social responsibility initiatives such as the Coca-Cola Foundation’s *5by20* initiative, the Nike Foundation’s *The Girl Effect*, and ExxonMobil’s *Women’s Economic Opportunity Initiative*; and international non-governmental organizations such as Plan Canada’s *Because I am a Girl* campaign and the international advocacy organization *Women Deliver*.

Given that feminist scholars and activists have spent many years arguing for the need to support women, these new discussions may appear to signal a success for the feminist movement. And yet, extensive critiques have been levelled at programs which promote ‘investing in women’ or ‘empowering women’ so that they can participate more extensively in the economy. Many scholars argue that this new rhetoric has co-opted the meaning of ‘empowerment,’ and that these income generation focused programs frame women and girls as though they are tools through which economic growth, education, or

other development outcomes can be achieved—this is widely referred to as an instrumentalist approach (see Wallace & Porter, 2013; Eyben & Napier-Moore, 2009; Roberts & Soederberg, 2012; Wilson, 2011). The instrumentalist view tends to emphasize how useful women and girls can be to other people, as opposed to how they can become healthier, more educated, achieve their individual aspirations, and control their own personal, professional, and social destinies. The term ‘empowerment’ was brought into popular consciousness by radical social justice movements in the 1960s, and has traditionally been considered a deeply political concept related to the distribution of power (Batliwala, 2007, 558). These radical social movements—which include feminist scholars and grassroots women’s movements— promote holistic visions of empowerment, in which women’s power, solidarity, and capabilities are acknowledged, social norms are transformed through building relationships and community organizing, and the voices of marginalized individuals can be heard (Wallace & Porter, 2013).

Yet contemporary development policy makers and practitioners are using the language of empowerment in tandem with instrumentalist principles and language. Instrumentalist language promotes women’s involvement in the market, and the public sphere more generally, *because* it is ‘smart economics;’ this has effectively resulted in ‘women’s empowerment’ being framed as a silver bullet solution to a flagging economy (Batliwala, 2007, 560; Roberts & Soederberg, 2012). This framing also suggests that women’s empowerment is something that an external entity bestows upon a woman, and that as long as a woman is ‘empowered,’ she is not influenced or constrained by institutional structures or social norms. For example, the Nike Foundation “explicitly denies the importance of structural factors” in creating social problems, arguing instead

that “the world is in a mess...because we are not ‘investing’ in the one solution—girls” (Grosser & van der Gaag, in Wallace & Porter, 2013, 77).

The instrumentalist position is problematic for two principles reasons. First, there are many concerns regarding the moral implications of women's empowerment for the sake of other people. The instrumentalist way of thinking, which is ostensibly supportive of gender equality, seems to fundamentally miss the point of gender equality. Chant and Sweetman (2012) argue that the adoption of ‘smart economics’ instrumentalist language by women’s organizations puts at risk the needs of women as a gendered constituency. Social, political, and economic equality is necessary because women are inherently equal to men, not because women are able to assist others in the achievement of developmental objectives.

Second, instrumentalist policies have ambiguous development outcomes. Numerous studies have been conducted in order to map the success of microfinance programs for marginalized individuals, an extremely popular type of instrumentalist program. Hulme (1997) highlights that there is a wide body of work that lauds microfinance and an equally large body of work that dismisses microfinance. Hulme (1997) argues that microfinance benefits many, but rarely the poorest of the poor. Dobra (2011) demonstrates there is an impact in terms of poverty alleviation for programs exclusively focusing on women’s individual economic empowerment, but that women do not experience significant change in their social position at a broader social level, noting “if empowerment is neutral and individual it only maintains the status quo” (140).

Instrumentalist conceptualizations of women’s roles fail to fundamentally challenge many of the unequal social relationships that have created women’s subordinate social

positions in the first place (Ngo & Wahhaj, 2012, 9). Despite frequent references to the importance of long-term sustainability of development initiatives in modern development discourse, instrumentalist approaches take a short-term approach, helping women address basic needs but failing to ensure that women and their daughters are in an improved social and economic position in the long term¹. Dobra (2011) also highlights that the lack of attention given to structural factors by new 'women's empowerment' programs in fact significantly impacts the effectiveness even of the programs themselves, as "most of the programs are too 'rigid' and do not take into account countries' social norms" (141). Chant and Sweetman (2012) argue that the lived experiences of marginalized women being targeted by instrumentalist interventions attest to the fact that a 'win-win' scenario of economic growth and increased gender equality is unlikely. In short, instrumentalist interventions may have positive outcomes for some women, but in general have failed to fulfil the promise of a silver bullet solution to the problem of gender inequality or to provide an easy pathway to sustainable development.

A significant number of international development donors have adopted the instrumentalist approach in their programming (Eyben & Napier-Moore, 2009)², which has serious implications for the content of multi-lateral policy making as well as the potential to affect the quality of program delivery for international development initiatives worldwide. A recent report by the Association for Women's Rights in

¹The distinction between long-term and short-term needs of women in relation to gender equality will be further developed in Chapter Two, which elaborates on the notion of practical gender needs and strategic gender needs—first developed by Molyneux and elaborated by Moser (1989).

²Listed in no particular order are a few of the many donor organizations that have implemented instrumentalist programs or employed instrumentalist rhetoric: Plan International, the Nike Foundation, the World Bank, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the United Nations Development Programme, the Canadian Department for Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development (DFATD, formerly CIDA), BMZ (the German Ministry of Development), UNESCO, UN WOMEN, and the Danish agency, DANIDA (Eyben and Napier-Moore, 2009).

Development mapped 170 global initiatives focusing on women and found that 35% of these were focused on women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship—the most common theme of all the initiatives under study (Miller, Arutyunova & Clark, 2013, 19). Although donors have been widely critiqued by scholars and practitioners alike for their adoption of instrumentalist policies, these policies continue to be promoted and implemented amongst development donors (Eyben & Napier-Moore, 2009).

Although there are numerous constraints and complex pressures on international development donor organizations, at the end of the day, officials who represent the interests of these organizations put the rubber stamp to various mandates, policies, or strategic documents. In light of the global trend towards instrumentalist policies, an approach with ambiguous results for the well-being of women and girls, it is crucial to ask why these policies are developed and why these programs are implemented. The motives, influences, and perspectives of organizations are important variables to consider in this equation.

II. Goals and Scope of the Research

The central research question is: how do internal factors influence UNDP Zimbabwe's approach to women's empowerment and gender equality? The sub-questions include: How does UNDP understand women's empowerment and gender equality? Is UNDP policy consistent at every level within the organization? Is UNDP practice consistent with policy? Is UNDP's approach to gender equality and women's empowerment effective? In what ways (if any) does UNDP have a gendered organizational culture and organizational structure?

Chant and Sweetman (2012) have suggested that the restrictive financial context

currently affecting international development agencies and donors is a key cause of renewed support for instrumentalism, noting that practitioners are forced to justify funding for gender equality on the basis of “broader social and economic impact” (518). Although this research certainly does not deny the important influence of external factors such as global revenue flows, the scope of this study will be limited to the internal factors that may influence the decisions of UNDP. The purpose of this restriction is not only an attempt to make the size of the research project more manageable, but also to pinpoint those issues which could be more realistically targeted for change; the structure and culture of a single organization, albeit a large one, as opposed to a complex global network of development actors. Therefore the key focus of this research will be on the internal factors that have influenced the adoption of instrumentalist policies, including corporate culture, organizational and policy-making structures, and organizational understandings of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The goal of this proposed research is to shed light on how the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a key donor agency and agenda-setter in the international development community, conceptualizes and rationalizes the implementation of women’s empowerment programs. I will focus in particular on the UNDP in Zimbabwe, a case study which is of both personal and academic interest. Over the course of a six-month internship program with UNDP in Zimbabwe, I supported the management of several projects, including the Zimbabwe Market Fair Project, which will be analyzed and discussed over the course of this paper. During this period, I became increasingly interested in the implications of economic empowerment programs aimed at increasing women’s involvement in market systems. Many women I spoke to over the

course of the Market Fair Project were enthusiastic about the potential for supplementary income, but these same women also expressed concern for how they would manage their family obligations and their businesses. Given the recent popularity of microfinance initiatives, exemplified by the expansion of the Grameen Bank from Bangladesh to other countries in South Asia, the question of women's economic empowerment is a particularly timely issue for investigation. Alvesson and Due Billing (2009) suggest that while studying organizations it is "more meaningful to focus on complexity and variation in different...organizational cultures, rather than trying to arrive at an average picture for organization and working life as a whole" (3). In light of these observations, a case study of the UNDP in Zimbabwe, a case with which I am personally familiar, provides the ripest opportunity for complex research with sufficient depth to make a contribution to the field of gender, development, and organizational culture.

III. Methods

I will be applying qualitative methods in order to conduct my research, namely, content/textual analysis, some discourse analysis, and participant observation. According to Krippendorff (2012), the purpose of content analysis is to conduct an empirically-grounded, exploratory study of information in order to determine the meaning of the content, the influence of the content, and how society understands itself through the content. I believe that this method is appropriate because my research goal is not to determine whether or not a hypothesis is correct, but to gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex issues that affect my research topic (Mayoux, 2006, 118). The use of qualitative methods will enable me to explore a wide range of issues and thus fulfil the exploratory focus of my thesis research.

In order to conduct my research, I will be examining a variety of primary and secondary sources. My secondary sources will include news coverage and peer-reviewed books and articles. My primary sources will consist of internal reports from UNDP Zimbabwe, including annual work plans and concept notes; organizational documents available to the public such as policies and strategy documents; and press releases and public statements. It is here that discourse analysis will be applied, as part of my thesis will entail the analysis of language in materials created by UNDP and intended for public consumption. Discourse analysis will provide the opportunity for reflexivity and a lens through which intended meanings and the public narratives of the donor organization can be teased out and better understood (Pieterse, 2010, 15).

I will also apply the method of participant observation in order to provide a nuanced and holistic perspective of the implementation of the Market Fair Project in Chapter 5. DeWalt and DeWalt (2012) explain that participant observation is one of a range of qualitative methods that is used in order to understand the *nature* of phenomena, as opposed to classifying and numbering phenomena, and that it is often complemented by other methods, including semi-structured interviews and content analysis. While participant observation is a method that evolved out of ethnographic studies and cultural anthropology, it has in recent years found more widespread application in other social sciences. Fundamentally, participant observation is a method in which a researcher “takes part in the daily activities, rituals, inter-actions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture” (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2012, 1).

On a practical level, participant observation generally consists of taking detailed field

notes of the researcher's interactions with subjects. DeWalt and DeWalt (2012) argue that the subsequent examination and analysis of field notes is not very different from any other type of content analysis. The techniques of participant observation are the same as content analysis: “reading, thinking, and writing; and rereading, rethinking, and rewriting” (179). The participant-observer is not only taking notes about what happens around them, but also actively participating in the events, meaning that the researcher's presence can change the outcome of events and that the researcher begins to identify with the cultural context in which they are engaged—a process known as enculturation. Participant observation is an extremely beneficial addition to complement other methods of qualitative analysis because it allows the enculturated research to capture the intangible elements of a socio-cultural context. This allows the research to develop “an understanding that is not easily articulated or recorded, but that can be mobilized in subsequent analysis” (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2012, 5).

Over the course of my own experience working as a Junior Professional Consultant with UNDP Zimbabwe from May to November of 2012, I did not have any intention of conducting research on the Market Fair Project. My application of the participant observation method is therefore *ex post facto*. My assignment while in Zimbabwe was to support key functions of the Market Fairs Project including advertising, assisting with logistics, and serving as a representative of UNDP interests at Market Fair Steering Committee meetings, and I was personally acquainted with representatives of the key organizations that formed the Market Fair Steering Committee and worked with them frequently over the course of my six month employment contract with UNDP. For my research, I relied primarily on personal communications with family members, friends,

and coworkers in order to revisit the events of the Market Fair Project. Zimbabwe's limited telecommunications connectivity made it challenging to connect with loved ones at home via skype or phone, and thus I was able to scour through over six months' worth of almost daily personal email communications in order to inform my analysis regarding the Market Fair. While this system of 'field notes' is unconventional, DeWalt and DeWalt (2012) note that scholars are increasingly employing methods other than field notes; for example, Boellstorff (2010, in DeWalt & DeWalt, 2012) relied primarily on emails and chat histories of his conversations with subjects in his study of online communities.

However, there are a few critical words of caution regarding participant observation. The first and foremost danger, which Clifford (1983) expands on in his classic text, is that a researcher will attempt to claim authority over their subjects, seeing themselves as capable of speaking for their subjects and knowing what is best for their subjects due to their enculturation. Obeyesekere (1990) also argues that Westerners studying other cultures are not be able to escape from the domineering theoretical and philosophical frameworks in order to fully comprehend other ways of knowing the world. Although I certainly cannot claim that the following research will completely avoid cultural bias, I hope that in acknowledging my theoretical perspective (in Chapter 2) and my positional power relative to the subjects of this research, I can minimize this tendency. The analysis that follows is strongly grounded in my own experiences in Zimbabwe; however, I understand that my experiences and the analysis of these experiences is not an objective truth, but rather influenced by the complex dynamics of cross-cultural interaction and my privileged position as a Western observer in a complex and highly nuanced social, cultural, and political context (Kirby *et al.*, 2006). Despite these words of caution,

throughout the entirety of the text that follows, I have endeavoured to deliver relatively fair and balanced analysis by employing DeWalt and DeWalt (2012)'s suggested method of thinking and re-thinking.

IV. Moving Forward

The core objective of this research project is to shed new light on the way in which gendered organizational culture and structure affects the development of policies related to women's empowerment and gender equality within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the global level and country level in Zimbabwe. In the chapter that follows, I will define and explain women's empowerment and gender equality from competing theoretical perspectives as well as outline the theoretical framework that I will apply to the analysis of key policy documents and materials. This framework is based in gender and development (GAD) approaches to gender analysis and a cultural and structural understanding of gendered organizations theory. Subsequent chapters will provide context to discussions of the organizational structure and history of UNDP and the key social and political issues in Zimbabwe. There are two core chapters of analysis; the first focuses on policy, including key documents representing UNDP policy positions at the global level and UN Country Team policy in Zimbabwe; the second analysis chapter examines the Market Fairs Project conducted by UNDP Zimbabwe, including relevant publicity materials and internal documentation. The final chapter will synthesize and analyze the results of this research, attempting to provide an answer to the core research question: how do internal factors influence UNDP Zimbabwe's approach to women's empowerment and gender equality?

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

I. Introduction

In order to make sense of a complex and often contradictory world, researchers develop a theoretical framework; a set of assumptions and understandings through which information is filtered (Maguire, 1987, 12). Theoretical frameworks can also be deeply personal, as they are rooted in the researcher's own experiences and worldview; it has been argued that all researchers must disclose their theoretical foundations in order to offset their biases (Kirby *et al.*, 2006, 66). The purpose of this chapter is to outline the theoretical approaches that will inform my data analysis, including any assumptions, contradictions, or areas of ambiguity, and to present my case for the value of these particular approaches.

The central research question that guides my thesis is this: How do internal factors influence UNDP's approach to women's empowerment and gender equality? Simply stated, my research attempts to figure out why UNDP does the things that they do when it comes to gender. In order to tackle this challenging question, I have employed two key theories: gender and development (GAD) and gendered organizations theories. The latter I have divided into two sub-components - theories of organizational culture and of organizational structure. My theoretical framework will provide the underpinnings for an analysis that confronts the "rules, incentives, constraints, and 'meanings' which contribute to the systematic diversion of resources, values, and power away from women and towards men" within organizations (Miller & Razavi, 1998, 2). When an analytical gendered organizations perspective is combined with the critical and normative force of GAD approaches, what emerges is a theoretical framework that fosters a deeper understanding of how organizations subtly perpetuate gendered norms and that also has an emancipatory intent to transform gendered social norms.

This chapter will begin by providing a detailed overview of competing definitions of women's empowerment and gender equality from both the Women in Development (WID) perspective and the Gender and Development (GAD) approach. This discussion will help to clarify the meaning of 'instrumentalist' approaches to gender, as well explore the key tenants of the GAD approach, and why it is the most suitable lens to use in the analysis of UNDP's policies and practice. Next, I present the 'gendered organizations' perspective by discussing mainstream organizational theory and its feminist critiques.

II. Approaches to Women and Gender in Development

The Gender and Development (GAD) approach is a theory of gender relations that not only provides valuable critical insight, but also a normative vision for how issues of gender inequality should be approached. The GAD approach emerged in the early 1980s against a critique of the Women in Development (WID) approach. Brown (2005) notes that there is "a general consensus that the GAD approach is superior" (57), but many scholars, including Chant and Sweetman (2012), argue that current development approaches have more in common with the WID approaches of the 1980s than GAD.

a. Gender Equality and the WID Perspective

In 1970 after the publication of Ester Boserup's groundbreaking book, *Women's Role in Economic Development*, theoretical scrutiny surrounding the idea of women's inequality began to intensify (Blin, 2008, 206). Boserup demonstrated that economic policies have different impacts on women and men, and her work highlighted the urgent need to implement economic programs that benefited both men and women equally (Blin, 2008, 207; Takeuchi and Hyodo, 1998, 21). Boserup had a significant influence on the women in development (WID) school of thought. Under the WID view, which aligns closely to classic liberal philosophies, women are inherently equal to men because they are also rational creatures; thus, enabling women to fully exercise their rationality by providing them with

equal access and opportunities is the primary means through which to achieve gender equality (Kabeer, 1994, 27; Moser, 1989). The core of the WID approach is predicated on making women equal to men, not on challenging a system that made women unequal to men in the first place (Kabeer, 1994). Kabeer (1994) also notes that under WID approaches, the intersections of class, race, and colonial histories were often ignored.

There were variations on the WID approach throughout the 1970s and 1980s, from the ‘welfare’ approach which focused on increasing development assistance to the ‘efficiency’ approach, which emphasized the importance of increasing women's economic productivity (Moser, 1989). However, what all of these approaches had in common—and what fundamentally distinguishes WID approaches from GAD approaches—is that WID conceptualizations of gender equality neglected to seriously challenge social norms around gender, particularly the gendered division of labour that assigned women exclusive responsibility for household work and child-rearing (Moser, 1989; Batliwala, 2007, 558). Instead of confronting and challenging ingrained social norms, WID approaches aimed to address women’s practical gender needs (PGNs) which are aimed at survival, such as food, housing and access to water (Moser, 1989, 1803). While the WID approach to improving gender equality has resulted in positive progress for women, such as an increase in women’s political representation, many feminist scholars have critiqued the WID approach for not going far enough to redress gender imbalances (Chant & Sweetman, 2012).

b. Women’s Empowerment in the WID Perspective

The WID approach to women’s empowerment, similarly to the WID approach to gender equality, has a tendency to disregard the impact of structural constraints on women’s agency and to overlook the importance of social norms (Moser, 1989). WID-based understandings of women’s empowerment often suggest that, in order to be empowered, women simply require education or entrepreneurial skills, and that women themselves will then “do the

rest,” utilizing their newfound empowerment in order to achieve gender equality (Chant & Sweetman, 2012, 520).

The detrimental social effects of neoliberal policies implemented in the 1980s influenced the WID perspective on empowerment significantly. During this time, women were encouraged to increase their productivity in order to achieve PGNs and counter the adverse effects of privatization of social services; the more that women could be relied upon to support productive economic activity, the less support the state was required to provide (Razavi, 1997, 1113; Moser, 1989, 1807). Feminist scholars point out that marginalized women were “acting as a buffer to the fall-out of Structural Adjustment Policies” (Chant & Sweetman, 2012, 519). The economic labour, income, energy, and time of women who had been ‘empowered’ to participate in the neoliberal economy became instruments used to offset the failings of the state and development organizations. The term “instrumentalist” has been used to reflect this view of women’s empowerment.

The instrumentalist perspective of empowerment tends to see women as valuable assets, entrepreneurs, and economic engines (Roberts & Soederberg, 2012, 950). Women’s economic participation is equated with women’s economic empowerment, and under WID ‘efficiency’ approaches, this empowerment was seen as a means to greater economic development and growth (Moser, 1989, 1808). Women are not primarily viewed as complex individuals with social, political, artistic, or personal goals, but are first and foremost seen as economic actors (Ngo & Wahhaj, 2012, 1), who, when empowered to earn a profit, reinvest their earnings in their families and communities, thus generating economic and social development. Although investment in women’s education and skills may result in important improvements in social, personal, and material conditions, when women are expected to use this income solely for the benefit of their families there is no challenge to the power dynamics that have assigned women responsibility for reproductive labour and resulted in

their economic subordination in the first place (Ngo & Wahhaj, 2012, 9).

The instrumentalist view of empowerment did not peter out when critiques of WID approaches began to emerge in the 1990s— Chant and Sweetman (2012) note that many modern day approaches to women’s empowerment are “a direct descendant” of the WID efficiency approach (517). Recent literature from development organizations often suggests empowerment is something that is done *to* women through the initiative of organizations, conveying that women's empowerment can only be achieved through outside intervention (Smyth, 2010, 147).

The instrumentalist perspective on women’s empowerment often seems to disregard there may be structural constraints on women’s choices or opportunities. The act of participating in an economy is seen as empowering women, even though women may be participating in industries that do not compensate them adequately, damage their health or expose them to danger. Given the lack of attention shown to structural issues, the failure of individual women to single-handedly pull themselves and their communities out of poverty may come as a surprise to proponents of WID-based visions of women’s empowerment.

c. Gender Equality in the GAD Perspective

Although the GAD approach values women’s participation in economic, social, and political structures, the GAD approach also highlights that increasing the number of women in the labour force alone is not enough to create gender equality (Chant & Sweetman, 2012). This is because under the GAD approach, gender equality is predicated on the transformation of gender roles for both men and women (Moser, 1989). GAD theories prioritize a re-envisioning of the gendered division of labour and encourage holistic approaches developed alongside the women who are directly affected by inequalities (Moser, 1989; Batliwala, 2007).

