



U.S. AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

June 10, 1996

ACTION MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR

FROM: C/AID, Kelly Kammerer *KCK*
SUBJECT: Implementation of USAID's Gender Plan of Action

Issue: A decision is needed on actions to implement the Agency's Gender Plan of Action which you announced on March 12, 1996.

Discussion: In announcing the Agency's Gender Plan of Action, you asked me to explore measures and make recommendations to you in the areas of personnel performance and recruitment, training, procurement, and data collection and analysis which would further the institutionalization of gender issues within USAID. Since you announced the Agency's Plan of Action, we have met with relevant bureaus and offices to discuss needed operational changes and review options for your consideration, always mindful of the resource constraints that USAID currently faces. We believe that the following recommended actions reflect an Agency consensus or middle ground, and that they will improve the integration of gender/WID considerations throughout the Agency's programs and have a positive impact on program performance.

PERSONNEL PERFORMANCE AND RECRUITMENT: There is a critical need to improve direct-hire experience and understanding of gender/WID issues. There also is a need to reward those staff who have demonstrated particular initiative in enhancing development results through attention to gender/WID issues. Discussion of options for addressing these needs has centered on creating a new backstop for WID; strengthening accountability for addressing WID concerns in certain staff position descriptions; and enhancing training and technical assistance on gender/WID issues.

Given the severe resource constraints that USAID faces, the reduction in force currently underway, and the recent recommendations of the HR BAA to consolidate rather than expand Agency backstops, we do not believe it is feasible to create a distinct backstop through which to bring gender/WID experience and understanding into the Agency. Instead, greater focus on and integration of gender/WID concerns into mission strategies and achievement of results can be facilitated by revising the

position descriptions of the Program Officer (PO) backstop, the Project Development Officer (PDO) backstop, or the merger of these two backstops to specifically include responsibility for ensuring appropriate attention to gender/WID issues in USAID mission and central programs. Although the position descriptions for these backstops now mention the need to consider gender roles, they fail to hold these officers accountable for doing so.

USAID missions in which Program Officers have embraced their gender/WID responsibilities have achieved a higher degree of effectiveness in integrating gender issues in project design, implementation and evaluation. Such officers should be rewarded professionally for these efforts. We believe that revision of position descriptions for the PO and PDO backstops to incorporate gender/WID responsibilities will have the added effect of encouraging senior managers to incorporate reference to gender/WID in PO and PDO Annual Evaluation Plans. Finally, it will promote collaboration among mission program staff and mission WID advisors.

Recommendation: That the position descriptions for the Program Officer (PO) backstop, the Project Development Officer (PDO) backstop, or the merger of these two backstops, be revised to specifically include responsibility for ensuring appropriate attention to gender/WID issues in USAID mission and central programs.

Approve: _____

Disapprove: _____

Date: 6-11-96

We further recommend that, in future mid-career level recruitment for these backstops, as well as technical backstops, the Agency take into consideration and give appropriate weight to applicants' experience and understanding of gender/WID issues in development. Recruitment materials should be revised to reflect this priority. Given current recruitment levels, the impact of this action will be minimal in the short term. We recommend, however, that this action be taken now to ensure that future recruitment activities and materials reflect the priority that the Agency accords gender/WID experience and understanding. In addition, we recommend that less experienced recruits for the PO, PDO, and appropriate technical backstops be provided with training in the technical and policy issues of gender/WID to ensure that they can address these issues in carrying out the Agency's programs. We believe this requirement will help in gradually mainstreaming USAID attention to gender/WID issues in the long term.

Recommendations: (1) That HR take into consideration and give appropriate weight to a clear specification of experience and understanding of gender/WID issues in development by all applicants in future mid-career level recruitment of the PO, PDO, and appropriate technical backstops, and revise recruitment materials to reflect this priority.

(2) That training for staff recruited into the PO, PDO and technical backstops in the early stages of their careers address the technical and policy issues of gender/WID.

Approve: _____

Disapprove: _____

Date: 6-11-96

In addition to revising position descriptions for the PO and PDO backstops to address gender/WID issues, we also considered recommending changes in the Agency's performance evaluation systems for both FS and GS personnel. This is a highly charged subject and discussions of the topic have focused on Agency core values, "specific skills", required work objectives, consistency and fairness of performance ratings in the two systems, reaction of the unions, etc. In the end, while it has been generally agreed that strong performance incentives are needed if we want to successfully institutionalize attention to gender/WID issues, we concluded that a mandatory requirement that evaluation forms incorporate performance on gender/WID issues is not the most effective mechanism to achieve this result.