While the WID approach tends to limit its priorities to PGNs, GAD highlights the

necessity of meeting both PGNs and strategic gender needs (SGNs), which focus on the long-term transformation of the gender roles which disadvantage women (Moser, 1989). Examples of strategic gender needs might include eliminating the unequal burden of housework or adopting policies that allow women more reproductive choices; both of these changes would have long term impacts on women's social roles and position in society (Moser, 1989, 1803).

The GAD approach is based on the premise that women and men are currently in positions of unequal power as a result of social norms that confine women to the undervalued private sphere and prioritize men's participation in the public sphere (Macdonald, 1993, 16). As a result of this analysis, the normative focus of GAD is on transforming these power relations. This is an inherently political approach that demands that gender inequality is scrutinized in institutions, social norms, economic and political systems, and interpersonal interactions (Brown, 2005, 63). In order to truly re-imagine gender roles, it is critical that men become involved; it is not only femininity that must be scrutinized and stripped of its assumptions and implications, but the social construction of masculinity must also be discussed more openly.

The GAD approach acknowledges that meeting PGNs is critical in the short-term, but also asserts that the achievement of SGNs will lead to more significant improvements for more women (Brown, 2005, 63). A crucial component of the GAD perspective is recognizing that women have diverse experiences, and that their unique needs should to be taken into consideration by transforming gender roles in a collaborative manner, including through active engagement with men and boys (Brown, 2005, 63). In short, the GAD approach to gender equality focuses on a holistic transformation of the way that societies think about masculinity and femininity, asserting that gender equality cannot be achieved until the structures that have created women's subordination are altered.

d. Women's Empowerment in the GAD Perspective

As I have outlined above, the GAD approach emphasizes a structural approach to gender equality, which cannot be achieved unless women are empowered. GAD theory views women's empowerment as a fundamentally political idea that attempts to challenge the foundations of oppressive social structures (Batliwala, 2007, 558). Distinct from the WID view of women's empowerment, the GAD approach is holistic; women cannot be considered to be "economically empowered" unless they are also politically, socially, and personally empowered (Batliwala, 2007, 560). Perhaps Batliwala (2007) most concisely summarizes the essence of the transformative GAD approach to women's empowerment when she states that empowerment is:

a process that shifts social power ...by changing prevailing patterns of access to and control over economic, natural, and intellectual resources, and by transforming institutions and structures that reinforce...existing power structures (560).

Under this transformative approach, women's empowerment is not only a matter of making personal choices, but also the ability to make personal choices without (or with minimal) institutional and structural constraints (Ackerly, 1997, 141). For example, while some women may choose to engage in prostitution as opposed to other forms of work, it has been argued by many feminist scholars that this cannot truly be seen as a choice, since women have no viable alternatives such as university education programs or more fairly compensated positions in the service industry. Although transformative understandings of empowerment include personal empowerment, as in the ability to express oneself and to become aware of the internalization of oppression (Pickup *et al*, 2001, 33), radical empowerment discourse also heavily emphasizes the importance of structural change and collective action (Cleaver, 1999, 599). Batliwala argues that transformative approaches like GAD try to find areas where women can organize collectively, discuss their own

experiences, and analyze structural issues; women are encouraged by transformative approaches to develop a “personal and political agenda for change” (2007, 560).

The GAD approach dismisses the instrumentalist view and rejects ideas of women as passive recipients of development assistance; instead, women are seen as capable individuals with a wide variety of preferences, experiences, and influences (Batliwala, 2007, 560). The GAD approach tends to emphasize the value of grassroots initiatives that are guided by women themselves and which support structural change in attitudes, policies, and institutions. The practical manifestation of a transformative approach to empowerment depends entirely on how women express and act on their own needs, and therefore GAD accepts that programs could address any number of intersecting and related issues affecting women’s lives, including social stigma against women’s work, economic productivity, or women’s political representation (Brown, 2005, 65).

Given the emancipatory motivations of the GAD approach (Cleaver, 1999) and GAD’s emphasis on confronting and disrupting the social norms that place women in subordinate positions (Batliwala, 2007, 558), the GAD framework provides a critical basis from which to study organizations. The fundamentally critical nature of GAD approaches will support my objective of assessing UNDP’s policies and approaches to women’s empowerment and gender equality. Since the GAD approach requires a holistic perspective and values a deep understanding of local contexts, the application of the GAD approach will result in a stronger and more comprehensive understanding of organizational practices.

Though there are important distinctions between the WID and GAD approaches, there is also overlap in many areas (Moser, 1989). Women and women’s organizations operate within social, political, and economic environments that may make it highly challenging to implement programs that confront the interests of political or economic institutions that benefit from traditional gender roles (Goetz, 1997, 7). Many organizations may implement

projects to tackle gender inequality that seem to encompass aspects of both the WID and GAD approaches (Brown, 2005). For example, an initiative that concentrates primarily on issuing micro-finance loans with the explicit intention of increasing women's economic contributions could be classified as a "WID initiative" with relative ease. Yet this same initiative might provide a much-needed opportunity for local women to gather together, ostensibly in the context of a savings and loan group, to discuss the lack of respect given to female entrepreneurs. Such WID-based initiatives can provide a springboard for action that tackles social roles and institutional power structures.

III. An Introduction to Gendered Organizations Theory

a. Mainstream Organizations Theory

Although management studies has been a prominent discipline since the 1970s, many important scholars of organizations such as Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Schein (1992) tended to disregard the high levels of gender inequality in the organizations they researched. Since gendered organizations theory is largely derived from a critical feminist analysis of mainstream organizations theory, it is important to discuss some of the basic tenants of the mainstream, functionalist perspective on organizations. The mainstream functionalist perspective on organizational culture is a largely gender-blind one, to the extent that some critics have cynically referred to mainstream organizational theory as "malestream" theory (Alvesson & Due Billing, 2009, 6). Mainstream organizational theory is an inter-disciplinary collection of various theories pertaining to the functioning of different parts of an organization; however, it finds its main practical application in the world of business (Hatch, 2012). Mainstream organization theory posits that organizational change is typically the intentional result of rational decision-making by upper management, and attempts to provide universal principles and laws of organizational structure that can be used to predict decision-making (Prechel, 1990). Mainstream organizational theory has been based on the normative

objective of increasing efficiency within organizations (Prechel, 1990).

A functionalist understanding of organizational culture is at the root of mainstream organization theory. In the functionalist paradigm, the main purpose of organizational theory is to diagnose relationships and cultural interactions within the organization, and apply these principles to achieve certain business objectives (Wilson, 2001). Functionalist approaches to organizational culture are based on the understanding that culture is created through processes of adaptation to external problems and internal adoption of norms that help to mitigate against these problems (Schein, 1992). Therefore, culture is seen as a variable that can be altered or managed in order to produce certain behaviours among employees (Wilson, 2001). Under this approach, organizational culture is “a manipulable accessory to performance... a product of the organization as much as goods and services” (Wilson, 2001, 175). Paradoxically, under this approach culture is seen as something that can be easily altered to suit the needs of the business, and simultaneously as something that never changes significantly enough to challenge the organization’s *status quo* (Wilson, 2001).

Martin (2000) notes that, while organizational theorists have made some attempt to understand diversity in organizations, the “add women and stir” approach is the predominant way of thinking and that references to sex, gender, femininities, or masculinities are extremely rare in mainstream organizational literature. However, there is a large body of explicitly feminist work that attempts to reframe, or, in Martin’s (2000) words, “re-vision” mainstream organizational literature; the result is gendered organizations theory.

b. What is gendered organizations theory?

Since the Beijing Conference of 1995, the importance of examining gender relations within organizations has come to the forefront and the idea of mainstreaming gender has been heavily promoted (Benschop & Verloo, 2006). Feminist scholars have built on this momentum, highlighting the pervasiveness of gender inequality, the intense need for gender

analysis, and the gendered nature of organizations (Wallace & Porter, 2013, 18). But what does it mean to say that an organization is gendered, or to demand that society looks at organizations from a gendered perspective? Acker (1990) states that:

To say that an organization, or any other analytic unit, is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine (146).

Alvesson and Due Billing (2009) elaborate on this theory, noting that organizations are not only a physical location where people perform gender³, but that organizations themselves have gendered meanings ascribed in their structures and practices and, in turn, participation in organizations *produces, sustains, and reinforces* gendered behaviour in individuals (5). To conduct a gendered analysis of organizations requires that the researcher assess organizational culture, logic, and procedures through the lens of gender relations. The gendered nature of organizations is often unnoticed until explicit attention is given to studying it, since an organizational ethos of gender equality is not often part of the “collection of values, history, culture and practices that form the unquestioned, ‘normal’ way of working” (Rao, Stuart & Kelleher, 1999, 2).

Despite the many advantages of the gendered organizations perspective, there are a few words of caution worth noting. As the discourse surrounding gender has evolved, benefiting from other philosophical traditions such as post-modernism and post-structuralism, feminist scholars have struggled to reconcile the very notion of gender analysis with the understanding of gender as a non-binary and socially constructed norm (Alvesson & Due Billing, 2009). Scholars of gender generally reject the idea that social ideas of masculinity and femininity are purely inscribed by biology, instead conceiving of gender as a social

³West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that gender is not innate, but something that is “done” during an individual’s interactions with others. Performing gender means to behave in ways that are socially accepted as stereotypically masculine or stereotypically feminine; to borrow Goffman’s view, “gender is a socially scripted dramatization of the culture’s idealization of feminine and masculine natures, played for an audience” (in West & Zimmerman, 1987, 130).

construction; and yet, the same scholars often rely on quantitative or qualitative data that is based on identification of subjects as biological men or women (Alvesson & Due Billing, 2009). Gender analysis of organizations rarely takes on the task of parsing apart the complex notion of gender identity and recognizing that “gender orientations may be uncoupled from bodies” (Alvesson & Due Billing, 2009, 218). Alvesson and Due Billing (2009) have also indicated that conducting gender research that aims to highlight the distinctions between men and women in the workplace could reinforce ideas of gender as a strict dichotomy.

It should be acknowledged that my own research risks falling into this trap. Although I personally adhere to the view that a high degree of gendered behaviour or performance can be attributed to socially inscribed norms and is therefore, much more fluid than a rigid male/female dichotomy, the primary focus of my analysis is not on the implications of UNDP’s policies for the very concept of gender. In fact, given that my research is concerned with the decision-making of organizations, I would argue that approaching gender from a social constructionist perspective may in fact confuse the analysis, as a dichotomous approach to gender adheres more closely to the ways in which organizations think and operate. A critique of the binary approach to gender is certainly valid, but it may not help me to uncover the ways in which UNDP operates. This is not to say that I intend to take an unquestioning approach to this issue. Where and if it exists, I intend to critique essentialist understandings of women’s roles in UNDP policy and practice.

It should also be noted that much of the research on gendered norms tends to equate “gender” with women. While the GAD approach emphasizes that gendered social roles must be examined —men’s roles as well as women’s roles— the focus of most gender equality programs remains squarely on women, and typically these programs seek either to address women’s disadvantage or to create organizations that are more inclusive of women. While it is critical to consider the unique ways in which women are disadvantaged by gendered social

norms, it is equally important to explicitly acknowledge that men who conform to social expectations of masculinity *benefit* from gendered social norms (Clever, 2002). Material resources, authority, social power, and other advantages are accorded on a gendered basis to men, and thus examining the specific ways in which men benefit from gendered oppression is key to dismantling gender inequality. This difficult work will involve not only women and women's advocacy, but will also require that male advocates for gender equality take a critical look at how their tacit acceptance of gendered roles accords them certain advantages and perpetuated gender inequality (Kimmel, in Cleaver, 2002).

It should also be noted that gender may not always be the most salient variable in the analysis of an organization. Race, class, ethnicity, sexuality and disability are all crucial to consider, but other, less easily observable traits could also be relevant, such as political orientation or family structure (Alvesson & Due Billing, 2009, 9-10). In fact, it is almost impossible to account for all the potential variables that could affect the nature of organizations. Alvesson and Due Billing (2009) observe that it may also be the case that some occurrences that may appear to be the result of discriminatory attitudes or practices could be voluntary. For example, some women make a conscious choice to exit the workforce entirely after having children. Rather than having been victimized by a workplace culture that values "male-bodied workers" to the exclusion of female employees, as Acker (2001) says, some women may simply decide that work is no longer meaningful or important for them. Teasing out the distinctions between these two elements is an important and extremely challenging part of the researcher's task. While the GAD approach may assist me in this endeavour due to the importance placed on valuing women's individual agency (Batliwala, 2007), researchers, myself included, must acknowledge that an analysis using a gendered organizations perspective is not a definitive and complete answer to the question of why organizations have certain patterns of gendered behaviour.

IV. Why use a theory of gendered organizations?

The value of gendered organizations theory is highlighted by the failure of other approaches to explain persistent gender inequality in organizations. Liberal feminist frameworks, particularly under the ‘equity approach’ of the WID framework, posited that the elimination of formal barriers to participation and the achievement of equal representation would be more or less sufficient to eliminate discrimination against women in the public sphere, thus reducing gender inequality (Moser, 1989). Although the reduction of legal barriers to women’s participation in public organizations and businesses was clearly vital, the elimination of formal structural barriers has not fostered a public sphere free of sexual harassment or discrimination against women who struggle to balance family obligations with workplace commitments (Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Goetz, 1997; Razavi & Miller, 1998; Rao, Stuart & Kelleher, 1999).

Attempts to generate gender equality by providing women with specialized training programs to assimilate them into male-dominated workplaces have met with resistance from men, while efforts to include women in workplaces by favouring traditionally feminine qualities, such as listening and collaborating, have been met with derision (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Promoting women’s assimilation in unequal systems has not been as successful as the liberal feminist paradigm once thought it might be; as Acker notes, “women’s bodies cannot be adapted to hegemonic masculinity” (1990, 153). Even gender mainstreaming⁴ initiatives that emerged in the aftermath of Beijing have not been as successful as was hoped at reducing gender inequality in the workplace. Moser and Moser (2005) concluded in their

⁴Gender mainstreaming (GM) is defined by the United Nations as the process of integrating gender into ‘the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres’ (in Parpart, 2013, para.6). Tiessen (2007) states that gender mainstreaming is “designed to put gender equality in development programs at the center of all policy making” (14). However, the implementation of GM has been widely critiqued because of the ease with which institutions have adopted the rhetoric of GM without the financial resources, accountability, or true commitment to support gender-based transformation. Often, the drive for GM has turned into a series of checklists rather than an attempt to seriously uphold GM’s ‘potential for gender transformation’ (Parpart, 2013, para.1).

study of international development donors that, despite widespread adoption of formal gender mainstreaming policies, few practical results managed to trickle-down to the level of implementation. In fact, evaluations of UNDP's GM found that there existed "subtle but effective opposition" at senior levels within the organization and very little programming at the local level which displayed a commitment to GM (Parpart, 2013, 385). Goetz (1997) argues that resource allocation patterns in organizations tend to leave even well-intentioned gender programs "stranded on the peripheries" (7), and del Rosario (in Goetz, 1997) notes that the understaffing of gender programs is endemic.

In a project meant to improve gender mainstreaming in the Ministry of the Flemish Community in Belgium, Benschop and Verloo (2006) found that even "the inclusion of staff obligations [for gender equality] in personal year plans has not been enough to secure implementation of action plans" (30). Benschop and Verloo (2006) concluded that even in environments where individuals could be held formally accountable for failure to implement gender reforms, the reforms were unlikely to materialize unless the individual was genuinely interested in gender mainstreaming. Interestingly, since many individuals in the Ministry already perceived their organization to be gender-neutral, they felt that any problems with gender inequality in their organization were caused by "women who are lagging behind in some way" (Benschop & Verloo, 2006, 29).

V. Organizational culture and 'deep structure' theories

It should be noted that although I have chosen to divide the discussion of the gendered organizations perspective into two different sections, this is intended to foster ease of reading, not to suggest that organizational structure and organizational culture are unrelated topics; indeed, organizational structure and culture are inter-related and iterative (Schein, 1992). In contrast to the functionalist approaches of mainstream organization theory, gendered organizations theory is based in social constructionist or symbolist understandings

of the world (Wilson, 2001). The symbolist view is that culture is formed by “the construction and reconstruction of meaning” (Wilson, 2001, 170), and therefore, that an organization’s culture is unique, variable, and can be specific to sub-sectors of the organization. Although it is still possible to develop an analysis of unique and complex cultures through the observation and recognition of patterns, the symbolist perspective also asserts that the culture of an organization is multi-dimensional and can be understood differently by individuals within the organization (Wilson, 2001). Under this approach, the aim of the researcher is to describe and achieve an understanding of the organization, rather than to produce a model of predictable organizational behaviour (Schultz, 1995, in Alvesson & Due Billing, 2009)

The symbolist approach is closely aligned with gendered organizations theory because of the attention shown to the unique character of each organization. While mainstream functionalist perspectives tend to see an organization as a homogenous institution, the symbolist perspective acknowledges the reality that an upper-level male manager and a low-wage female employee are likely to have very different perspectives on the culture of the organization. The symbolist perspective is filled with ambiguities and perhaps even contradictions, and the researcher must accept that it is difficult to conduct an assessment of an organization’s culture while also acknowledging the subjectivity of this culture. Yet, I argue that it would be more problematic to insist that all individuals within organizations have a unified view of their workplace culture. This complexity simply serves as a reminder that the analysis generated by application of a gendered organizations perspective is not a definitive answer to the question of what an organization's culture is like.

Alvesson and Due Billing (2009) propose that the patterns of organizational culture can be traced through observation and interpretation of three different types of activities: actions and events; material objects; and verbal expressions (122). For example, the gendered nature

of actions and events could be observed by assessing who dominates the discussion at meetings and the types of social activities that are encouraged in the workplace (Alvesson & Due Billing, 2009). Material objects that might be gendered include the advertising or publicity materials of an organization or the workplace dress code (Alvesson & Due Billing, 2009). Verbal expressions are another clear area where gendered workplace norms can be expressed; using military or sports metaphors to convey messages about business practices might contribute to a different environment than one in which the language of the ‘workplace as a family’ is used (Alvesson & Due Billing, 2009). However, it should also be noted that there are few metaphors which are truly “gender-neutral.” Understanding the ‘workplace as a family’ can also be used to silence women or to differentiate men from women in organizations when considering the traditional roles and responsibilities of each within the family.

Given that workplace cultures are shaped by a wide variety of complex inter-personal interactions, relationships, spaces, events, and social norms that build and alter over time (LaGuardia, 2008), it will be helpful to identify some basic typologies or common characteristics that are correlated with deeply gendered organizational behaviours. Rao, Stuart and Kelleher (1999) developed a basic framework for analyzing the gendered nature of organizations, which they refer to as an analysis of the ‘deep structure’ of organizations. Although the ‘deep structure’ framework is not an exhaustive list, it nonetheless provides a strong foundation upon which to begin a gender analysis of organizations. Rao, Stuart and Kelleher (1999) propose that there are four key dimensions that must be considered in assessing the gendered nature of organizations: the valuing of heroic individuality; the use of power; the monoculture of instrumentality; and work-family balance (4).

The idea of heroic individuality refers to the extent to which an organization values or respects individuals who ‘stand alone,’ undertaking independent projects or working long

hours in order to deliver outcomes, as opposed to prioritizing communication and teamwork (Rao, Stuart and Kelleher, 1999). An organizational preference for heroic individuality is part and parcel of an organizational culture that values individualism and dedication—traits which have been socially ascribed as masculine. In their own analysis of organizations, Deal and Kennedy (1982) propose several different typologies of organizations, including the comparable notion of “tough guy/macho” (107) culture, which is a high-risk, high-reward culture that values individualism and a fast-pace. Deal and Kennedy (1982) argue that ‘heroes’ provide an internal role model who inspires employees to achieve greater success for the company. Even though Deal and Kennedy did not intend to take a gendered perspective on organizations, their analysis nonetheless revealed a gendered bias in organizations in the form of the “tough guy/macho” role (Wilson, 2001, 172).

‘Deep structure’ analysis also reveals the use of power as a key dimension or organizational cultures. In mainstream organizational theory there is a tendency to see power as static and a zero-sum game, but this is not always the case (Tiessen, 2007). As Alvesson and Due Billing (2009) suggest:

Power is better understood in terms of interacting processes between people in the organization, trying to reduce the scope for action of others not only through influencing overt behaviour, but also by ideological, symbolic and disciplinary means (66).

Rao, Stuart and Kelleher (1999) identify a variety of different types of power: exclusionary power, positional power, agenda-setting power, hidden power, the power of dialogue, and the power of conflict. In an organization based on *exclusionary power*, a few individuals near the top of a zero-sum hierarchical structure wield the ability to make decisions (Rao, Stuart, and Kelleher, 1999). Macdonald (1993) calls attention to the surprising extent to which a single individual who has been endowed with power through a hierarchical structure can influence and shape projects. The concept of *positional power* implies that individuals with a high degree of formal status within an organization can wield power simply because of that

status - a member of the Board of Directors, for example (Rao, Stuart, and Kelleher, 1999).

The notion of *agenda-setting power* demonstrates that limiting or granting access can also be a way to exercise power; Rao, Stuart and Kelleher (1999) present the example of a secretary with the ability to control the CEO's calendar and appointments. All of these dimensions of power raise questions about gender. Whereas agenda-setting power may be more likely found in the hands of women, as the example of the secretary demonstrates, statistics on the number of female business executives tends to support the conclusion that men are more likely to wield exclusionary and positional power (Wallace & Porter, 2013).

Within a corporation, power can also come in the form of *hidden power*. When power is expressed very subtly—for example, a male manager casually asking his female employee to grab him a cup of coffee—employees can internalize this perception of their relative position (Tiessen, 2007, 46). Over time, these relationships are normalized, becoming an ingrained part of the culture (Tiessen, 2007). While other types of power such as exclusionary or positional power are gendered in more overt ways, the notion of hidden power is a particularly important reminder that, along with the formal structures of organizations, the subtle ways in which individuals in organizations interact must also be examined.

Rao, Stuart, and Kelleher (1999) touch on two other types of power: power of dialogue and power of conflict. Both of these ideas of power centre on the role of communication in building and shaping culture; in order to create cultural norms, people have to interact with each other. While the *power of dialogue* emphasizes that open communication and language “can be used to prevent or promote” gender equality in the workplace (Tiessen, 2007, 48), the *power of conflict* can also create or deny organizational change. The conflict-based approach directly contests against sources of power through methods such as bullying, aggressive lobbying, or endorsing opposing legislation (Tiessen, 2007).

Rao, Stuart and Kelleher (1999) also refer to the importance of an organization's

‘monoculture of instrumentality.’ This term, inspired by eco-feminist Vandana Shiva, refers to the extent to which an organization has become immersed in the achievement of quantifiable objectives and supportive of highly-technical managerial processes, to the exclusion of qualitative and holistic approaches to project design, implementation, and evaluation (Rao, Stuart & Kelleher, 1999, 10).

Macdonald (1993), among many other feminist scholars, has written on the very real dangers of organizations becoming immersed in measurable outcomes and failing to connect with the constituents they serve. This instrumentalist approach to project management is directly related to instrumentalist approaches to women’s empowerment; Baden and Goetz (1997) highlight the concerns of staff of women’s organizations who argue that “gender analysis has become a technocratic discourse...dominated by researchers, policy-makers, and consultants, which no longer addressed issues of power central to women’s subordination” (5). Walker (in Wallace & Porter, 2013) argues that many international NGOs are losing focus of their core purpose—goals like gender equality, human rights, and justice—in order to obtain funding, and that obtaining this funding relies on the organization’s ability to apply instrumentalist and quantifiable approaches such as Results-Based Management (RBM)⁵. Walker issues a powerful condemnation of the monoculture of instrumentality, stating:

Responding to pressure for enhanced accountability through the demonstration of short-term results, ‘value for money,’ and efficiency, institutional donors and INGOs are increasingly adopting a results-based management approach...this is bad news for any organization attempting to promote gender equality and women’s rights. Tackling gender inequality requires a long-term approach that attempts to change deeply entrenched attitudes...it is often sensitive, controversial, political, and difficult work, and the change sought can be difficult to measure (in Wallace & Porter, 2013, 63).

⁵Results-Based Management is a commonly used management approach in international development which aims to increase effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of projects by outlining in quantifiable terms the expected outputs, outcomes, and impacts of all projects and the steps needed in order to achieve these outcomes. UNDG (n.d.) perceives the function of RBM as a tool that “[ensures] that [the UN Country Team’s] cash, supply, and technical assistance contribute to a logical chain of results.”

An organizational culture that ascribes to the ‘monoculture of instrumentality’ outlined above will likely struggle to implement transformative approaches to gender equality, as these projects—and the deep, long-term changes in gender roles that they foster—are challenging to quantify and include in RBM frameworks. Finally, Rao, Stuart and Kelleher (1999) demonstrate that the willingness an organization shows (or does not show) to implement work-family balance policies can reveal gendered aspects of the organizational culture. The next section will elaborate on these formal structures.

VI. Gendered procedures and structures

While many bureaucratic organizations, such as donor agencies, are perceived by mainstream theorists to be gender-neutral due to their formal policies of gender equality, many feminist scholars identify these organizations as gendered and as sources of male dominance (Goetz, 1997; Acker, 1990; Martin, 2000). Miller (in Miller & Razavi, 1998) argues that the structure of bureaucracies is designed to maintain the status quo by creating “organizational and spatial distance” between policy development and operational functions, a system which impedes the implementation of gender equality policies (147).

Acker’s (1990) discussion of the gendered nature of organizations raises three key considerations for analysis: the extent to which the gendered division of labour is institutionalized in the workplace; the extent to which gendered norms are enforced by formal social structures in the workplace; and the extent to which procedures and practices, or ‘organizational logic,’ are constructed by gendered norms (146-147). These three dimensions can form the basis of an understanding of how organizational structure is a gendered phenomenon.

The institutionalized division of labour based on gender is an obvious and important place to start. A cursory examination of the leadership structure of an organization,

institutional policies regarding promotion and parental leave, and gendered coding in job descriptions can all be valuable ways to examine an organizations' gendered nature (Gaucher, Friesen and Kay, 2011). Acker (1990), among many others, points out that men usually dominate the most powerful leadership positions in organizations. Benschop & Verloo (2006), in their study of a Belgian government ministry, note that while a third of the workforce is comprised of women, only 64% of these women hold full-time positions, and only 18.7% of them hold upper management positions (23). It is evident that the 'pink collar ghetto' is still alive and well; although women are now employed in large numbers, their employment tends to be concentrated in 'pink-collar' industries that require stereotypically feminine attributes, such as teaching or health care, and in positions that are 'ghettoized', that is, poorly-compensated and less secure (Miller, 1995). In light of this, Macdonald (1993) comments on the importance of gender-sensitive formal recruitment policies for both programme and administrative staff in order to foster equitable workplaces (35).

Secondly, Acker (1990) notes that both formal and informal social structures in the workplace can have important implications for women's marginalization. The formal environments in which coworkers interact can foster gender imbalances. To analyze the gendered nature of organizational structures it is also important to examine questions such as whether or not workplace social functions are held in traditionally masculine spheres such as at sporting events or to what extent do certain workplaces expect women to tolerate sexual harassment as part of their job, for example in customer service (152)?

Lastly, Acker (1990) uses the term 'organizational logic' to refer to the minutiae of organizational procedure, such as job evaluation systems, written work rules or codes of conduct, contracts, and "managerial directives" (147). The rules, regulations, and procedures of every-day operational functions can serve to alienate women from positions of influence, sideline the concerns of women, and otherwise serve to perpetuate unequal organizational

policies in a manner that is distinct from the informal and inter-personal manner in which organizational culture is shaped, due to its authoritative character.

Martin (2000) observes that even job titles are gendered and have gendered impacts; women may feel their value in the workplace is undermined by gendered titles such as “Stewardess” or “Secretary.” Parental leave policies, telecommuting, and flexible working hours are some examples of organizational structures that demonstrate a commitment to the needs of women, who tend to be the primary caregivers in most families (Martin, 2000). Macdonald (1993) points out the hypocrisy of international development organizations that aim to “improve the quality of life of people in the South in ways that actually worsen the quality of life of the Northern NGO’s own staff” with inflexible work-family balance policies (35). From a GAD perspective, work-family balance policies, depending on their specifics, may not sufficiently address the SGNs of women, since they may not promote the transformation of women’s traditional roles as caregivers. However, the adoption of policies geared towards increasing women’s participation might nevertheless indicate an organization’s willingness to tackle issues of gender in the workplace.

VII. Next Steps

Despite formal legislation eliminating barriers to gender discrimination and countless programs that promote gender mainstreaming, there remain significant discrepancies in the employment of women versus men, particularly at high levels. Alvesson and Due Billing (2009) observe that “it is common that men occupy around 90 percent of positions at the top” of businesses (49). Wallace and Porter (2013) note that there were only 21 women running Fortune 500 companies, and only 19.8% of members of Parliament globally are women (78). It is clear that formal policies that encourage gender equality are not enough to result in equal representation. Gendered organizations theory will enable me to look beyond liberal feminist frameworks such as WID to uncover previously hidden obstacles to gender

equality and women's empowerment in organizations, enabling an understanding of why and how certain gender policies are implemented. My theoretical framework, grounded in the GAD approach and gendered organizations theory, aims to critique organizations for their failure to create equitable environments, not to change women in order to eke out space for their participation in an unequal system (Ely & Meyerson, 2000).

My theoretical framework is based on the premise that organizations are inherently gendered, due both to the 'deep structure' of organizational cultures and due to the 'organizational logic' of formal processes and systems. In addition, I contend that the transformative underpinnings of GAD theory will provide a valuable overarching theoretical and conceptual framework from which to critically examine organizations. The theoretical framework I have outlined here will be applied in the following chapters in order to guide my analysis of the internal decision-making of UNDP at both the policy and project level.

Chapter Three: UNDP and Zimbabwe in Context

I. Introduction

Whether they are public, private or community-based, institutions and organizations are such a prevalent part of the fabric of the modern world that it often seems as if they have always existed. However, Goetz (1997) notes that institutions are not 'natural' or inherent to our societies, and that, in fact, “all institutions embody a history of social choices by particular groups” (6). Understanding this history of choices is essential in order to uncover the factors that have influenced the choices of the United Nations Development Programme to adopt their policies on women’s empowerment and gender equality.

+ -This chapter will explore the history of UNDP more generally as well as UNDP in Zimbabwe. While the information presented in this chapter will not answer the central research question of this paper, providing a comprehensive understanding of the context of the organization is nonetheless crucial. Indeed, the GAD approach that frames this paper highlights the need to develop localized and contextualized understandings of issues and to value the unique identities, needs, and priorities of individuals (Batliwala, 2007). I will begin this chapter by presenting a portrait of UNDP as an organization, followed by a brief overview of the history of Zimbabwe, the challenges of UNDP engagement in Zimbabwe, and UNDP’s priorities in Zimbabwe.

II. A Brief History of the United Nations Development Programme

UNDP was formed in 1965 by the merger of the United Nations Special Fund, which channelled technical assistance funds to developing countries, and the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance, which focused on improving economic and political conditions in developing countries (UNDP FAQ, 2014). Given that the purpose of this merger was to reduce the duplication of efforts between the two organizations, the original driving purpose of UNDP was coordination of activities.

UNDP still plays this role. It has offices in 177 countries worldwide and describes itself

as the United Nations' "global development network" (UNDP FAQ, 2014). It is also the agency responsible for coordinating the overall efforts of the UN system to reduce global poverty through its position as chair of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). UNGD is a forum where 32 departments, agencies, and other members of the UN system to meet in order to coordinate their efforts to reduce poverty (UNDG, 2014). Given the prominent role of UNDP in setting the agenda for global development initiatives, the positioning of UNDP in regards to gender equality is likely to have a considerable influence on shaping trends in the international development community.

Currently, UNDP groups its projects into four key priority areas, including Poverty Reduction and Achievement of the MDGs, Democratic Governance, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, and Environment and Energy. Women's empowerment and human rights are seen as cross-cutting themes across all of these programming categories (UNDP FAQ, 2014). Evidently, the management, policy development, and operational structure needed to implement this broad agenda is extremely complex. UNDP has three major roles; firstly, that of coordination and development policy leadership within the United Nations system; secondly, as the manager of the Resident Coordinator system, which aims to facilitate the coordination efforts of the UNGD by stationing high-level representatives in each country office; and thirdly, the role of a country-level partner for the management and implementation of development projects (UNDP FAQ, 2014).

UNDP can implement its complex mission only with assistance and support from national country governments, which provide voluntary contributions. While the overall volume of funds donated by Members States to development cooperation activities has doubled over the last 15 years, the nature of these contributions has altered, as more and more donors have shifted their support from core funding of UN agencies to program- or project-specific contributions (Mahn, 2012). As a result of this trend, UNDP is no longer the

“central financing clearing house” that it used to be, and various UN agencies instead find themselves competing with each other for direct funds allocated by donor countries to specific projects (Mahn, 2012, 2). The increased competition between UN agencies may lead to greater pressure on staff to implement programs on a limited budget, and has the potential to seriously impact the mandate of UNDP.

Within UNDP itself, resources are allocated to various country offices on the basis of the indicative planning figure (IPF), a calculation of the intensity of need in various developing countries (Miller & Razavi, 1995). However, developed country Member States can also decide to earmark funds to certain countries on the basis of their own domestic, political, or economic interests, resulting in unpredictable funding at the country level (Mahn, 2012). IPF calculations are based on population as well as economic data, including per capita gross national product and terms of trade (Miller & Razavi, 1995). This allocation system could pose a challenge for a country like Zimbabwe, where the recent growth of the GDP has not correlated with a reduction in poverty (UNDP Zimbabwe MDGR, 2012).

In comparison with many other international or multilateral organizations, UNDP is relatively decentralized, and relies heavily on its Country Offices and Resident Coordinators in order to implement key initiatives (Miller & Razavi, 1995). Overall policy guidance for the entire organization is provided by the Bureau for Development Policy, stationed in New York City, while large-scale operational work occurs at the level of the five regional offices (Miller & Razavi, 1995). However, the vast majority of operational work is located at the country office level, and the majority of professional staff are based in developing countries as opposed to headquarters (Miller & Razavi, 1995). The driving force behind the work of each UNDP Country Office is the Country Programming Exercise, which sets out the goals, strategies, and priorities of the host country. This document is ideally prepared as a joint exercise with the recipient government, UNDP, civil society, and bilateral and multilateral

organizations that may be involved in the implementation process (Miller & Razavi, 1995). After this document is finalized, a Programme Support Document is developed in order to establish quantifiable goals, outputs, targets and budgetary allocations for each initiative identified in the country programme⁶. The Programme Support Document and country programme serve to guide the UNDP Country Office for the next planning period. The implementation of projects is usually conducted through agencies such as UNAIDS, UN WOMEN, international NGOs, or, increasingly, local civil society organizations, while UNDP tends to play a management role.

The decentralized structure of UNDP has great potential but also presents many challenges. Decentralization holds promise for organizations seeking to align their priorities more closely with those of the recipient country host government but there is also the potential that organizational initiatives devised at the headquarters level will simply not trickle down to country offices (Moser & Moser, 2005). This may be for a number of reasons, including that some country offices feel too overworked to implement what they may perceive as the ‘pet projects’ of headquarters staff (Miller & Razavi, 1995).

The gap between headquarters and country level is particularly noticeable when it comes to UNDP’s efforts to mainstream gender into its programming. Host country governments may be resistant to gender reforms on cultural grounds, perceiving gender equality to be an externally imposed ideal (Mannell, 2012; Moser & Moser, 2005). Here, UNDP finds itself in a difficult and contradictory position, given that it prioritizes the principle of recipient country ownership, yet has also committed to the principles of gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment. It becomes particularly difficult to rationalize the insertion of

⁶ Although this topic will be discussed more fully in later sections, it should be noted here that Macdonald (1993), Rao, Stuart and Kelleher (1999), and Wallace and Porter (2013), among many others, have discussed the dangers of applying strictly quantitative metrics to the measurement of women’s empowerment or gender equality. With such a nuanced and complex subject, quotas or percentages do not present a full picture of the key issues.

gender-related objectives into projects when the recipient government contributes significantly to financing certain projects (Miller & Razavi, 1995). Furthermore, the country-level counterpart of UNDP tends to be the Ministry of Finance of the recipient country government, one of the government bodies found to be least responsive to gender concerns in many countries (Miller & Razavi, 1998, 155).

Recent developments in information and communications technologies (ICTs) and a landscape of increasing competition amongst international organizations have also affected UNDP, resulting in a more information-based networking organization. Holohan (2004) observes that as other multilateral organizations such as the World Bank move into new areas such as poverty reduction, UNDP has been forced to clarify its competitive advantage by moving away from implementation and highlighting UNDP's knowledge base. In Holohan's words (2004), UNDP is being altered gradually from "a product organization to a practice organization" (33) that understands organizational knowledge as rooted in the practice of interaction, relating, and engaging with colleagues and counterparts (Nicolini, Gherardi, & Yanow, 2003). This attempted transition is highlighted by the recent introduction of ICTs, such as the UNDP Portal, which was intended as an online information and data sharing network for project officers from various UNDP country offices (Holohan, 2004). However, Holohan (2004) also demonstrates that this attempted transition has not been altogether successful, and has been plagued by difficulties stemming from the decentralized structure of UNDP, including lack of leadership and gaps in capacity between various country offices.

The decentralized structure of UNDP has also resulted in a somewhat dispersed structure of accountability. UNDP holds itself accountable not only to recipient country governments that it partners with, but to the beneficiaries of projects and to the national donor agencies in the developed world that provide funding (Executive Board, 2008). Although UNDP utilizes

built-in accountability mechanisms such as conducting internal and independent evaluations, the key accountability mechanism of UNDP is the Executive Board, composed of 36 Member States who rotate regularly (UNDP, “Executive Board,” 2014). The Executive Board receives direct reports from UNDP Administrator on key elements of the UNDP Accountability Framework, including the outputs of country, regional and global programs (Executive Board, 2008). The Executive Board is responsible for the approval of UNDP Strategic Plan and its goals, and UNDP reports on these goals to the Board as well as to UN Member States (Executive Board, 2008). It is worth noting that developing countries are more represented than developed countries on this Board, since it functions on a one-member, one-vote basis (Miller & Razavi, 1995).

Given that the focus of my research is on gender policies and the internal organizational factors that have influenced their implementation, it is important to provide a brief overview of UNDP’s historical engagement with gender concerns. The first action taken by UNDP to address emerging concerns surrounding gender inequality in development projects occurred in 1976, when a focal point for women’s issues was appointed. The key task of this individual was to disseminate research on women in development and sensitize staff to women’s concerns (Miller & Razavi, 1995). In subsequent years, focal points were assigned to all regional bureaux to assist with the integration of women’s issues, although these focal points did not have the advantage of any financial allocations for their work. The first UNDP guidelines on Women in Development were issued in the early 1980s, under the category of 'Special Consideration in Projects' (Miller & Razavi, 1995, 14). After evaluations in 1978 and 1985, the Executive Board demanded increased action, but most of the progress during this period was piecemeal, consisting of side projects in maternal health that tended to see women as passive beneficiaries of development (Miller & Razavi, 1995, 14).

In 1986, “women in development” (WID) became one of the four priority themes of

UNDP, a step that was followed by the establishment of the Division of Women in Development which had a mandate to integrate WID approaches into UNDP's work (Miller & Razavi, 1995, 15). Though at the time it was a welcome development, the Division had little tangible authority, and was largely unable to enforce the implementation of its recommendations (Miller & Razavi, 1995, 15). When feminist scholars began to highlight the need to move from WID to Gender and Development (GAD) approaches, UNDP responded by integrating the Division into the Social Development and Poverty Elimination Division of the Bureau for Development Policy (then called the Bureau for Programme and Policy Support) in New York. It was hoped that this would mainstream gender concerns (Miller & Razavi, 1995, 18), though research has shown that the integration of gender focal points often results in gender concerns being overridden (Moser & Moser, 2005, 16) due mostly to lack of political will to address gender bias (Benschop & Verloo, 2006).

In 1995, UNDP began to publish a gender-related development index in its annual Human Development Report, with the objective of ranking countries not only according to their overall human development, but also their relative gender equality. Although the Gender Development Index has been widely criticized on the basis of flawed indicators (see for example Dijkstra and Hanmer, 2000), it nonetheless represents a serious effort to continue to intensify and integrate gender analysis into the everyday processes of UNDP. The Beijing Conference, also in 1995, represented a significant step forward in the struggle to get gender equality on the global agenda, a golden moment for many feminist scholars and academics (Eyben & Napier-Moore, 2009). Although gender mainstreaming was the key word on everyone's lips at Beijing, many large development agencies, including UNDP, have not been completely successful in incorporating the lessons learned there. Moser and Moser (2005) found both passive and active resistance to gender-based reform within UNDP (17), concluding that UNDP lacked the necessary training and budget for gender equality

initiatives (13).

UNDP's approach to gender equality in the late- 1990s and early 2000s was characterized by false starts, uneven progress, and mixed messages from the executive level (Sadik *et al.*, 2006, 9). UNDP's first attempt at an organization-wide gender strategy was indicative of a WID-based approach; the organization worked to improve hiring practices rather than modifying UNDP's overall development priorities. The Gender Balance in Management Policy for 1995-1997 was followed by two more iterations covering 1998-2001 and 2003-2006 (Sadik *et al.*, 2006, 7). An evaluation of UNDP's gender mainstreaming progress conducted by Sadik, *et al.* (2006) suggests that the priority was given to internal staffing issues over program content because of UNDP's attempts to shift to a knowledge-based organization with strong internal capacity. This shift to a knowledge-based model coincided with an organization-wide effort to reduce inefficiencies; as a result, the UNDP focus on gender programs was reduced because they were perceived as redundant in the face of UNIFEM's work (Sadik *et al.*, 2006, 10).

Finally, in 2008, a more all-encompassing approach to a gender strategy was formulated, with the first cycle of broader gender strategies in 2008 (UNDP, 2014b, 5). This strategy, covering the period from 2008-2011, represented a promising step in the direction of GAD-based approaches to gender. This analysis explicitly acknowledged the necessity of examining the power relationships between men and women, as well as the societal norms imposed upon each gender (Meguro *et al.*, 2008, 2). The details of this Gender Equality Strategy will be examined in more detail in Chapter 4.

In 2008, UNDP also formed the Gender Steering and Implementation Committee (GSIC), which is chaired by the Administrator of UNDP. The GSIC's main purpose is to serve as the principal gender equality oversight mechanism of UNDP by monitoring the implementation of UNDP's gender equality strategies, assessing progress on gender parity

within the organization, and presenting its findings and recommendations to the Executive Office for policy decisions (UNDP, 2014b, 17). The GSIC is complemented by the Gender Team, which is housed in the Bureau for Development Policy (UNDP, 2014b, 18). At least fifteen gender policy advisers are posted at the headquarters and Regional Service Centre level, while country offices with portfolios exceeding \$25 million per year are also expected to have a dedicated gender staff member (UNDP, 2014b, 18).

In late January 2014, UNDP released its new gender strategy, which covers the period from 2014-2017. Entitled *The Future We Want: Rights and Empowerment*, this document adopts many of the same positions as the previous gender strategy. Gender equality is acknowledged as an issue of basic human rights; however, the Strategy also states that gender equality is important *because* it will help to foster broader economic growth and development (UNDP Gender Strategy, 2014, 2). This rationale for supporting gender equality appeals to instrumentalist arguments that view gender equality and women's empowerment as means to an end. The implications of this most recent UNDP gender strategy will be explored in Chapter 4.

III. UNDP in Zimbabwe

Since Zimbabwe attained majority rule in 1980, it has been a Member State of the United Nations (UNCT, "FAQ," 2014). However, Zimbabwe's relationship with the international community in general, and the United Nations in particular, has always been a challenging and complex one, due in large part to the intransigence of the current President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe. Although this topic could indeed be the subject of a thesis in and of itself, in this section I will outline a short summary of the recent history of Zimbabwe and its relationship with UNDP.

There were two principal agitators against white minority rule in the former British colony of Rhodesia; the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), a political party and

guerilla movement mostly dominated by the Shona ethnic group; and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), a similar organization mostly composed of the Ndebele ethnic group and led by Joshua Nkomo (Barnes in Raftopolous & Savage, 2004, 143). After years of conflict, in 1980 the white minority-led government conceded to a transitional period and voting rights for the black majority (Chuma in in Raftopolous & Savage, 2004, 120). Mugabe, who had risen to prominence within the ZANU party, grappled for control in the first truly democratic elections with Nkomo. Mugabe endeavored to secure his position by building patronage networks, increasing his personal control of security and police forces, and encouraging the harassment and intimidation of political opponents (Eppel in Raftopolous & Savage, 2004; Amnesty International, 2008). Although Mugabe won the presidency, he continued to consolidate his power against Nkomo. This endeavour finally culminated in 'Operation Gukurahundi,' in which the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade of the Zimbabwean military was deployed to eradicate ZAPU sympathizers in 1983 (Eppel in Raftopolous & Savage, 2004, 45). Although it is not certain how many ethnic Ndebele were killed, the death toll is estimated at well over 10,000 people, and approximately 400,000 people were left on the brink of starvation by the magnitude of the violence, the majority of which occurred between 1982 and 1987 (Eppel in Raftopolous & Savage, 2004, 45). After Nkomo conceded defeat, agreeing to merge the two parties, Mugabe maintained his firm hand on the Presidency by consolidating his patronage network, including through the distribution of appropriated commercial farms during the land reforms of the early 2000s (Amnesty International, 2008).

The next substantial challenge to Mugabe's presidency began in 2000, when a new opposition party was formed, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In subsequent elections, significant political violence has been observed and documented, including harassment of NGOs, civil society activists, and MDC members by security and police

forces (Eppel in Raftopolous & Savage, 2004; Amnesty International, 2008). During the hotly contested elections of 2008, Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the MDC, withdrew his candidacy, citing excessive violence against his supporters (Amnesty International, 2008, 4). Due to pressure from the international community, a tentative Government of National Unity (GNU) was formed in 2009 with Mugabe as President and Tsvangirai as Prime Minister. This unstable configuration managed to implement a few key reforms, notably the abandonment of the Zimbabwean dollar in favour of the American dollar and the drafting of a new constitution. Some of the most significant changes brought about by the new constitution include an imposition of a (non-retroactive) Presidential two-term limit, a strengthened Bill of Rights which takes a stronger stance on women's rights, freedom of expression, and freedom from torture, and a promise to provide compensation for all "indigenous" people affected by the disastrous land reform program (Allison, 2013). Although reports of political violence diminished considerably in the run-up to the 2013 elections and several international observers declared that President Mugabe's re-election had been free and fair, there were also reports of electoral irregularities (Smith, 2013).

The most recent Millennium Development Goals Report for Zimbabwe, issued in 2012, concluded that although there had been considerable economic growth in recent years, the reduction in poverty expected to occur in conjunction with this growth has not materialized (UNDP Zimbabwe MDGR, 2012). This can be attributed both to rising inequality between the rich and the poor and to the significant percentage of economic growth that is a result of foreign investment. However, positive trends were observed in increasing educational enrolment, improving environmental sustainability, and reducing the prevalence rate of HIV (UNDP Zimbabwe MDGR, 2012). When it comes to *MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*, Zimbabwe's progress is mixed. Although parity in primary and secondary school has been reached and literacy rates among women are high, there has been little

success in promoting women's political involvement, with representation of women in the Lower House and Upper House of government at an average of 19% (UNDP Zimbabwe MDGR, 2012, 31).

As a multilateral institution with an ethos of recipient country ownership, UNDP finds itself in a challenging position in the Zimbabwean context. Once again, contradictory values are in play; although UNDP supports the principle of ownership, it is also dedicated to the realization of human rights, including political rights such as freedom of expression and assembly. In a country where human rights abuses and electoral violence committed by the current President are well-documented, UNDP is in a difficult position - how can UNDP continue to advocate for human rights while continuing to work with a government deeply marked by systematic human rights abuses? And yet, how can they turn away from partnership with the Zimbabwean government since UNDP requires development initiatives to be grounded in recipient country government priorities? This tension surrounds the implementation of programs and projects by UNDP Zimbabwe, and the balance between criticism and collaboration has been very difficult to achieve.

However, UNDP has nonetheless completed updated country programming exercises in cooperation with the Government of Zimbabwe, resulting in the Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF). The ZUNDAF covers the planning period from 2012 to 2015, and prioritizes seven key areas for development: Good Governance for Sustainable Development; Pro-Poor Sustainable Growth and Economic Development; Food Security at Household and National Levels; Sound Management and Use of the Environment, Natural Resources and Land to Promote Sustainable Development; Access to and Utilisation of Quality Basic Social Services; Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support; and Women's Empowerment, Gender Equality and Equity (UNCT, 2012). Despite the inclusion of women's empowerment and gender equality as key

priority areas in the country programming exercise, there is little nuance to the analysis of gender issues. The ZUNDAF will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

Despite the challenges of engaging with a flawed political system, UNDP remains an active partner of the Zimbabwean government, managing a difficult relationship while attempting to promote the MDGs. An analysis of the ZUNDAF and other relevant UNDP Zimbabwe policies will be elaborated in Chapter 4, and the disparity between the approaches of UNDP globally and UNDP Zimbabwe will be explored. The contextual information presented in this chapter will be essential to understand the analysis that will follow.

Chapter 4: Case Study of UNDP Policy

“Reality is unpredictable, and often messy...what actually happens often falls far outside ‘the scope’ of planning documents.” (Wallace & Porter, 2013, 9)

I. Introduction

While there is often a gap between policy and practice, the language and content of policy still plays a critical role within organizations, framing the organization’s mandate and thus setting the agenda for projects (Cornwall & Brock, 2005). Particularly when it comes to large international organizations that are “opinion leaders” (Wallace & Porter, 2013, 17), such as UNDP, it is critical to understand and assess organizational policy. The purpose of this chapter is to explore a selection of UNDP policies at both the global level and the country level in Zimbabwe, assessing the nature and content of these policies and analyzing how organizational culture and organizational structure may have shaped these policies.

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, I will examine two key documents that shape UNDP’s global approach to gender policy - the 2008-2011 UNDP Strategic Plan and the 2008-2011 UNDP Gender Equality Strategy. Next, I will examine the UNDP Zimbabwe policy document the Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) 2012-2015. The ZUNDAF provides a guideline for high-level UN policy in Zimbabwe and, given the lack of complementary strategic documents focusing on gender equality, it appears that the ZUNDAF encompasses the entirety of the UN’s gender equality strategy for Zimbabwe. Finally, I will assess three more recent documents: the 2014-2017 UNDP Strategic Plan; the 2014-2017 UNDP Gender Equality Strategy⁷, and *Making Joint Gender Programmes Work: a guide for Design, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation*.

Although the 2014-17 UNDP’s Strategic Plan and Gender Equality Strategy are the most recent documents concerning gender equality, it is necessary to focus most of my analysis on

⁷There is no publicly available UNDP Gender Equality Strategy that covers the period between 2012 and 2014. It is assumed that the 2008-2011 Gender Equality Strategy was extended in order to cover this transitional period as a new strategy was developed.

the earlier 2008-2011 documents since the dates of the UNDP global level gender strategy and the ZUNDAF do not correspond. Although the 2008-2011 documents may not reflect the most updated information, examining aligned strategies will help me to piece together a more complete picture of how organizational culture and structure are transmitted throughout the organization, and thus how internal factors have influenced UNDP's approach to women's empowerment and gender equality. However, it is also critical that my analysis of UNDP takes into account the complete picture—which also means examining the more recent UNDP Strategic Plan and Gender Equality Strategy.

II. UNDP Globally

a. UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011

The UNDP's 2008-2011 Strategic Plan, *Accelerating global progress on human development*, was drafted by the Executive Office of UNDP and approved by the Executive Board. The document sets the stage by discussing current global challenges; explores the direction in which UNDP is headed; outlines UNDP coordination strategies and key program areas; and finishes by outlining key operational and management issues such as accountability, finances, and monitoring and evaluation. One of the earlier sections of the Strategic Plan highlights the lessons learned by UNDP over, chief among these a mandate to promote the inclusion of vulnerable populations, promotion of “systematic efforts to mainstream gender equality,” and “achieving better focus and promoting a culture of results management” (UNDP, 2007, 11).

This Plan has a strong emphasis on improving UNDP efficiency in its administration and coordination functions, and emphasizes a vision of the world based on “inclusive and sustainable growth” (UNDP, 2007, 6). A variety of additional plans and strategies, such as the Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011, were formed on the basis of the framework established by the Strategic Plan. This chapter will demonstrate how the content and tone of the Strategic Plan takes on new variations as it is diffused downwards through the

organization to the country-level in Zimbabwe, where certain norms maintain their prominence and others fall by the wayside.

This Plan is founded on the 'human development approach', which, according to UNDP, emphasizes human empowerment, increasing income, access to education and health services, freedom from violence, and environmental security (UNDP, 2007, 6). Overall, the Strategic Plan tends to emphasize approaches that favour economic growth, often equating growth with “progress.” There is frequent discussion of private sector development, the need to support entrepreneurship, access to credit and the importance of marginalized people’s integration into global capitalism (UNDP, 2007). Key goals of UNDP in the 2008-2011 strategic period include: “macroeconomic stability, inclusive growth, good governance, private enterprise, the active political, economic, social participation of all citizens, [and] the promotion of gender equality” (UNDP, 2007, 9).

There are relatively few references to gender throughout the document, although gender is mentioned as a cross-cutting theme and the “promotion of gender equality—including the empowerment of women—is a key dimension of the strategic plan” (UNDP, 2007, 14). Sections detailing HIV/AIDS mainstreaming and environmental mainstreaming both receive more comprehensive analysis and suggestions than the section elaborating on gender mainstreaming. The Plan does not define either gender equality or women’s empowerment, but does refer to an alternate document designed by UNDP leadership, entitled the “Eight Point Agenda for Women’s Empowerment” (UNDP, 2007, 29). This agenda included some valuable points regarding the need for men’s involvement in gender inequality, thereby hinting at the need for transforming gender-based social roles, but this document was not incorporated into the main body of the Strategic Plan. The failure to provide nuanced explanations of gender within the Strategic Plan seems to indicate that gender has not been effectively integrated throughout the document as a unit of analysis. To summarize, the

Strategic Plan appears to take a WID-based approach to gender equality rather than a GAD-based one, it neglected to seriously discuss the need for transformed social roles. There are other problematic gendered elements throughout the Strategic Plan, including a problematic focus on the instrumental value of gender equality and the quantification of gender equality outcomes; in Rao, Stuart, and Kelleher's (1998) terminology, the 'monoculture of instrumentality.'

The organizational culture promoted in this document, as with most other UNDP documentation, emphasizes the importance of teamwork, inter-agency collaboration, coordination, and the power of dialogue. One of the stated aims of the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan is to foster a more "participatory, collegial, and accountable" UN system (UNDP, 2007, 14). This sense of organizational unity and partnership stands in stark contrast to 'heroic' approaches that tend to be more oriented to traditionally masculine styles of working because of their lack of attention to work/family balance (Rao, Stuart & Kelleher, 1999)⁸. There are explicit references to fostering increased gender-balance within staff ranks, but no similar commitment to foster a gender-equitable organizational *culture* (UNDP, 2007). Instead, the focus is on a culture of accountability, although it is unclear what exactly this entails and how accountability for gender-balance will be achieved, since there is no discussion of quotas, preferential hiring, or other mechanisms to promote women's formal employment or leadership. The UNDP Strategic Plan (2007) states that "national ownership constitutes the foundation of [UNDP's] work" (19) and touts its "shift from a supply-driven approach" (21) to one that is focused on responding to national needs.

The references to gender that do exist in the Plan often include explicitly instrumentalist rationale, for example reaffirming UNDP's commitment to "the mainstreaming of gender

⁸Here it is worth clarifying that high-level support for the concept of teamwork does not always reflect the pressures faced by project implementation teams at the country level—hence the need for an analysis of project implementation that is closer to local realities in Chapter 5.

and women's empowerment...as an important means to achieve the MDGs" (UNDP, 2007, 7). The key substantive action recommended in the Plan in order to increase organizational responsiveness to gender inequality is the development of monitoring and evaluation systems that feature quantitative indicators to easily measure the success of gender projects:

Jointly formulated outcomes and indicators measuring results in the focus areas, and including the gender dimension, will permit UNDP...to be more effective in achieving gender results (UNDP, 2007, 20)...

UNDP also references the importance of

"[setting] clear targets and benchmarks while creating enabling incentives and accountability systems throughout [the] organization so as to achieve gender parity and gender sensitivity in the workplace" (UNDP, 2007, 35).

In these examples, gender inequality or women's marginalization are framed as technical problems that have technical solutions (indicators, targets, and incentives) that can be clearly and decisively applied. Attempting to foster an organization-wide sense of accountability for gender results may not damage UNDP's efforts to be more gender-equitable, but Benschop & Verloo (2006) have highlighted that accountability measures are not always effective in contexts where there is no serious organizational effort to challenge gendered social norms. Walker (in Wallace & Porter, 2013) argues that, as the focus on meeting managerial objectives, such as RBM, increases:

it is difficult to ensure that the development of logic models is bottom-up and participatory. Generally the frameworks are filled in by head office staff, who understand the confusing jargon and what the donor wants (68)

Through its focus on measuring progress and accountability for progress along quantitative grounds, the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011 points to an organization with relatively rigid conceptualizations of development outcomes. The Strategic Plan indicates a clear focus on women's economic potential, women's entrepreneurship, and the importance of gender equality for achieving economic growth, indicating that women are thought of as important because of what they can do for others, not for their own sakes (Grosser & van der Gaag, in Wallace and Porter, 2013). Walker (in Wallace & Porter, 2013) highlights that programme

design is increasingly being reduced to a “desk-based process of filling in an application form or results framework, as opposed to a comprehensive and participatory process” (65). In the UNDP Strategic Plan, the ideas of consultation with women do not seem to play an important role. While formal inter-agency collaboration is emphasized, there is little focus on involving women themselves in the development of gender indicators or results and indeed no mention whatsoever of grassroots consultation.

b. UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011

Empowered and Equal is the title of UNDP’s 2008-2011 Gender Equality Strategy, an organizational document which provides excellent insight into the UNDP’s approach to gender equality. The Strategy elaborates on the history of UNDP’s engagement with gender equality and women’s rights and outlines lessons learned before leading into a closer examination of the management of gender equality programs within UNDP and how UNDP addresses gender in each of the key UNDP focus areas: poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention, and environmental sustainability. The remainder of the Strategy addresses the human and financial resources that UNDP intends to apply in order to advance the Gender Equality Strategy. Much of the focus of the Strategy remains on the operational and administrative dimensions of the Gender Equality Strategy of UNDP. The Strategy’s section on lessons learned is largely focused on explaining UNDP’s proposed initiative to develop a stronger institutional structure that is more results-oriented. The key lessons that are derived in UNDP’s (2007) analysis of lessons learned is that “committed leadership, effective oversight, adequate funding and improved capacities” (9) are the most critical elements for achieving gender equality results. Needless to say, these lessons are extremely general in nature and could easily be applied to any organization or case study.

Upon examination of the Strategy, it is immediately evident that the UNDP is a gender-aware organization; it does not take the gender-blind view that women and men are a

“homogenous group of individuals... [representing] a unity of interests” (del Rosario, 1997, 84). In this Strategy, UNDP acknowledges that gender equality is an important objective in and of itself, in addition to recognizing the instrumentalist rationale that gender equality will support the attainment of other MDGs (Meguro et al., 2008, 2). The Strategy’s analysis of gender equality explicitly acknowledges the necessity of examining the power relationships between men and women, as well as the societal norms imposed upon each gender (Meguro et al., 2008, 2). The Gender Equality Strategy, likely due to its more specialized focus and greater attention to the document by subject experts in gender, represents a considerable departure from the UNDP Strategic Plan, which does not reference social norms or consider the need to analyze power relations. The Strategy's vision resonates strongly with GAD:

The vision is of a world in which men and women work together as equal partners to secure better lives for themselves and their families...share equally in the enjoyment of basic capabilities, economic assets, voice, and freedom from fear and violence. They share care of children, the elderly and the sick, the responsibility for paid employment and the joys of leisure (Meguro et al., 2008, 10).

This view presents a challenge to traditional ideas of the sexual division of labour, which, according to Moser (1989), have assigned women exclusively to caregiving and domestic work, and have been left unquestioned in many instrumentalist or WID approaches. The UNDP’s vision of gender equality appears to have been derived from an analysis of the areas in which men assert control over women, as it includes proposals to address long-term concerns such as control of resources, gender-based violence, and gendered labour. This definition also prompts the reader to consider the ways in which the social role of masculinity must be reimagined in order to achieve gender equality; just as women should be able to assume responsibility for paid employment, men must also be enabled to assume responsibility for the traditionally female task of caregiving.

The UNDP’s analysis also touches on the oft-neglected issue of women’s leisure time, addressing the triple-burden of reproductive, productive, and community managing work

that remains unchallenged under WID approaches (Brown, 2008, 61-62). Interestingly, the UNDP Gender Strategy also distances itself from the assumption that equal representation of women will provide a more or less sufficient response to social norms of exclusion. This view is perpetuated not only by the WID approach (Moser, 1989, 1811), but also by the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011, which considers women's participation in marketplaces to be sufficient in order to foster "inclusive" growth, without any corresponding change in the social norms that govern the modern globalized marketplace (UNDP, 2007). However, the 2008-2011 Gender Equality Strategy acknowledges that social norms themselves must change in order to guarantee inclusion (Meguro et al., 2008, 24).

In line with the GAD focus on women-led development (Moser, 1989, 1808), the Strategy (Meguro et al., 2008) also emphasizes the need to support knowledge exchanges (28); change legal mechanisms to ensure that women can access economic resources (29); and tap into the unique knowledge of women in developing countries in order to inform their policies and strategies (31). While there are numerous references throughout the document to the role of the UNDP in promoting women's access to resources, services, etc., there is less discussion on the issue of women's control of resources. Control over resources is referred to only once, in the context of a section on terminology that highlights gendered disparities in access to and control over resources (Meguro et al., 2008, 70). Control is also referred to in an explanation of the term "women's empowerment," where Meguro et al., (2008) explain women's control over their own destinies and lives as a critical component of empowerment (71). This perspective on valuing women's unique knowledge is reminiscent of Kabeer's powerful call to reflect on the "experiences and struggles of poor women of color that allow the most inclusive analysis as well as politics" (2002, 530).

An analysis of the UNDP Gender Strategy, particularly the conceptualization of key terms such as "gender" and "women's empowerment" makes it clear that the intersectional,

localized, and transformational nature of the GAD approach is prioritized (Brown, 2005, 63). Based on this Strategy, it is evident that UNDP understands gender as a social identity influenced by race, class, age, and other variables, and also utilizes an understanding of women's empowerment that prioritizes political concepts such as the transformation of social norms (Meguro et al., 2008, 70-71). Meguro et al., (2008) make it clear that women's empowerment is intertwined with larger social and structural issues, and that full and complete empowerment cannot be attained individually:

The core of empowerment lies in the ability of a woman to control her own destiny. This implies that to be empowered women must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), they must also have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions...And to exercise agency, women must live without the fear of coercion and violence. (71)

This conceptualization of empowerment is closely aligned with the GAD approach, which similarly prioritizes the altering of social norms in order to shape a more inclusive world for women, as opposed to WID approaches that center on changing women's individual behavior. Although the Gender Equality Strategy has been developed in conjunction with the UNDP Strategy Plan 2008-2011, and is intended to be implemented simultaneously, the preceding analysis has outlined serious discrepancies between the two documents in regards to their approaches toward gender equality and women's empowerment. This may be attributable to the fact that the Gender Equality Strategy was developed by a specialist group of consultants with specific expertise in gender issues.

I will also briefly examine the visual representations throughout this Gender Equality Strategy, a form of analysis that is growing in popularity⁹. In a critique of instrumentalist approaches, Wilson (2011) argues that attempts to portray racialized women of the developing world as productive agents of development have instead promoted neo-liberal

⁹There were no pictures or other visuals in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011, leaving me unable to conduct the same analysis on that document.

ideologies that women's participation in exploitative global markets will be beneficial (2011, 328). Wilson outlines how Third World Women are pictured as "hyper-industrious 'entrepreneurs'" (2011, 323), smiling joyously while laboring as if they derive immense pleasure from performing a triple burden of work. For the most part, the use of imagery by UNDP in the Gender Equality Strategy avoids this pitfall, choosing instead to picture women in a matter-of-fact style as they go about the daily business of their various roles as farmers or business owners, mothers, community organizers, and rights-bearing citizens. Women are depicted voting in elections, with their children, working on farms, actively participating in meetings, working in stores, and explaining the benefits of newly installed solar panels (Women's Empowerment Web Page, 2013).

Dogra (2011) also critiques images from development organizations, asserting that Third World women are depicted as pure images of vulnerable motherhood, abandoned by Third World Men (335); the absence of fathers in the imagery employed by development organizations is intended to "signal a family's 'lack or neediness'" (338). In the Strategy (Meguro et al., 2008), three of the seventeen images in the main body of the strategy show men in the role of caregivers, suggesting that UNDP's Gender Strategy takes a positive approach to promoting men's involvement as caregivers.

Both the Gender Strategy and the Strategic Plan share a focus on teamwork, emphasizing the importance of delivering programs as a unified UN Country Team. The two strategic documents also share a focus on increasing the accountability of UNDP. While the Plan focuses on results-based management tools such as results matrices and formulating quantifiable indicators as a way to increase accountability, the Strategy builds on this premise and notes that a shift in organizational culture is also needed in order to increase accountability for gender-based results, acknowledging that there is hidden power within organizations (Meguro, *et al.*, 2008, 37). The options proposed to remedy this power

imbalance include: 1. increasing gender training for staff members at country offices, though the nature of the training or the personnel targeted for training is not outlined; 2. the creation of gender focal points in all offices, though the purpose of these focal points is unclear, given that they are “not necessarily technical experts in gender analysis”¹⁰ (Meguro, *et al.*, 2008, 15); and 3. the use of results-based management tools.

While the initiative taken by the Gender Equality Strategy to explicitly identify and remedy organizational culture is a sign of progress, guidance on *how* to remedy this organizational culture is limited, and much of the responsibility for implementing public education programs seems to be shifted downwards to the Country Team level. While there is discussion of more detailed gender training to be provided to staff at the Bureau for Development Policy, there is no apparent commitment to provide intensive gender training programs at the country level, beyond what is made available through internal web portals. There is also a significant emphasis on leadership as a means to foster gender equality, with Meguro *et al.* (2008) noting that “the organization not only needs to establish a new and stronger institutional structure, but also to demonstrate leadership” (7). The phrasing of a ‘stronger’ organization might suggest that some degree of exclusionary or top-down power might be applied in order to increase gender equality within the organization, although, Benschop & Verloo (2006), among others, have demonstrated that the imposition of exclusionary power alone is not sufficient to create organizational change.

Despite the more progressive approach to gender equality voiced in this Strategy, it also references instrumentalist rationales and outlines plans for programming that are instrumentalist in nature, emphasizing the importance of quantitative metrics rather than

¹⁰Technical expertise in gender equality might be best understood as having a strong understanding of critical issues that are gendered such as workplace discrimination, social norms, sexual harassment, etc.; having strong capacity to execute complex gender analysis and understand gendered discrimination in varied contexts; and being able to design and deliver systems, tools, training materials, and advisory services pertaining to gender (Meguro, *et al.*, 2008, 29).

qualitative assessments. Although transforming gender relations is often alluded to, there is a limited connection between the stated objectives, the specific ways in which these objectives will be achieved, and the means used to assess them. While Meguro *et al* (2008) note that “‘gender equality’ [implies] concern for both men and women, and the relationships between them,” (2), UNDP's means of measuring equality is through a results framework. The detailed Results Framework at the end of the Gender Equality Strategy consists almost exclusively of ‘tick box’ indicators that rely on yes or no answers, such as “Measures are undertaken to develop gender-responsive public investments and budget frameworks” (Meguro *et al.*, 2008, 52). While this indicator is technically qualitative, it does not assess the quality of the measures that are undertaken, and the indicator itself demonstrates considerable scope for error or inaccuracy. Without a clear definition of what constitutes a gender-responsive public investment, the indicator itself is meaningless. The quality of programming itself does not seem to figure heavily in UNDP’s view of successful programs, with “committed leadership, effective oversight, adequate funding and improved capacities” (Meguro *et al.*, 2008, 9) instead being cited as the key determining factors.

The Gender Equality Strategy also proposes more significant changes to organizational structure than the Strategic Plan, highlighting that gender balance in UNDP offices must be achieved and providing statistics to draw attention to the gender imbalance within the organization; at the middle and senior management level, only 34.5% of employees are women (Meguro, *et al.*, 2008, 40). The Gender Equality Strategy makes an explicit commitment to affirmative action in order to reach gender parity, and outlines as well that training programs will be implemented in order to “ensure that all staff has a basic understanding of working in a gender-sensitive manner” (Meguro *et al.*, 2008, 42). Although no clear financial resources are earmarked and no specific quotas for women’s involvement are outlined, there is a section devoted to Learning and Capacity Development which

broadly outlines plans for the development of training materials, specialized training for managers, and leadership training. The intensity of training will be targeted to specific staff roles based on a needs assessment which determines the extent of gender training required; UNDP states that “skills development will be relevant to job descriptions” (Meguro *et al.*, 2008, 42). This seems to indicate that while all staff, men and women, will receive a basic level of gender training, those in operational and administrative functions will receive less training than individuals in programmatic roles. The reliance on job descriptions in order to conduct gender training needs assessment also suggests challenges; in order to truly foster a gender equitable organization culture, all staff should receive advanced training because all positions, including those without obvious relevance, have gendered implications. Further, this strategy does not specify if this training will be conducted at the headquarters level only, or in all Country Offices¹¹, although it is clear that a significant portion of training will be directed at middle and upper management.

In short, while the recommendations of the Gender Equality Strategy go above and beyond the narrow gender focus of the Strategic Plan, displaying a much more nuanced understanding of gender equality and women’s empowerment, there is still considerable ambiguity as to how these changes to organizational culture and organizational structure will be realized, and the current proposals to improve gender programs apply instrumentalist methods. However, the disconnect between the Strategic Plan and the Gender Equality Strategy, both two high-level strategic documents, is concerning. The Strategic Plan, with its broader focus, the strong endorsement and involvement of the UNDP Executive Board, and more directive language, is more likely to make a stronger impression upon Country Offices as a critical document to adhere to in policy and practice. The Gender Equality Strategy,

¹¹Later iterations of UNDP’s gender training program explicitly provides basic level training for all staff, including in Country Offices. This will be discussed in more detail during the review of the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017.

drafted by a specialist group of gender experts, may gain less traction at the country level.

III. UNDP Zimbabwe

a. Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2012-2015

The Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) 2012-2015 represents the efforts of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Zimbabwe to craft a comprehensive country programme that reflects the needs of the national government as well as the UN agencies within the country. The ZUNDAF is divided into seven identified national priority areas relating to good governance, pro-poor growth, food security, environmental management, quality basic social services, access to HIV prevention, and women's empowerment, gender equality and equity. There are a total of eighteen outcomes falling under these seven priority areas, with indicators linked to the MDGs (UNCT, 2012, vii). The ZUNDAF also aims to integrate cross-cutting themes including "human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, capacity development, and results based management" (UNCT, 2012, viii). Even though each UNDP country team is required to develop a national-level gender strategy, according to the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011, there is no publicly available gender strategy developed by UNDP Zimbabwe (Meguro, *et al.*, 2008). The ZUNDAF has an introductory section to present basic information on Zimbabwe, the UN in Zimbabwe, and the process of developing the ZUNDAF. This is followed by an overview of each of the seven national priority areas, an elaboration of the more specific outcomes, and some broad guiding comments on the approach and potential initiatives that could be implemented under this national priority area. In the Annexes of the documents, some financial allocations are detailed for each of the specific outcomes areas. \$20 million dollars are allocated for the implementation of goals related to gender equality and women's empowerment, out of a total ZUNDAF envelope of \$797,142,522 (ZUNDAF, 2012, 40). A further "results matrix" details the specific agencies

that will be involved in implementation and compiles specific, measurable indicators for each of the outcomes under the national development priority areas.

The ZUNDAF was developed during a period of uncertainty in which the Government of National Unity (GNU) was deep in conflict, with tense relations between the MDC and ZANU-PF occasionally driving government to a standstill. Ministers and Deputy Ministers at the same Ministries were from opposing parties as part of the power-sharing agreement, creating deadlock in key areas such as security reform and resulting in widespread confusion and incoherent policy (Sokwanele, 2012). The process of developing a national strategy with the GoZ would have involved engagement with Ministries that were deeply polarized and an Office of the President that rejected many of the objectives of UN's human rights agenda. Given that the ZUNDAF also claims that the UN has the comparative advantage of "normative legitimacy" (UNCT, 2012, 4), it is both overly simplistic and disingenuous to claim that the UN's place at the ZUNDAF negotiating table was completely impartial.

The organizational structure surrounding the formulation of the ZUNDAF is sprawling, complex, and involving extensive inter-agency cooperation. At the forefront are the UNDP and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, the two organizations that typically direct inter-agency initiatives, leaving other, more specialist agencies as sources of issue-based consultation. The report was drafted with the collaboration of ministries of the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ)¹² and the Office of the President, one international non-governmental organization, the International Organization of Migration, and 16 UN agencies¹³ (UNCT, 2012). The process of formulating the ZUNDAF began in February 2010, when the UN

¹²Including the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion and the Ministry of Labour and Social Services.

¹³Collaborating UN agencies include: the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labour Organization, the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, UN AIDS, the UN Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization, the UN Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the UN High Commission for Refugees, the UN Children's Fund, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UN Women, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the Universal Postal Union and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Resident Coordinator's office in Zimbabwe began to train members of Thematic Groups¹⁴ on country programme requirements (UNCT, 2012, v). The draft was completed in 2012. As I have outlined, the deeply polarized nature of the Government of Zimbabwe at this time made it understandable that the process took over 2 years!

While gender equality is described in the introduction of the ZUNDAF as a cross-cutting theme, the discussion of gender equality in the document is extremely limited, as was also the case in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011. The extent of gender mainstreaming seems to consist of references to the importance of collecting and utilizing gender-disaggregated data, the need to understand women's unique situations, and the importance of supporting vulnerable women (UNCT, 2012). The ZUNDAF does not describe or explain the Zimbabwe UNCT's understanding of gender equality or equity, even by referencing definitions of gender equality in other UN strategies or documents. There are no references to social norms or attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality throughout the document (UNCT, 2012). In fact, the sole outcome listed under the national priority area of women's empowerment and gender equality is: "Laws, policies and frameworks established and implemented to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women and girls" (UNCT, 2012, viii). While there is no denying that establishing non-discriminatory laws and policies is a strategic gender need that can have a positive impact on women's lives, this outcome is a disappointingly vague and un-ambitious goal. If women do not receive information and educational support regarding their new rights and how to access those rights, and if government officials, police, social workers, health care workers, and other service delivery professionals do not have sufficient capacity to understand and enforce gender-sensitive

¹⁴Thematic Groups are drawn from multiple UN agencies and are focused around issues. For example, a gender specialist from UN Women might work with gender specialists from the International Labour Organization and the World Food Programme in order to ensure that gender concerns are captured from diverse perspectives.

legislation, formal legal statutes often have a negligible impact on the poorest and most marginalized women at the grassroots (Bhuyan, Jorgensen, & Sharma, 2010, 8).

The references to gender equality in the ZUNDAF center on the need to improve women's participation in political and economic systems, including the need to reduce poverty through providing women with "access to livelihoods and decent employment" (UNCT, 2012, 14). Women's ability to exert agency over their livelihoods and employment is not referenced, giving the impression that income, and not personal choice or freedom, is the key desired outcome of this initiative. In the extremely brief section outlining the national development priority of "Women's Empowerment, Gender Equality, and Equity," women's participation in political and decision-making positions is referenced three times, while the social norms that prevent women from leaving the domestic sphere to participate in the public sphere are not referenced. In other sections of the ZUNDAF, women's triple-burden of labour is referred to in passing, but there is no appeal made to the shifting of gender roles in order to alleviate this burden.

Women's empowerment has been indicated as one of the key goals of the ZUNDAF, but the emphasis of the document is on women's formal participation in political and economic structures, as opposed to a GAD-based understanding of empowerment that challenges unequal power relations. It seems clear from an analysis of ZUNDAF that the instrumentalist approach to empowerment and equality is favored, and that there is a clear discrepancy between the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy and the ZUNDAF. There is a more evident connection between the ZUNDAF and the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011, which also fails to acknowledge the importance of gendered social norms and tends to emphasize instrumentalist approaches to equality and empowerment.

Replicating the pattern seen in most UNDP plans, strategies, and policies, the language of team building is used throughout the document. Particularly given that the ZUNDAF is a

document developed to reflect the joint agenda of all in-country UN agencies and the national government, the language of ownership, partnership, and cooperation is at the forefront (UNCT, 2012). Interestingly, the ZUNDAF takes care to make a note of the UN's "neutral and impartial role across the humanitarian and development spheres" (UNCT, 2012, 4). According to Rao, Stuart and Kellher's (1999) conceptualization of hidden power, UNCT's claim to be impartial dismisses the complex power relations within the UN, the conflicted relationship between developing countries and the UN, which is often seen as Western-dominated, and the divisiveness of the Zimbabwean political context.

The ZUNDAF Results Matrix is reflective of instrumentalist logic, providing indicators, baselines, and targets for each outcome, using almost exclusively quantitative indicators in order to measure progress on the seven key outcomes outlined in the ZUNDAF. In terms of measuring women's empowerment and gender equality, there are 3 quantitative indicators listed: the ratification and domestication of a 9 international legal frameworks; the proportion of the national budget allocated to the Ministry of Gender; and the number of women in decision-making positions in Parliament, Ministries, Local Government and Public Service (56). There is only one qualitative indicator; the revision of the National Gender Policy (UNCT, 2012, 56). Although this indicator is technically a qualitative one, it is a 'tick box' yes or no indicator rather than a detailed qualitative indicator that evaluates the quality and content of the revisions of the Gender Policy.

One of the most illuminating pieces of information to be gleaned from the ZUNDAF is the rationale behind the incomplete and disappointing gender agenda for the 2012-2015 period. The analysis at the beginning of the ZUNDAF lists six key impediments to gender equality in the Zimbabwean context: "limited coordination of the national gender management system, inadequate implementation of the national gender policy, partial domestication of international and regional instruments, low participation of women in

politics and decision making positions in all spheres of development, limited access to and ownership of productive resources, and increases in gender-based violence” (UNCT, 2012, 35). Years of research from feminist scholars has shown that the implementation of formal legislation and policy measure, while essential, are not sufficient to create sustainable, lasting change and improvements to gender inequality that is rooted in social norms (Chant & Sweetman, 2012). The only gender-related output listed in the ZUNDAF tackles legislation, but fails to substantially address other key problems highlighted such as low participation of women in politics, women’s lack of access to resources, and violence.

The emphasis of the previous ZUNDAF 2008-2011 was on “creating an enabling policy environment for gender equality and building an institutional home for gender issues” (UNCT, 2012, 36); while broad, this seems to suggest a much more comprehensive focus with the potential to tackle more deeply ingrained social norms of gender-related discrimination. The notion of creating an “enabling environment” suggests that government officials, legislators, civil society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders will cooperate in an effort to encourage and promote gender equality-focused policy; this could include lobbying specific lawmakers to implement key reforms, or broader initiatives to alter social norms, making community members more open to gender equality legislation. The selection of a legislative focus was attributed in the ZUNDAF to the need to maximize the comparative advantage of the UN Country Team in Zimbabwe and their skills in “capacity development of key governance institutions in policy and legislative formulation and implementation processes.” (UNCT, 2012, 35) The centering of national-level priorities on the capacities of the United Nations is worrying indeed. Not only does this signify a lack of consultation of women at the grassroots level, but it points toward a dangerous form of donor-driven development condemned by Walker (in Wallace & Porter, 2013). The ZUNDAF is a far cry away from the transformative focus on women’s empowerment that

was highlighted and prioritized at the level of UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy.

IV. A Note on Recent UNDP Strategies

a. UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017

In this section, I will briefly turn my attention to several recent UNDP strategies, including the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan and the 2014-2017 Gender Equality Strategy, as well as a guide to Joint Gender Programmes produced in 2013. Although these documents currently form the backbone of UNDP's strategic direction, I chose to focus my analysis on the examination of earlier strategic documents since the timelines for the UNDP Strategic Plan and the Gender Equality Strategy did not align with the ZUNDAF. Nevertheless, it remains important to provide an up-to-date picture of the current state of UNDP head quarter's strategic direction, in order that this research can remain relevant for a longer period of time and that it can more effectively and accurately guide further directions for research. For these reasons I will provide an overview of some of the key distinctions between the 2008-2011 strategies and the 2014-2017 strategies.

Changing with the World is the title of UNDP's 2008-2011 Strategic Plan, reflecting the intention of the organization to develop and strengthen its comparative advantage in a more competitive global context for international aid (UNDP, 2014a, 3). Where the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan discusses a "human development approach," the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan discusses a sustainable human development (SHD) approach, which focuses on "the process of enlarging people's choice by expanding their capabilities and opportunities in ways that are sustainable from the economic, social and environmental standpoints" (UNDP, 2014a, 4). This approach, while it hints at a GAD perspective that encourages a holistic approach to gender equality, does not seem significantly different from the human development approach expressed in the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan. Indeed, Rist (2007), known for his outspoken critique of buzzwords, would likely dismiss the SHD agenda out of hand for its lack of

substantive improvement on previous approaches.

There are a number of similarities between the 2008 and the 2014 Strategic Plan, including references to the collective, global UNDP team and a sense of unity instilled through repeated use of the word “we” and the focus on the Delivering as One modality, which emphasizes improved coordination within UN Country Teams (UNDP, 2014a, 8). There is a shared focus on improving organizational efficiency, although the 2014 Strategic Plan is more vocal and assertive about the need for streamlining and efficiency. The need for UNDP to move to a knowledge-based organization, in which the comparative advantage rests in its technical knowledge, is strongly voiced (UNDP, 2014a, 20). Regional collaboration, exchanges between regional staff, and the principle of inclusion are some of the prominent features of the Strategic Plan (UNDP, 2014a).

In comparison to the earlier Strategic Plan, the 2014-2017 Plan is rarely instrumentalist when it comes to rationalizing the need for gender equality; and although, it acknowledges that the SHD agenda will not be achieved without women’s ability to “contribute on an equal basis with men,” there is not a strong emphasis on increasing women’s productivity, unlike in the earlier Plan (UNDP, 2014a, 17). However, the organizational processes to achieve gender equality outlined by the Plan are instrumentalist, focusing on quantitative outcomes and measurable results and neglecting to account for the social dimensions of inequality.

The need to streamline and cut back are first and foremost in the current Plan, with a “leaner and more efficient” UNDP at its heart (UNDP, 2014a, 61). Some of the key reforms proposed by the Plan center around the development of more effective administration and include: organization-wide investment in the expansion of RBM practices; reduction in the duration of the project management cycle; and “rigorously defined, sex-disaggregated and

measurable results frameworks drawing on a standardized bank of SMART¹⁵ indicators” (UNDP, 2014a, 53). Quality of programming takes a backseat to administrative measures, given that the key to higher quality programmes is seen as “better project planning, design, monitoring and evaluation, underpinned by strong RBM” (UNDP, 2014a, 52). Effective implementation of programs seem to be, in UNDP’s reasoning, *the* key to achieving development goals, with the strategy stating: “eradication of extreme poverty... will require an institution that meets benchmarks for organizational effectiveness” (UNDP, 2014a, 11). Furthermore, it is worth considering if the programs being implemented under these effective, results-focused systems are truly *impactful* in terms of creating sustained change. Wallace and Porter (2013) suggest that many of the quantifiable indicators used by development agencies and donors to assess the effectiveness of implementation are superficial, ‘tick-box’ indicators.

The 2014-2017 Strategic Plan represents a shift to a more GAD-based approach to empowerment and gender equality, but also increases the focus on instrumentalist ways of doing, which can be seen in the persistent promotion of RBM, and the frequent references to efficiency. Gender equality goals that cannot be measured—including improvements in women’s self-actualization, changes in social norms, and increased social capital amongst communities of women—will receive fewer donor funds and attentions, falling by the wayside in favour of more visible, tangible, and measureable improvements in women’s life conditions. Improvements in tangible Practical Gender Needs are certainly warranted, but the analysis of the GAD approach has demonstrated that it is insufficient to truly address the depth and breadth of gender inequality.

¹⁵The acronym SMART refers to indicators that are “Specific, **M**easureable, Available/Achievable in a cost effective way, **R**elevant for the Programme, and available in a **T**imely manner” (EENRD, 2012). This guidance on how to design results indicators for projects is widely applied in international development, and is aligned with RBM styles.

b. *UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017*

The most recent iteration of the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy, *The Future We Want: Rights and Empowerment*, begins by stating “first and foremost, gender equality is a matter of human rights. It is also a driver of development progress” (UNDP, 2014b, 2). The introduction sets the tone aptly; this strategy contains many statements of support for the transformation of gender roles and the SGNs of women, but these notes are frequently juxtaposed with reminders of women’s instrumental value to the attainment of development goals. UNDP Administrator Helen Clarke makes an appeal for the reduction of structural barriers to women’s rights on the basis that these barriers “[prevent] many women from living the *productive*, fulfilling lives they deserve” [emphasis mine] (UNDP, 2014b, 2). Other areas in the document frame the achievement of women’s SGNs as a convenient pathway to economic development, extolling the virtues of equality because “women and girls can become catalytic agents of change and equal partners with men in the quest to promote growth that is inclusive” (UNDP, 2014b, 9). The political and relational nature of women’s empowerment is noted in multiple locations throughout the strategy, appealing to the need for men’s and boy’s involvement and the importance of structural barriers being reduced and eliminated (UNDP, 2014b). The understanding of empowerment signified in the Strategy is also significant:

Women’s empowerment has five components: women’s sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally. (27)

This understanding of empowerment closely parallels that of GAD, and it is clear that the relational and transformational nature of the GAD approach is understood (Brown, 2005, 63). The 2014-2017 Gender Equality Strategy also makes it clear that UNDP understands gender as a social identity influenced by race, class, age, and other variables. This approach

to women's empowerment and gender equality does not deviate substantially from the vision expressed in the 2008-2011 Gender Equality Strategy, and holistic and transformative conceptualizations of women's empowerment and gender equality are consistent present across the range of 2014-2017 strategies.

As in the Strategic Plan, the Gender Equality Strategy uses the language of team-building and cooperation. The power of dialogue is also promoted; the theme of women's participation in politics and civil society is more clearly visible than in the global Strategic Plan, particularly in the numerous references to building and supporting women's networks (UNDP, 2014b). The 2014 Gender Equality Strategy also features a return to issues of hidden power, as UNDP cites one of their comparative advantages as UNDP's "recognition as being neutral and able to act as a facilitator to broker dialogue among diverse actors" (UNDP, 2014b, 5). While UNDP's ability to connect and collaborate with multiple organizations is significant, it is interesting that "neutrality" is noted as a key advantage of UNDP's operations. This declarative statement is jarring in the context of a Gender Equality Strategy that explicitly aims to recognize and actively challenge deeply embedded societal norms. While UNDP may well be thought of as neutral by those within the organization, this claim is perceived as "tenuous" by many others due to the history of UNDP as an organization grounded in the Western World (Miller & Razavi, 1995, 25)¹⁶. Mannell (2012) highlights that many countries in the developing world have rejected the vision of gender mainstreaming promulgated by organizations like UNDP not only because of local cultural norms, but also because of the failure of gender mainstreaming to acknowledge and address local histories and tensions surrounding race and class.

It is also interesting to note that, while the 2008-2011 documentation makes reference to

¹⁶This was particularly evident in my own experiences in Zimbabwe. Despite the highly polarized and volatile political environment in which UNDP was operating, strategic organizational planning continued to rely on the idea that UNDP was perceived as a neutral organization. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

UNDP's impartial role, there is a much stronger overall emphasis on neutrality in the 2014-2017 set of strategic documents. The 2014-2017 Gender Equality Strategy makes it clear that gender equality is a worthwhile political goal that is about transforming power relations, and simultaneously attempts to claim UNDP's place as a politically neutral entity. Goetz (in Razavi & Miller, 1997) argues that in times of economic and political crisis, men's economic positions are prioritized, and political parties are willing to broker peace with special interest groups by making concessions on women's issues; Goetz concludes that men are still perceived as the "key constituency" of the state (51). While it is justifiable for UNDP to strive for a careful balance between implementation of gender equality policies and political neutrality, maintaining this balance in an environment where men remain the "key constituency" may well be impossible. This prompts the question: which set of values is more important to UNDP, transformation of gender roles or political neutrality?

Also worth mentioning is the organizational bias toward quantifiable, instrumental management processes. In a section discussing which areas must receive more attention to gender mainstreaming, many technical dimensions are highlighted, such as RBM and accountability frameworks. However, increasing the attention given to the design process of gender mainstreaming programs was not referred to—it seems that quality is of a lower priority than organizational procedure (UNDP, 2014b). Other elements of the Strategy emphasize accountability and the importance of developing measurable indicators to assess gender equality results.

The Gender Equality Strategy also makes a commitment to reforming the organizational structure of UNDP to achieve more gender parity and minimize the gendered division of labour within the organization. Despite UNDP's stated objective of fostering an "inclusive work culture" (UNDP, 2014b, 19), there has not been significant improvement in the gendered division of labour amongst staff since the 2008-2011 Gender Equality Strategy.

Women continue to account for between 35% and 39% of staff at the middle and senior management levels (UNDP, 2014b, 19)¹⁷. Suggestions regarding the development of an inclusive work culture are more specific than in the 2008 Strategy, as a gender training module has been developed and is mandatory for all staff¹⁸, and specific financial allocations are made to gender training programs (UNDP, 2014b). While UNDP has made an effort to improve gender parity, including through fostering an inclusive organizational culture through developing gender training modules, a cursory glance at 2008 and 2014 gender parity statistics suggest that the strategies employed to date have not been effective.

c. Making Joint Gender Programmes Work

The guidance manual *Making Joint Gender Programmes Work: Guide for design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation* was developed in 2013. Although the manual was not available when the ZUNDAF was conceived, there is value in examining it since this document sets the parameters for what UNDP would consider to be the ideal inter-agency collaboration on gender issues. A Joint Gender Programme (JGP) is a formal collaboration between numerous UN agencies and national governments that features a co-designed project, often including civil society actors as well. The Guide provides a number of recommendations on the steps to be taken by the lead implementing agency when implementing a JGP, touching on the areas of project design, relationship management,

¹⁷While the early research of Moss Kanter and Dahlerup is often cited to indicate that 30% representation of women is the critical mass needed to foster substantial organizational change, more recent research by Childs and Krook (2008) suggests that the evidence is in fact more mixed, with some academics even arguing that a small, vocal minority of women has a more significant effect in an organization. Childs and Krook (2008) argue that there are several ambiguities and relevant unexplored possibilities in Kanter and Dahlerup's work, and that typical discussions of critical mass theory frame it "as if [Kanter and Dahlerup] had made only one claim about the impact of rising female representation" (733). Childs and Krook (2008) instead suggest that it is more important to look at "*how* the substantive representation of women occurs" rather than *when* it occurs (734).

¹⁸I myself was required to take this online training module when I began my internship with UNDP in May 2012. Entitled "Gender Journey," it outlined the basics, such as distinguishing sex from gender and how to interact respectfully with colleagues in the workplace. While I appreciated that this course was required, I would raise concerns about the effectiveness of this model due to the low level of effort required for completion. Follow-up courses to increase knowledge of gender issues were available to staff members, but were not mandatory and there was a negligible rate of completion for these courses.

monitoring, and knowledge management.

In line with transformational GAD approaches, the guide acknowledges that achieving gender equality requires change at every level, and that the purpose of joint gender programmes (JGPs) is to “facilitate holistic responses to the complex institutional, social and cultural dynamics perpetuating gender inequality” (Beck, *et al.*, 2013, 1). The Guide adopts a transformational understanding of gender equality and women’s empowerment, stating that neither can happen “unless men’s understanding of gender roles and responsibilities change[s]” (Beck *et al.*, 2013, 26).

As with other UNDP policies, the Guide encourages partnership and promotes an ethos of teamwork. This is particularly clear in the case of JGPs, which are by their very nature a collaborative pursuit which can “create a shared vision and common language about gender equality” (Beck, *et al.*, 2013, 7). The language of inclusiveness is extended outside of the direct UN family towards civil society organizations as well, with the Guide noting that CSOs should be seen as “strategic partners and not only as implementers” (Beck, *et al.*, 2013, 19). However, a closer reading of the guide also implies that this partnership with CSOs—and indeed, even national government counterparts—is predicated on the assumption that agenda-setting power will remain within the UN agency.

The Guide proposes that a “visioning exercise” should be undertaken with partners, particularly senior staff in partner organizations, to determine the project focus; however, this recommendation is quickly followed by the recommendation the UN Country Teams should decide on the direction of the JGP first, and only then can UN agencies “open up the discussion with partners. This way, the UN can display a united front” (Beck, *et al.*, 2013, 16). Effectively, the agenda has been set without consultation from national government partners, CSOs, or women’s groups that may be heavily involved in the implementation of this project. This is confusingly contrasted with the note that “community/CSO

representatives (including men and women) who are opinion leaders *can* be brought to consultations” [emphasis mine] (Beck *et al.*, 2013, 20). Through its focus on internal discussion, consultation with senior staff, and selective consultation with local opinion leaders, the Guide seems to suggest that the beneficiaries of JGPs do not necessarily need to be consulted in order for a project to be effective. Brown (2005) highlights that, while many large organizations purport to be in favour of “bottom-up participatory development,” the urban elite in developing countries are often thought of as the ‘grassroots,’ while the actual project beneficiaries, marginalized women, are left without a voice in project design (78).

Given that the Guide deals with the management of projects, there is a considerable focus on the technical details of project implementation, from the development of Terms of Reference for key staff members to the development of realistic, outputs, outcomes, and indicators. The Guide proposes a less instrumentalist vision of project management than in proposed by the strict adherence to RBM asserted in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. The Guide not only acknowledges the need to apply both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to capture the results that are “easier to measure, such as improvements in women’s mortality rates...[as well as] those that are more difficult, such as women’s empowerment” (Beck, *et al.*, 2013, 25), but also plainly recognizes the difficulty of “measuring change as a result of gender-related policy level interventions” (Beck, *et al.*, 2013, 22).

Given this deviation from the emphasis on instrumentalist approaches seen thus far, it is worth noting that the *Making Joint Gender Programmes Work* guide was developed on the initiative of the Gender Team housed in the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy, a specialist team of technical experts dedicated to gender equality. The Guide was developed based on requests from UN Country Teams and Gender Theme Groups who required more support (MDG Achievement Fund, n.d.), and the development of this document was conducted by external consultants in cooperation with the Gender Team. This perhaps

suggests that the Gender Team within the Bureau for Policy Development represents a distinct sub-culture from the rest of UNDP. Given UNDP's decentralized structure, the Guide will provide a convenient set of reference materials for Country Offices in the implementation of JGPs, but there will be no direct accountability for the suggestions and guidance laid out by the Bureau for Policy Development. In short, the implementation of the Guide, which had a limited release through internal web platforms on the UN WOMEN and UNDP websites, is not likely to be taken up at a significant level by Country Offices due to the decentralized nature of the UNDP.

V. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to outline and analyze some of the key documents that have shaped UNDP's approach to gender equality and women's empowerment in recent years. In my assessment, the strategic documentation from the 2008-2011 period paints a picture of an organizational structure that sees gender equality and women's empowerment as an 'add on,' not as a crucial development goal. While many of the key concepts and organizational priorities of the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan are reflected in the 2012 ZUNDAF, particularly the emphasis on productivity, economic growth, and accountability for results, the transformative approach to gender equality and women's empowerment developed in the Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011 are not reflected in the ZUNDAF. There are many possible explanations for the failure of progressive approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment to translate to the country level, including lack of national capacity, and failure at the global level to communicate policy. Some of these dimensions will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. However, it is interesting to note that results-based management norms have successfully been transferred from the headquarters level to the country level, with similar instrumentalist rationales, results indicators, and emphasis on technical management processes appearing in both the 2008 Strategic Plan, the 2008 Gender

Equality Strategy, and the 2012 ZUNDAF. Many results indicators in the ZUNDAF reflect the same phrasing as those in the 2008 Gender Equality Strategy, making it evident that there is not a complete breakdown in policy transfer between the global level and the country level, but rather a selective breakdown.

The examination of the recent global level strategic documents also prompts several interesting observations. The 2014-2017 Strategic Plan and 2014-2017 Gender Equality Strategy promote a vision of gender equality and women's empowerment that is more internally consistent and adheres more closely to GAD approaches, but there is also a more pronounced focus on results-based management and instrumentalist processes in both documents than has been seen in the earlier versions. The only document that deviates from this emphasis on RBM, noting that the exclusive use of quantitative indicators is not sufficient to measure gender equality, is *Making Joint Gender Programmes Work*, a document developed by an independent technical team without authoritative influence from the Executive Board.

I would suggest that the decentralized structure of UNDP is an important determining factor of the organizational approach to gender equality and women's empowerment. Due to the decentralized structure of UNDP, authority for project implementation lies almost exclusively within the country-level office, and the national strategic planning process is conducted with an eye to national priorities and values rather than the core organizational values that are developed within the Bureau for Policy Development at the upper-level. As a result, the dissemination of abstract cultural norms within the organization, such as a holistic approach to women's empowerment, is considerably more challenging than the dissemination of tangible norms. While changes to organizational structure, such as results frameworks and RBM checklists, can be tangibly monitored, the consistency of approaches to gender equality cannot be, and there is more room for gendered organizational bias to

intervene and further disrupt UNDP's global level policy agenda.

The next chapter will scrutinize the Market Fairs Project, which was conducted by UNDP Zimbabwe in 2012, in an effort to assess what UNDP's approach to gender equality and women's empowerment looks like at the practical level of project implementation.

Chapter 5: Case Study of UNDP Zimbabwe Project

“Every step taken, from senior management to field level, is supposed to be guided by and filtered through prescriptive systems, frameworks and procedures... This approach presents a tough, confident face to the world, very sure of its ground and language, confident in its objective ‘grounding’ and tough in holding people to the rules and procedures. It is an approach that seems certain of itself and is looking for certainty in its work.” (Harding, in Wallace & Porter, 2013, 131)

I. Introduction

An examination of the internal factors that influence UNDP’s approach to women’s empowerment and gender equality would be incomplete without careful consideration of how women’s empowerment projects are implemented at the local level. As a case study, I have chosen the Market Fair Project (MFP), which was implemented by a coalition of local and international organizations based in Zimbabwe from 2011 to 2012. UNDP was one of the two donors to this initiative, and played a critical role in its implementation as a member of the Market Fair Steering Committee. In this chapter, I will examine several primary documents in order to present a picture of the implementation process, including: a Concept Note, which outlines the key strategic priorities of the Market Fair; an annual workplan which includes indicators and targets related to the Market Fair; and publicity materials used to advertise the Market Fair, including a pitch to corporate sponsors, a video, and a UNDP weblog on the Fairs. I will be utilizing a variety of methods in order to conduct this analysis, namely content analysis, discourse analysis, and participant observation that is based on my time as an intern working with UNDP Zimbabwe to support the implementation of the Market Fairs Project.

I will begin this chapter by providing an introduction to the practical details of the Market Fair. I will also sketch a picture of the situation of women entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe, furnishing more detail as to the specific economic situation of the target beneficiaries of the MFP. Following this, I will analyze publicity materials developed in service of the MFP, attempting to answer the question of how UNDP portrays its position of

women's empowerment and gender equality. Lastly, I will discuss the complexities of decision-making throughout the MFP and assess how internal factors have influenced the UNDP's decisions and organizational approach to the MFP.

II. Key Facts

The goal of the Market Fair is to: “create a sustainable and locally led market fair that will empower women and youth through facilitating their market access and strengthening their capacity to develop and add value to their products” (Concept Note, 2011). The activities undertaken by the MFP in order to achieve this goal include: providing business skills training to participants; the Fairs, which bring together a variety of exhibitors approximately every three months in key cities across Zimbabwe; marketing the Fairs; organizing logistics for the Fairs; and seeking corporate sponsors. The Market Fair Project began on the initiative of UNDP in November 2011, with the two participating UN agencies—UNDP and UN WOMEN—scheduled to withdraw financial and operational support to the MFP in December 2012 with the expectation that local organizations would ensure the sustainability of the program (Concept Note, 2011). A total of six market fairs took place in cities across Zimbabwe between 2011 and 2012: three in Harare, two in Bulawayo, and one in Mutare. I was closely involved with the organization of two Fairs in Harare and played a minimal role in the organization of a Fair in Bulawayo, and thus will primarily be discussing my experiences regarding the organization of Fairs in Harare.

The Market Fair Steering Committee (MFSC) was established in order to provide strategic direction to the implementation of the Market Fair Project, and met on a regular basis in order to discuss relevant issues and coordinate logistics. The composition of the MFSC changed over the course of 2012, expanding in order to include a wider variety of organizations. The core members of the MFSC include: Kunzwana Women's Association, a grassroots women's organization; Empretec Zimbabwe, an organization promoting

entrepreneurship; the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and the Ministry of Women's Affairs of the Government of Zimbabwe; the International Rescue Committee; the Adventist Development and Relief Agency International, a humanitarian organization; the International Organization for Migration; ZUBO Trust, a local non-profit focusing on women's empowerment; and the Zvishavane Water Project, a local non-profit primarily concerned with agricultural projects (Zimbabwe Market Fair, 2012). The Zimbabwe Applied Art in Craft Association, Women's University of Africa, and the organization Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe also participated in later incarnations of the MFSC (Zimbabwe Market Fair, 2012). UNDP and UN WOMEN were key members of the MFSC and provided all of the funding necessary for implementation of the MFP.

Approximately 130-150 participants were selected from across the country to attend each Fair. Women and youth were the primary participant in the program, and this target demographic was sought out on the basis of their previous involvement with the organizations represented on the MFSC. In the case of Fairs based in Harare, Kunzwana Women's Association and Empretec Zimbabwe were the primary organizations through which women and youth became involved, and many participants attended more than one Fair. Since participants were recruited from throughout the country, individuals without the capital to pay for their transportation to the Fair were provided with no-interest loans which they had to repay after the Fair. The Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises provided training on business skills such as marketing, product promotion, pricing, costing, book-keeping, and customer service to all Fair participants. The anticipated benefits to exhibitors at the Fair include access to business skills training, income generated through sales, and the potential to expand their businesses and generate future revenue through contacts made at the fairs (Concept Note, 2011).

III. Women Entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe

While Chapter 3 has already sketched a broad outline of the key issues at play in Zimbabwe's political and economic landscape, this section will present a more detailed picture of the challenges experienced by the target demographic of the MFP; women entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe. Kapungu (2008) notes that women's groups linked to missionary societies were the first to promote capacity development initiatives for women, although these activities focused on household management and encouraged all women to become "a virtuous wife, selfless mother, and a tidy, industrious housekeeper" (70). Economic necessity required that women undertake activities to supplement family-incomes, however, resulting skills training initiatives focused on production of handicrafts (Kapungu, 2008).

However, handicrafts were not necessarily the primary source of income for Zimbabwean women. Traditionally, Zimbabwean women in rural areas have also cultivated land to earn an income, working independently or assisting their husbands in the field; up to 66% of the population of Zimbabwe is self-employed in the agricultural sector (UNDP Zimbabwe MDGR, 2012, 20). Even women in urban areas rely on informal cultivation as a survival strategy in challenging economic circumstances (Hovorka, 2006). Yet, it was only in 2008 that the Ministry of Agriculture was persuaded by women's groups to allow women to own land in partnership with their husbands and to automatically accord wives first consideration in inheritance (Kapungu, 2008, 74). These unequal laws not only demonstrate that Zimbabwean women have been historically disadvantaged in the economic sphere, but also that men have been historically *advantaged*. Until very recently, Zimbabwean men were accorded unquestioned control of land, materials, and resources, while women's access to these resources was dependent on male permission. Even after the advent of more equitable legislation, it is likely that many men continue to see unquestioned control of economic

assets as their right. It is important to remember that men as a social class often have a vested interest in maintaining gender inequality that benefits them (Clever, 2002).

There is very little opportunity for formal employment in Zimbabwe, and an extremely limited domestic market for entrepreneurial activities that produce luxury goods such as handicrafts. The UNDP Zimbabwe MDG Report (2012) reported that “three out of every four employed persons in Zimbabwe are in vulnerable employment,” which is defined as having an income that is too low to generate savings (20). While the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe has reported that unemployment is at 10.7%, Moyo (2014) points to data from the United Nations World Food Programme that puts unemployment in the formal sector at 60%. Many employment figures in Zimbabwe can be misleading, given that some estimates include informal self-employment, while others do not. Richardson, Howarth and Finnegan (2004)’s research shows that female entrepreneurs across Africa are most commonly associated with “informal and part-time operations¹⁹. This is where the owner is not a “real’ entrepreneur but ‘pushed into’ business as a ‘no choice’ option for escaping from poverty” (16). Despite the survivalist nature of women’s entrepreneurial activities, female entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe are gaining increasing attention, with the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises allocating 30% of loan funds to women in 2008 (Kapungu, 2008, 74).

Women seeking to start their own businesses and generate income still face significant barriers, however. For one, the income generated by handicrafts is often extremely limited. In Hovorka’s (2006) field work in the Mbare District, a high-density suburb south of Harare, a local woman made an income of a mere Z\$200 per month through the sale of handicrafts²⁰.

¹⁹In Zimbabwe, these informal businesses typically constituted small roadside stands selling clothes, produce, candies, snacks, and handicrafts.

²⁰At the time of writing in 2006, Hovorka states that this was worth approximately €0.03. Hovorka (2006) notes that this income was sufficient to pay the rental of a single-room apartment for one month. She does not mention how much time and energy was expended on the manufacture and sale of handicrafts.

Limited domestic savings and limited tourism²¹ means that sellers of luxury goods often struggle to find a market for their wares. Some of the obstacles highlighted by African female entrepreneurs as key impediments to success including: balancing income-generating work with family obligations, low self-confidence, lack of physical mobility as a result of cultural norms, societal expectations of women, and lack of education (Richardson, Howarth & Finnegan, 2004). It is clear that although female entrepreneurs may struggle due to their personal educational limitations, the broader economic, social, and cultural context of Zimbabwe also constitute powerful influences that prevent female entrepreneurs from establishing formal businesses and generating income.

IV. The Market Fair Project

a. UNDP Zimbabwe's Approach to Empowerment and Gender Equality

The language of publicity materials used to promote the MFP in Zimbabwe can provide a strong indication as to how UNDP Zimbabwe at the ground level perceives and understands women's empowerment and gender equality. Publicity materials used to advertise the MFP include presentations to potential sponsors, videos, blog posts, and posters, and these materials have all been produced, approved, and in some cases paid for by UNDP Zimbabwe. Throughout the Concept Note, which is the core strategic document of the MFP, there is a distinct focus on the role of the individual and on improving women's productivity and profitability. Social norms that assign women to the domestic sphere and label certain trades—typically the most profitable ones—as “masculine” have effectively restricted women from entering into many trades such as construction or auto repair (Richardson, Howarth and Finnegan, 2004, 67). Yet, UNDP Zimbabwe's Concept Note criticizes women for their failure to single-handedly break with social norms and enter into more productive

²¹Zimbabwe has a population roughly seven times the size of Botswana, yet Botswana had 1.5 million visitors in 2004 (Millington, *et al.*, 2007), while Zimbabwe's estimated 1.8 million visitors in the same year (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2011). This is an indication of the limited capacity of the tourism sector.

and profitable trades, stating: “[women-led enterprises] tend to mainly concentrate on less productive, less profitable livelihoods activities” (Concept Note, 2011, 1). This framing disregards the numerous institutional constraints on women’s ability to negotiate business into more profitable sectors, and this pattern of individualistic thinking is widely consistent with the ‘efficiency approach’ of the WID school, which argues for women’s inclusion in the public sphere on the basis of their economic contributions (Moser, 1989). This focus on enhancing women’s incomes reflects broader organizational goals, highlighted in UNDP’s Strategic Plan 2008-2011, of fostering women’s inclusion in global markets as the primary means to sustainable development.

The framing of the Concept Note places the burden for improving their economic situation on individual female entrepreneurs as opposed to highlighting the impact of Zimbabwe’s unstable economy on entrepreneurial activities. The Concept Note (2011) states that “[female entrepreneurs’] market access remains limited largely due to a lack of capacity to coordinate and to promote their products (1). Grosser and van der Gaag (in Wallace & Porter, 2013), among numerous other feminist scholars, argue that improvements in individual capacity are not enough to alter larger structural conditions, pointing out that “even the most educated and skilled woman in New York or Sydney may find it hard to change her family and her community, let alone the world” (78).

While the Concept Note (2011) acknowledges the influence of larger social structures in the sense that it encourages women to become more connected to markets, there is little indication as to how the disadvantaged female entrepreneurs targeted by the MFP can foster these connections. Developing business skills is clearly an important component of reaching broader markets, but the MFP neglects other structural issues affecting women’s ability to participate. While it is certainly not the case that all projects should be expected to address all structural and individual barriers, the project is framed as a comprehensive solution to the

problem of women's low-incomes in Zimbabwe, an approach which is disingenuous.

Harding (in Wallace & Porter, 2012) cites Schon in his discussion of problem-solving, making the case that this narrow, technical approach is neither appropriate nor effective:

The problems of real world practice do not present themselves to practitioners as well formed structures. Indeed they tend not to present themselves as problems at all but as messy, indeterminate situations. (132)

By failing to acknowledge the complexity of the economic situation of female entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe, the Concept Note (2011) presents a conflicted picture of what 'empowerment' looks like, stating: "through prioritizing market access for women and youth, business growth and personal empowerment will be supported" (2). Empowerment is seen as the direct result of enabling women to access markets. However, UNDP also argues that women are not participating in markets "due to a lack of skills," and must therefore develop their capacity as a prerequisite to participation in markets (Concept Note, 2011, 1). How can 'dis-empowered' women with low capacity participate constructively in the markets that will, apparently, lead to their empowerment? The MFP wants women to develop their skills in order to become equal to men, as opposed to reforming the broader social and economic forces that have created a gender imbalance. This is broadly indicative of a WID approach, while a GAD approach advocates for a more holistic understanding of empowerment that values women's ability to exert influence on institutional structures (Kabeer, 1994; Batliwala, 2007). A GAD approach to the MFP might help to develop women's professional skills, but simultaneously support and encourage women to work together in order to advocate for policy reforms that benefit female entrepreneurs, such as an easing of restrictions on the areas in which informal traders can operate.

The MFSC presentation to attract corporate sponsors, which took place at a private event with select local and international businesses in Harare, bears a close resemblance in language and logic to instrumentalist and WID-based approaches to women's empowerment

and gender equality. Once more, the discussion is centred on the individual experiences of women (MFSC, 2012). Women and youth are described as having limited access to markets as a direct result of their own lack of capacity; the failure of the Government of Zimbabwe to provide basic services or the lack of social and cultural support for female entrepreneurs are not subjects for discussion. The presentation delivered on behalf of the MFSC states that: “our passion is to build these women and youth and do away with the dependency culture” (MFSC, 2012). It is clear that development and empowerment is something that is *done to* women and youth by a wiser and more capable organization—the MFSC. In the context of an appeal for financial support from corporate sponsors, this message is targeted to demonstrate the value-added and abilities of the MFSC.

Other notable elements of this pitch to corporate sponsors include several references to women being brought together in ‘learning platforms.’ While Brown (2006) emphasizes that interventions with an instrumentalist focus may not have intentions to transform social norms and bring about larger structural change, women’s credit groups, entrepreneurial groups, and other income generating ventures can still foster transformation if women have the opportunity to connect and collaborate. Women involved in the MFP may indeed have completed their exhibiting and sales work at the Fair and gone on to enact change in their home communities; however, these outcomes were not intended effects of the project, nor was women’s personal development and self-confidence viewed as an outcome worth being tracked by the monitoring and evaluation metrics of the MFP.

Weblogs and videos produced to advertise the MFP also indicate the tendency of UNDP Zimbabwe to prioritize and value instrumentalist conceptualizations of women’s empowerment. The weblog begins by highlighting the intention of the fair “to empower Zimbabwean women and youth” (UNDP, Women’s Economic Empowerment, 2012); again, empowerment is framed as something enacted upon women. However, the weblog

differentiates itself from other documents because it references the broader economic context in which the MFP takes place. The blog post cites the severe effect of Zimbabwe's economic collapse on women and youth, noting that this as an important reason why initiatives such as the MFP should be promoted (UNDP, Women's Economic Empowerment, 2012).

Lastly, a short video commissioned and approved by the MFSC in order to promote the MFP continues the trend of instrumentalist framing, once more placing the onus for women's limited market access on women's own deficiencies (Mutare Market Fair 2012). However, the video also makes note of the extensive work that women do to support their families and communities through their small, informal businesses (Mutare Market Fair 2012). In this video, women have been applauded for their key roles in supporting their families, but also reminded of their own failings to generate sufficient income. These contrasting messages are reminiscent of the 'efficiency school' of WID, which advocates for increased inclusion of women in the public (particularly economic) sphere on the basis of their self-sacrificing natures and tendency to re-invest in their families and communities (Mutare Market Fair 2012).

UNDP Zimbabwe's instrumentalist approach to project implementation is closely aligned with UNDP policy at the global level, as in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011, but fails to integrate the in-depth technical knowledge on women's empowerment and gender equality displayed in the Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011. UNDP's broader organizational focus on economic progress, showcased in the Strategic Plan 2008-2011, has translated into a focus on income-generation at the local level. The MFP has a strong economic focus, heavy usage of instrumentalist rationales, and a close connection to WID theories. The MFP is reflective of country-level policies, as both fail to demonstrate nuanced gender analysis. Beyond recognizing that women are disadvantaged, the MFP does very little to address women's position within society; for all practical purposes, there would be very few changes

to the structure of the initiative should male entrepreneurs become the new focus of the MFP.

b. Decision-Making

In this section, I will explore the day-to-day process of administering the MFP and address how internal factors have influenced UNDP's approach to the implementation of women's empowerment and gender equality programs. The MFP is a minor component part of the "Support to Peace Building and Increased Access to Sustainable Livelihoods in Zimbabwe" (SPBSL) Programme (ONHRI, 2012). This larger, multi-million dollar initiative, developed by UNDP in partnership with the Office of the President and Cabinet through the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), targets two national development priorities as listed in the ZUNDAF (2012): "good governance for sustainable development"; and "pro-poor sustainable growth and economic development" (vii). The Market Fair Project has been categorized under Outcome 2.2 of the ZUNDAF (2012), "Increased Access to Sustainable Livelihoods and Decent Work Opportunities, Especially for Youths and Women" (14).

It is immediately clear that the Market Fairs Project will be primarily driven by practical gender needs—such as access to services, access to food, and access to shelter—over strategic gender needs, which focus on women's ability to control resources, influence decisions, and actively participate in policies and plans that affect them (Moser, 1989). Providing women with access to sustainable livelihoods may indeed change their material circumstances, but it is clear that the core emphasis of the SPBSL Programme is not on transforming gender relations. This is largely due to the top-down nature of decision-making for program allocations at the UNCT level in Zimbabwe. In this case, the budget was agreed upon through discussion between UNDP, the Office of the President and Cabinet, and the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI, 2012). The Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender, and Community Development is not listed as the responsible

party to any of the workplan components, even those directly involving women (ONHRI, 2012). Although it appears that women were explicitly targeted as the beneficiaries of the program, there seems to have been little attention paid to the ways in which women's overall social position may be impacted by the project.

Within the Annual Workplan of the SPBSL Programme, the indicator which is used to assess the success of the MFP is as follows: "number of women and youth trained in business management and number of youth and women engaged in viable micro-enterprises 12 months after the programme commencement" (ONHRI, 2012, 4). There were no targets outlined for the number of women to be trained or the number of businesses established for the MFP (ONHRI, 2012). The trend towards quantification of results has been noted on numerous occasions throughout this research, and the value of such quantitative metrics comes under scrutiny once again in the case of the MFP. The metrics used to assess the success of the MFP in the Annual Workplan do not take into account important factors such as the quality of business management training provided to women and youth, or how the viability of businesses will be measured. In Vadeera's (in Wallace & Porter, 2013) words, this intervention neglects to account for the "depth of change" (152), which determines sustainability and impact.

Vadeera (in Wallace & Porter, 2013) takes issue with the typically low budget allocations associated with women's skills training programs, noting that "cost per beneficiary²²" has become one of the key methods by which the value of projects is determined. "Scale and numbers' [are thought of] as the only real way of bringing social change" (Vadeera, in Wallace & Porter, 2013, 153). \$220 per person is often considered to be the maximum expected amount for women's livelihood training programs in India, Vadeera (2013) notes,

²²Cost per beneficiary is calculated by dividing the total financial inputs in a program by the total number of people served during the same time period. The resulting number is often used to compare non-profit organizations and assess efficiency and value for money (Chao, 2013).

although she indicates the flaws in this reasoning:

Who decided, how, and why that only 10,000 INR (\$220) was the cost of empowering a resource-poor woman to change her life circumstances for the better...? ...While low costs are generally good practice to avoid wastage of resources, when low cost becomes a defining principle only in provisions for the poor in the society there seems something almost unethical about it. (148-149)

The total annual budget allocated by UNDP for the MFP is USD \$10,000, and UN WOMEN contributed a comparable annual amount (ONHRI, 2012, 5). With an estimated 2012 budget of \$20,000 and approximately 300 women and youth served²³ throughout the MFP over the course of 2012, the project has an estimated average cost of \$66 per person.

The extremely low cost per beneficiary of the MFP indicates an important fact about the project; namely, the Market Fair Project was intended to be a low-cost project with simple, straightforward results and little attention to sustainability. The MFP was a low priority in the larger scheme of the SPBSL Programme, which had an annual budget of \$2.79 million in 2012 (ONHRI, 2012). The focus on number of women trained as opposed to quality of training or sustainability of training indicates that quantity of results, rather than sustainable results, were the order of the day. Furthermore, the failure of UNDP to establish concrete objectives for number of women trained and number of businesses established seems to indicate that they were, in effect, willing to ‘take what they could get’.

I will argue that the short-term, instrumentalist focus of UNDP Zimbabwe in regards to the MFP was the result of two key internal pressures: need for results, and the need to minimize the risk of reputational damage to the organization. Due to the results-based annual workplan framework established through the SPBSL Programme (at the urging of the ZUNDAF and global-level Strategic Plan), there is little incentive for UNDP Zimbabwe to seek more meaningful and sustainable change, since those results are not captured and taken

²³Although approximately 130-150 women and youth attended each Market Fair, this calculation is based on an average of 50 *new* participants attending each of the four Fairs throughout 2012.

into account in the reporting process. With success of programs measured solely by numbers of women attending training, there is little need for sustainability to form a part of the project design from the perspective of a program administrator concerned about their employer's perception of their performance.

The neglect of sustainability is reflected in the absence of consultations with intended beneficiaries and lack of attention to training materials and training quality in the Concept Note. While it is explained that “existing training materials will be developed and adapted in conjunction with the Committee” (Concept Note, 2011, 4), the MFSC did not assist in the development of training materials. The Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises developed these materials without consultation from partners, and then utilized these tools to deliver training sessions for female entrepreneurs in Harare. Representatives from Kunzwana’s Women’s Association attended the training sessions in Harare, which may have provided some *ad hoc* opportunities to contextualize and adapt training materials to the needs of rural women trainees. The subject matter to be covered in training sessions, including “marketing and product/business promotion, pricing, costing, how to effectively run a business, market access” (Concept Note, 2011, 3) is vague and not comprehensive. Women who were attending the Fair for a second time did not receive progressive training. Vadeera (in Wallace & Porter, 2013) notes that truly transformative training initiatives are deeply involved processes that require women to learn things that “start bringing a visible change in their personality and behaviour. All this requires tough negotiation at family level and a lot of counselling support for the women and often for their families” (152). The MFP certainly did not provide this level of consultation and involvement with beneficiaries.

Risk management is another critical internal dimension that contributed to UNDP’s approach to the MFP. In Zimbabwe’s fractured political context, UNDP was rapidly expending public goodwill on a variety of higher priority initiatives, including funding the

Human Rights Commission, support of the Universal Periodic Review process which catalogued political and human rights violations by the Zimbabwean state (Resident Coordinator, 2012), and funding to COPAC, the committee dedicated to developing a new constitution in advance of the next Presidential election (ZUNDAF, 2011). Negative press regarding UNDP was at a high point in 2012 due to its support of COPAC, and UNDP Zimbabwe often found itself in a precarious position in public opinion. A state-run newspaper, *The Herald*, declared that the constitution-making process was being corrupted by the MDC-T which was “surreptitiously [smuggling] its toxic content through foreign intercessors like the UNDP” (Moyo, 2012). Further articles declared that the funding of the constitution-making process by UNDP was contributing to the “[decimation of] the foundation of the Zimbabwean State” (*Herald Editorial Staff*, 2012). The negative press was not solely confined to state-run news sources; an independent station disliked by the Government, SW Radio Africa, failed to present a balanced picture of events, giving credence to allegations that UNDP Zimbabwe had paid the then-Deputy Minister for Justice to write favourable articles about UNDP’s support of COPAC (Karimakwenda, 2012).

In this situation, a focus on less controversial initiatives could certainly benefit UNDP Zimbabwe, promoting a positive public image and easing its relationship with government. With its messaging focused on the individual lack of capacity as opposed to critiquing broader structural issues, the MFP did not attract negative attention. Indeed, the MFP served as a counterbalance to UNDP critiques of the Zimbabwean government by proudly emphasizing the talent of Zimbabweans and the beauty of Zimbabwean products. The Market Fair Project received wide-spread positive coverage in a variety of prominent local news sources, including Bulawayo 24 News, Kubatana News, allAfrica.com, the Zimbabwean Financial Gazette, *The Chronicle Newspaper*, and the state-run *The Herald* newspaper. Posters for the Market Fair showcased the tagline “initiative, innovation,

access,” (Zimbabwe Market Fair, 2012) above a photo of a woman proudly displaying her “high-quality, locally made Zimbabwean products” (Zimbabwe Market Fair).



Figure 1: Advertisement for the Zimbabwe Market Fair 2012

Zimbabwean patriotism. UNDP Zimbabwe’s priorities of economic growth, gender equality, and employment creation are all addressed by activities promoting women’s business skills, making the Market Fair Project a 'low-hanging fruit'.

In order to implement the Market Fair Project, a coalition of organizations from a wide variety of sectors, including government line ministries and grassroots women’s organizations gathered together to form the MFSC. However, several organizations played a more prominent role in the Committee than others. In the case of fairs that took place in Harare, Kunzwana Women’s Association and Empretec, both based in Harare, played critical roles. When fairs took place in Bulawayo, ZUBO Trust and Zvishavane Water Project played more prominent roles. Despite the intention expressed in the Concept Note for the MFP to be locally owned, UNDP Zimbabwe played the key leadership roles in the MFSC.

In short, UNDP’s approach to the MFP can perhaps best be captured by stating that they wanted an ‘easy win.’ This initiative is framed as a simple, comprehensive solution to a clear technical problem. Few can dispute the benefits of improving women’s skills, and the materials used to advertise the Market Fair make a strong emotional appeal to

Both Kunzwana and Empretec were relied on heavily by UNDP and UN WOMEN to utilize their local networks to implement the MFP. Established by a Zimbabwean woman in 1995, Kunzwana Women's Association is a growing membership-based organization, currently operating in four provinces across the country (Kunzwana, 2014). The primary mandate of Kunzwana is to support rural women to develop business skills; however, the organization also works to advocate for women's health facilities and home-based care, as well as to disseminate accessible information on personal health, civic education, and other critical issues. Empretec Zimbabwe is run and operated by Zimbabweans, and was formed in 1997 as part of a project operated by the UN Council of Trade and Development (Empretec, 2011). Empretec is run by a board of advisors from the Zimbabwean private sector and has provided training in businesses skills to over 15,000 entrepreneurs since its inception (Empretec, 2011). Empretec does not have a specific mandate to improve gender equity.

The Concept Note (2011) states that “the committee will be chaired by UNDP and UN WOMEN in 2012,” (3); yet, the structure of the decision-making process tended in practice to be more egalitarian. In order to organize the Fairs in Harare, meetings took place alternately at the offices of UNDP, Kunzwana Women's Association, and Empretec Zimbabwe, and meetings were alternately chaired by the representatives of each of these organizations. In my experience, meeting agendas were proposed by the representative that was hosting the meeting, although modifications to the agenda could be proposed by all involved parties. Members of the three most involved groups (Kunzwana Women's Association, Empretec, and UNDP) participated equally at meetings, although smaller organizations that played a more *ad hoc* role in the organization of Market Fairs were not always in attendance.

There were three categories of activities involved in the Market Fair Project: advertising and sponsorships; selection and training of participants, and logistics (transportation to and

from event, coordinating booth set-up, etc.). Approximately half of project resources were allocated to advertising, while training of participants and resources consumed the other half of the project budget. Responsibility for these areas was primarily handled by Kunzwana Women's Association and Empretec Zimbabwe, while the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises delivered business skills training. Responsibility for advertising, marketing and sponsorship activities was assumed by UNDP, while UN WOMEN played a largely *ad hoc*, advisory role throughout the entire process. While true that some of these priorities could be handled at relatively low costs, there seemed to be a common assumption that local organizations were capable of executing tasks on a shoestring budget and that local organizations would be able to rely on informal networks in order to complete their responsibilities. This impression was conveyed principally through language used by UNDP staff members in internal meetings and discussions; on more than one occasion, it was suggested that local organizations "shouldn't need" additional funds to complete activities, or that representatives of local organizations were exaggerated the difficulty or complexity of certain tasks.

Sustained and relatively open dialogue was a critical feature throughout the management of the MFP. Rao, Stuart, and Kelleher (1998)'s notion of *power of dialogue* was reflected throughout the MFP, since the primary organizations—Kunzwana, Empretec, and UNDP Zimbabwe—were given equal chances to set meeting agendas and steer the conversation. Organizations representing grassroots interests, such as Kunzwana Women's Association or the Zimbabwean Applied Arts in Crafts Association, were given an equal place at the table and had the space to articulate a vision of locally-grounded gender equality. However, UNDP Zimbabwe's position as a donor to the project accorded a certain degree of positional power to UNDP, despite the attempts of the MFP to shift responsibility to local organizations in order to ensure sustainability.

Other critical project components, including monitoring and evaluation, were also handled primarily by UNDP Zimbabwe. The Concept Note (2011) provided some indication as to the monitoring and evaluation framework of the MFP, which was structured to include: “pre- and post-training assessment, record of sales and follow-up orders, impact of the fair on business development and a database ...maintained for exhibitors and products” (3). These monitoring and evaluation goals appear to be relatively well-balanced between qualitative and quantitative methods of evaluation; however, this is one case in which the reality of project implementation did not align with previously established project frameworks. A database which monitored each participant over the course of their engagement with the MFP was never established, nor were indicators to provide a more subjective assessment of women’s experiences developed and administered, for example a qualitative indicator of the areas in which women felt their lives had been improved by the project.

While the monitoring of post-training improvements was a valuable opportunity for acquiring knowledge on the experiences of participants, in practice participants were simply asked to respond “yes/no” to the question of whether or not their knowledge had improved as a result of the training. The core dimensions used by the MFSC to evaluate success of the Fair was were the number of participants, the attendance at the Fair, and the earnings of each of the participants over the course of the Fair. Furthermore, the results of these monitoring and evaluation exercises were not disseminated widely or to any of the MFP beneficiaries. With UNDP and UN WOMEN officials as the only organizations monitoring results, it is worth considering if there is any accountability to female beneficiaries and, if not, how the MFP can expect to promote gender equality (Tiessen, 2007, 25). This low-cost, low-effort approach to monitoring and evaluation makes it clear that there is, overall, a lack of attention to the depth of change created by the MFP.

The principal internal factors that contributed to the dearth of comprehensive monitoring included lack of funding earmarked for this purpose and a sense of organizational inertia in the aftermath of the Fair. Without any money earmarked for monitoring and evaluation, the surveys intended to assess participant satisfaction and learning were designed and administered by low-level UNDP staff. Staff, who were not trained at conducting interviews circulated amongst the booths of participants during the Fair in order to informally discuss and respond to the survey questions. While this method of assessment, which places UNDP staff in casual conversations with groups of participants, may have benefits including diminishing the sense of power differentials between UNDP staff and MFP participants (Hinson Shope, 2006), the data gathered was generic and lacked depth. Participants were asked to respond to fairly basic questions that were easy to measure and to record quickly²⁴. Use of English as a method of assessment of participants who speak English as a second language not only signifies UNDP's power and authority over the participants (Hinson Shope, 2006), but also resulted in reduced complexity and detail of information. Harding (in Wallace & Porter, 2013) observes that modern bureaucratic organizations have an extremely low tolerance for complexity in their procedures, and “work paths into the future are pre-set into frameworks and plans, tagged with objectives, indicators, and performance targets” (131). The straightforward monitoring and evaluation exercise that had been designed as a streamlined and casual process to be completed with minimal effort failed to give a complete picture of what it means to female entrepreneurs to be economically empowered or to be connected to markets.

V. Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I analyzed key documents and drew on my own professional experience to arrive at several conclusions related to the instrumentalist character of UNDP

²⁴Including: “How much money did you make at the Fair?” and “What would you change about the Fair for next time?”

Zimbabwe's project implementation and the internal factors that have influenced UNDP's perspective on women's empowerment and gender equality.

First, it is evident that there is a close relationship between UNDP Zimbabwe's implementation practices and the country-level and global-level policies that guide UNDP's strategic direction. In publicity materials used to advertise the Market Fair, as well as throughout the process of project implementation, the framing of the MFP is strongly instrumentalist in nature and draws on the gender analysis of the WID approach. In the documents related to the MFP, there are no references to reforming institutional structures in order to address women's structural disadvantages as entrepreneurs, and the framing of the MFP consistently puts the onus on women to improve their business skills, gain market access, and thus increase their productivity and profitability. While some UNDP policies—notably the Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011—reflect a more holistic and transformative vision of gender equality and women's empowerment, country-level policy documents and program approaches have not integrated this specialist knowledge.

Second, the patterns of decision-making displayed throughout the course of the MFP reveal the strongly gendered nature of the broader organizational relationship between UNDP Zimbabwe and local organizations. While the local organizations forming part of the MFSC, notably the member-based Kunzwana Women's Association, are small, grassroots, and largely devoid of results-based management systems, UNDP is a highly regulated bureaucratic organization with clear, formal procedures in place that prioritize results-based management and quantitative monitoring and evaluation. While local organizations were placed in the position of implementing organizations throughout the MFP, UNDP took on a role as a strategic decision maker and representative of the public face of the organization. Fletcher (2001) argues that relational knowledge is typically coded as feminine, while Alvesson and Due Billing (2009) highlight that in the context of organizations “some ideals

and values could be seen as expressing male dominance...Ideals such as profit and maximum growth, aggressive competition, the tendency to make quantitative ideals (money) the ultimate measure of success, could be related to masculine conceptions and a male rationality” (8). Thus, gendered organizations theory can provide some insight as to why the technical knowledge and systems of UNDP were prioritized above the indigenous knowledge of local, member-driven organizations such as Kunzwana Women’s Association.

Third, I argue that the core internal factors that influenced UNDP Zimbabwe’s adoption of an instrumentalist approach to the Market Fairs Project were an organizational imperative to deliver quantitative results, and a strong corporate focus on risk management. The results-focused culture of UNDP minimizes the need to take on broader priorities that address underlying structural issues, instead creating a focus on results that can be clearly justified and enumerated. UNDP’s organizational culture values neutrality and objective, technical knowledge—an approach that was called into question in the polarized political context of Zimbabwe. The implementation of an ‘easy win’ project such as the Market Fair Project can be seen as an attempt to mitigate the reputational risks that are inherent in undertaking a transformational project focused upon women’s empowerment and gender equality.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The aim of this research has been to assess what attitudes towards women's empowerment and gender equality are prevalent in UNDP and to understand how these attitudes are perpetuated. In turn, these findings may provide insight as to how UNDP can be engaged on issues of gender inequality and how its practices and policies can be reformed in order to benefit the women and men affected by UNDP's development initiatives.

Before summarizing the analysis of this research, I will provide a brief picture of how this work fits into a larger body of knowledge that has been aggregated on gender and organizations. My pre-existing views on the subject were challenged during the experience of writing this thesis—while most literature is highly critical of the ability of organizations to integrate gender into their analysis, I was pleasantly surprised to find that many UNDP policies, namely the Gender Equality Strategies of 2008 and 2014, were receptive to the idea of transforming social norms. However, the translation of these policies norms into practice tended to be weak, a tendency which tended to confirm my pre-existing expectations.

This research was limited by a number of factors; first and foremost, it does not provide a comprehensive picture of all the issues that inform UNDP's decision to adopt an instrumentalist approach to women's empowerment and gender equality. This research has intentionally limited its scope to the internal factors that may have affected UNDP's approach, disregarding larger-scale trends such as the limited financial resources available to donors since the 2008 financial crisis, which Chant and Sweetman (2012) suggest may have influenced donor approaches to gender. My research has also been limited in certain ways by my choice of methodology—while my combined approach of content analysis and participant observation has enabled me to provide some insight on the internal workings of UNDP, as a young intern in a position of relatively low authority, I was not privy to high-level conversations and discussions which could have further uncovered the internal

workings of the organization's approach to gender equality and women's empowerment. DeWalt and DeWalt (2012) note that a large part of participant observation consists of 'thinking and re-thinking,' attempting to piece together a series of subjective and often hidden observations about tacit cultural norms or phenomenon. Obeyesekere (1990) provides a further reminder that, as a Western participant-researcher, I was certainly not immune to cultural bias in the presentation and analysis of my results.

Despite these limitations, my research makes a timely contribution to a critical discussion. With results-based management, value for money, and other highly technical and managerial approaches to development beginning to dominate, the tension between grassroots, power-based organizing work and large-scale international non-governmental organizations seems to be greater than ever. Wallace and Porter (2013) outline the intensification of this debate in recent years and Mosedale (2014) highlights that, even though there is extensive literature on how we can understand empowerment, "many projects and programmes that espouse the empowerment of women show little if any evidence of attempts even to define what this means in their own context, let alone to assess whether and to what extent they have succeeded" (2). There is still significant work to be done in terms of analyzing how power operates in specific organizations in order to understand "development interventions' contributions to women's empowerment" (Mosedale, 2014, 2). My research will, I hope, be a significant contribution to understanding this phenomenon in the case of UNDP Zimbabwe.

After setting the stage for the key problems addressed by this research in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 explored the theoretical approach that grounded this study; namely, gendered organizations theory and the GAD approach. The subsequent chapter presented a more comprehensive picture of the history and development of UNDP and the economic and political context of Zimbabwe. Chapter 4 examined UNDP policy at the global and country

level, while Chapter 5 analyzed the implementation of a project. Both of these analysis chapters examined approaches to women's empowerment and gender equality, structural and cultural factors affecting these approaches, and the contradictions and tensions within UNDP. In this final chapter, I will summarize the core findings from my analysis.

I. Addressing Key Questions

a. How does UNDP understand women's empowerment and gender equality?

As the exploration of theoretical literature in Chapter 2 outlined, approaches to gender analysis can be broadly divided into the Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) approaches; with the caveat that there is considerable nuance and variation in understandings of women's empowerment and gender equality from different authors, organisations and in diverse local contexts.

WID-based understandings of gender equality often neglect the social and cultural dimension of women's oppression, emphasizing instead that women's individual circumstances and material deprivations are the source of their unequal social positions (Kabeer, 1994). As a result of this analysis, WID approaches assume that the acquisition of education or entrepreneurial skills will lead to women's empowerment (Chant & Sweetman, 2012). The GAD approach argues that gender inequality is the result not only of material circumstances and gender gaps in capacity and education, but also due to social, cultural, and institutional norms that restrict women's choices (Batliwala, 2007). As a result, GAD scholars have persuasively argued that women's empowerment consists not only of equipping women with skills, but also in fostering social norms that enable women to make choices without constraints and participate fully in the public sphere (Ackerly, 1997). The WID approach has been labelled as 'instrumentalist' by many feminist scholars because it justifies women's inclusion on the basis that equality and women's empowerment will lead to economic growth. Instrumentalist approaches to empowerment and gender equality are often associated with language, processes, and systems that reduce development outcomes to

linear models, quantifiable results, and matrices and charts (Wallace & Porter, 2013).

Wallace and Porter (2013) argue that understanding development “as linear, logical, and controlled, following theories of change based on a cause-and-effect model” (4) denies the complex reality of interlocking social, cultural, political, and economic factors.

Analysis of UNDP policy and the implementation of local projects has shown that overall, UNDP’s approach to women’s empowerment and gender equality is consistent with the WID framework. UNDP has adopted instrumentalist approaches to women’s empowerment and gender equality at the headquarters, country, and project level, but there is some variation in policy throughout the organization. The UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011, which is the guiding policy on which all other organization initiatives are based, is heavily reliant on instrumentalist language and logic. The Plan mandates that results-based management systems are implemented throughout the organization in order to promote efficiency of projects. The Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011, which provides a blueprint for understanding gender analysis throughout UNDP, has a more progressive approach to gender that emphasizes the relevance of social and cultural norms, but this Strategy was developed by a specialized group within the Bureau for Development Policy, composed of technical experts on gender. However, the Gender Equality Strategy also promoted instrumentalist processes such as results-based management.

At the country level, it was evident that the Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2012-2015 also adopted instrumentalist frameworks. The ZUNDAF was largely gender-blind to begin with, and neglected to address the role of social norms in perpetuating gender inequality. This document aligned with WID approaches and utilized the instrumentalist language and logic of the Strategic Plan. At the local level during the implementation of the Market Fairs Project, UNDP worked closely with grassroots organizations but nonetheless employed language that rationalized women’s empowerment

on the basis of economic growth and applied results-based management processes. Overall, UNDP's approach to women's empowerment and gender equality was indicative of instrumentalist language, processes, and systems.

b. Is UNDP policy consistent at every level within the organization? Is UNDP practice consistent with policy?

As outlined in the previous section, policy and practice is not uniform at every level of UNDP. While the Strategic Plan, the ZUNDAF, and local level approaches to implementation remain more or less consistent in their instrumentalist language and logic, the Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011 takes a GAD-based approach to analyzing gender equality. Alvesson and Due Billing (2009) highlight that organizations are typically fragmented into “a mosaic of various, sometimes overlapping, some distinctive subcultures and macro-cultures” (118). It is certainly worth interrogating how differences in organizational culture have contributed to this disparity in approaches.

In Chapter 3, I discussed UNDP's attempt at a transition to a more decentralized structure; however, I also outlined how the UNDP Executive Board remains a strong agenda-setting body within the organization, playing a critical role in the drafting and endorsement of the Strategic Plan that serves as a blueprint for country offices. The only documentation that supports a highly progressive, GAD-based vision of gender equality—the Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011 and the *Making Joint Gender Programmes Work* manual—was developed by specialist technical groups. Other important factors that may prevent country and local level adoption of more progressive approaches to gender equality include lack of local capacity; it is worth noting that in 2013 at UNDP Zimbabwe, there was only one full-time staff member and one consultant who were experts in gender (About UNDP in Zimbabwe, 2013) in an office that had over \$153 million worth of projects per year (Funding and Deliver, 2013).

It is also critical to note that there was more success in translating norms of results-

based management from the headquarters level to the local level. Many of the results monitoring frameworks and indicators presented in detail in the ZUNDAF were derived from the Gender Equality Strategy. While organizational norms and practices related to gender analysis that were developed by the Bureau of Development Policy have not successfully been translated downstream, results-based management norms appeared to have been successfully transferred; there is a selective breakdown of policy transfer rather than a complete breakdown.

c. Is UNDP's approach to gender equality and women's empowerment effective?

The question of whether or not instrumentalism is an “effective” approach is an interesting one, and rests in no small part on the reader’s understanding of effectiveness. A non-contextual definition of effectiveness reads: “successful in producing a desired or intended result” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014). By this measure, instrumentalist projects can indeed be effective, given their ‘results-based’ nature. However, I argue that in the context of UNDP’s organizational mandate to promote *sustainable development*, the notion that instrumentalist interventions can be effective is misguided.

RBM has become increasingly prominent in development agencies because it is thought to increase accountability and efficiency by designing projects wherein each action has an expected and logical outcome (UNDG, n.d.). Harding (in Wallace & Porter, 2013) and Dobra (2011) both question the basic premise of this approach, arguing both that it is too rigid to be effective, and that it disregards the messy reality of life. Research conducted by Benschop and Verloo (2006) has also highlighted that the effectiveness of RBM’s accountability measures are contingent on a workplace environment that is already conducive to gender equality. While UNDP has decided that ‘effectiveness’ is a key criterion to eradicating poverty and accomplishing other organizational goals (UNDP, 2014a, 11), it is worth considering if the instrumentalist programs that are being ‘effectively implemented’ are truly

generating *sustainable* impact.

The case study of the Market Fair Project demonstrated that, while business skills training may have resulted in improvements to female entrepreneurs' material circumstances, broader economic and cultural factors have far-reaching impacts on women's ability to achieve long-term success as entrepreneurs. It is debatable if a marginal improvement in the income generating capability of several hundred women lives up to UNDP's promises of 'sustainable development.' The effectiveness and sustainability of the MFP is further called into question by the failure of RBM monitoring and evaluation frameworks to compile a long-term picture of its impact on women. Despite UNDP's stated goal of achieving *sustainable development*, instrumentalist approaches persistently demonstrate a focus on short-term initiatives, disregarding long-term cultural and social impact. I argue that instrumentalist interventions are not effective in achieving UNDP Zimbabwe's organizational objective of sustainable development.

d. In what ways does UNDP have a gendered organizational culture and organizational structure?

Many organizations, particularly those in the field of development and social justice, have made significant strides in re-assessing their organizational priorities, but the gendered nature of organizations remains a key concern; Acker (1990) argues that all organizations are fundamentally gendered because they have been constructed around the idea of a male-bodied worker. Throughout this research UNDP has been scrutinized on the basis of gendered organizations theory, assessing dimensions such as individualism, application of power, valuing of instrumentalism, and formal structure.

The most clearly gendered aspect of UNDP's organizational culture is the persistent and problematic focus on the instrumental value of gender equality and the application of instrumentalist processes; in Rao, Stuart, and Kelleher's (1998) terminology, this is referred to as the 'monoculture of instrumentality.' There are also clear structural issues of unequal

gender balance within the organization, with women representing only 34.5% of management staff throughout the organization (Meguro, *et al.*, 2008, 40). Gender expertise also appears to have been ‘ghettoized’ within the organization, with progressive policies such as the Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011 failing to gain traction and recognition at the country level.

Country level policies and local implementation of projects also showcase a certain degree of gender-blindness, as they fail to recognize and address structural issues that affect women. In the case of the MFP, gendered organizational culture is reflected in the tendency to prioritize the strategic input, decision-making, and organizational values of UNDP over the local organizations that were part of the Market Fair Steering Committee. Alvesson and Due Billing (2009) and Fletcher (2001) outline how technical, instrumentalist organizations are coded as masculine in nature and thus favoured over ‘feminine’ organizations that value relational knowledge.

IV. How do internal factors influence UNDP’s approach to women’s empowerment and gender equality?

In my assessment, there are three core internal pressures that have guided and shaped UNDP’s instrumentalist approach to women’s empowerment and gender equality, with varying degrees of influence at each level of the organization. First, it is clear that there is considerable pressure at the headquarters level to apply results-based management principles in order to achieve efficiency and value for money. RBM principles have gained popularity in response to increasing pressure for transparent financial management in a restrictive economic context and due to the increasing involvement of private sector actors in development (Arutyunova & Clark, 2013). Harding also suggests that RBM has caught on because it resonates with the very purpose of development initiatives, which is to “aspire to *control* the external world” (in Wallace & Porter, 2013, 131). To neatly order complex problems into simple, linear chains of actions and results, as with *RBM*, is easier to

understand and therefore easier to transfer throughout an organization. Holistic, localized and contextual approaches to project management cannot be taught in an organization-wide, one-size-fits-all webinar, while the procedure for correctly filling out an RBM framework can be. In fact, a 2003 UNDP report on GM entitled *Transforming the Mainstream* highlighted that the inherently political process of gender transformation has prompted the organization to focus on “more visible, less provocative activities like policies, guideline and data sets, rather than on more difficult, less visible processes to transform organizational culture and practice, as well as individual attitudes and behaviours” (Zaoude *et al.*, 2003, 9). Despite this blatant acknowledgement that UNDP is sidestepping a critical element of gender equality, Parpart (2013) argues the solutions proposed are “more of the same: more resources, stronger institutions, more accountability and greater commitment” (382). All worthwhile goals, yet falling short of the necessity to engage with gender equality and social roles on a political and personal level. While progressive gender analysis struggles to be transmitted downstream in UNDP due to its complexity, RBM norms that promote an instrumentalist framework through which to view women’s empowerment and gender equality can be easily understood and transferred.

Second, UNDP’s adoption of an instrumentalist approach has been facilitated by the marginalization of expertise on women’s empowerment and gender inequality within the organization. My analysis highlighted a clear gap between the language and logic conveyed in the Strategic Plan 2008-2011, the ZUNDAF 2012-2015, and the Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011, where the latter was intended to serve as a guideline on gender analysis for country offices in their development of policy. With progressive approaches to gender being promoted by technical experts within UNDP but failing to be taken up elsewhere in the organization, it speaks to the *failure to integrate gender expertise within the organization*. The strategies that I highlighted which promoted GAD approaches to gender equality and

women's empowerment were almost exclusively produced by specialist teams within the Bureau for Development Policy, and in some cases it is unclear if these progressive policies and approaches were even disseminated past the headquarters level, as in the case of the *Making Joint Gender Programs Work* guidelines. *Transforming the Mainstream*, a 2003 report that was critical of UNDP's approach to gender mainstreaming, was also drafted by the Gender Programme Team within the Bureau for Development Policy.

Even organizations committed to gender mainstreaming have a history of alienating gender experts; when mainstreamed throughout the organization, gender staff often find themselves over-ridden by other organizational priorities, while specialist advisory staff on gender are ghettoized and "stranded on the peripheries of regular government development budgets" (Goetz, 1997, 7). While UNDP has provided basic gender training to staff and supported gender experts, the disappointing depth and breadth of UNDP's training initiatives (outlined in Chapter 4) have also emphasized that the ghettoization of gender expertise within UNDP is still a concern.

Third, risk management is a pivotal issue for UNDP, particularly UNDP Zimbabwe. UNDP highly values its neutrality, which requires that it is perceived as an equal partner of national governments, even those with low capacity and limited interest in human rights and gender equality. Though UNDP's mandate to promote gender equality may be sincere, in practice the organization is required to tread a fine line between fulfilling its mandate and managing reputational risk, funding, and access to government. A holistic and comprehensive approach to gender equality and women's empowerment demands that people challenge their core values, and that institutions scrutinize and criticize their own biases. Particularly in the divisive political context of Zimbabwe, *instrumental approaches to women's empowerment and gender equality were seen as an uncontroversial quick win* that was sorely needed in order to balance out negative public reactions to other UNDP

policies and initiatives. The broader implication of this analysis is that political neutrality and gender equality are fundamentally incompatible ideas.

To put it plainly, instrumentalism is the basis of UNDP and UNDP Zimbabwe's language and logic because addressing women's empowerment and gender equality is too complex to grapple with for UNDP, which is highly decentralized and bureaucratic organization that operates in a wide variety of highly diverse local contexts. In order to receive funding, achieve buy-in from stakeholders, and, critically, *to maintain its identity as a neutral organization, UNDP cannot seriously engage with a complex and long-term approach to women's empowerment and gender equality.* Fundamentally, UNDP is more interested in self-preservation and sustaining its identity as a neutral organization than enabling a more progressive approach to women's empowerment and gender equality.

The body of literature on gender and organizations is continually expanding, and with this research I hope to make a small contribution to our collective understanding of how gendered norms affect policy and practice within UNDP. Many interesting questions remain, particularly those related to the adoption of instrumentalist approach to women's empowerment and gender equality.

Mayoux (in Razavi & Miller, 1998) argues that local NGOs are placed in a precarious position by the extensive, project-specific reporting demands of donors, who fail to provide oversight of local NGO's overall approach to gender; she argues that this leaves a "black hole" of accountability for gender equality within organizations (191). This argument urges us to assess more closely which organizations are not fully implementing gender equality within their organizations, yet it presents an interesting paradox: how can feminist scholars demand accountability from organizations regarding their integration of gender equality policies, and yet continue to fiercely critique the measurement and quantification of gender equality outcomes? Questions regarding appropriate methods of monitoring and evaluation

challenge organizations to continually seek complexity, as Harding (in Wallace & Porter, 2013) suggests. But it is worth considering if there can ever be a future in which development organizations are willing to put aside immediate concerns of self-preservation in order to seriously and honestly examine their own commitment, or lack thereof, to women's empowerment and gender equality.

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