We do believe, however, that gender analysis/WID skills should be included in the "specific skills" section of the Annual Evaluation Form (AEF). These skills are assessed in addition to the employee's specific work objectives, and provide raters with an opportunity to highlight employee performance that might not otherwise be acknowledged.

Recommendation: That HR include gender analysis/WID skills among the skills listed in the "specific skills" section of the Annual Evaluation Form.

Approve: _____

Disapprove: _____

Date: 6-11-96

We also believe a reference to the critical need to address gender/WID issues should be incorporated into guidance for raters, the precepts for the Appraisal Committees for both civil service and foreign service personnel, and the precepts for the Selection Boards for foreign service personnel. This will ensure that both supervisors and rated employees are aware that attention to gender/WID issues in USAID programs is Agency policy, and will encourage the review and, as appropriate, revision of the responsibilities of senior managers and strategic objective (SO) team leaders to reflect the need to address gender/WID considerations if warranted.

Recommendation: That HR incorporate appropriate guidance concerning the critical need to address gender issues in development in guidance for raters, the precepts for the Appraisal Committees for both civil service and foreign service personnel, and the precepts for the Selection Boards for foreign service personnel (coordinating with the unions as necessary).

Approve: _____

Disapprove: _____

Date: 6-11-86

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: If appropriate USAID staff are to be held accountable for ensuring attention to gender/WID issues, this action should be supplemented with training and technical assistance to build their gender/WID analysis skills as needed. POs, PDOs, and SO team leaders, among others, may need to enhance their gender/WID skills. Currently, such support can be made available via staff of G/WID, the regional bureaus' gender advisors, and a number of technical support and training contracts focused on gender/WID. This can be augmented through the use of new technologies such as the InterNet to disseminate best practices. There is a real need, however, to better inform mission staff of these support mechanisms and strongly affirm their need to take advantage of them. We propose an AWIDE cable to this effect. In addition, we propose that all appropriate Agency training programs address the issues of gender/WID as critical components of effective development.

Recommendations: (1) That you approve the preparation of an AWIDE cable, strongly reaffirming the Agency's commitment to addressing gender/WID issues and urging appropriate mission staff to take advantage of available training and technical assistance to develop and/or enhance their gender/WID analysis skills.

(2) That M/HR, in collaboration with G/WID and other pertinent technical offices, incorporate training on gender/WID issues into all appropriate Agency training programs.

Approve: _____ 

Disapprove: _____

Date: 6-11-96

PROCUREMENT: Steps need to be taken to ensure that collaborators and contractors also are held accountable for addressing gender/WID issues in carrying out Agency development assistance programs when pertinent. Currently, there is no standard language requiring attention to these issues. Nor are collaborators or contractors regularly asked to provide us with staff knowledgeable and experienced in these matters.

Discussions of this problem, particularly with M/OP, have centered on identifying methods to hold development partners accountable for incorporating gender/WID concerns without unduly burdening them administratively or financially, or violating acquisition regulations. We believe the actions described below will bring substantive results, particularly in an increasingly competitive funding environment. Moreover, building the institutional capacity of our development partners in addressing gender/WID issues may in the long term be the most critical component of the Agency's ability to effectively manage its WID efforts.

With regard to the assistance arena, the Agency has substantial latitude within which to require applicants to address gender/WID issues in their proposals for assistance. We believe that the most effective means to hold our collaborators accountable for incorporating gender/WID concerns is to include a section in the final version of the Agency's competitive assistance guidelines that addresses gender/WID and requires that these issues be addressed and evaluated as a part of both the Request for Applications and the potential recipient's proposal submission.

Recommendation: That M/OP include a requirement in the final version of the competitive assistance guidelines that, as a

2) That language be included in the 200 series of the Automated Directives System specifying that strategic planning and R4 documents should indicate how gender considerations are being addressed, and that relevant language from the Agency's revised policy paper on Women in Development be incorporated throughout the ADS as appropriate.

Approve: 

Disapprove: _____

Date: 6-11-96

Action Memorandum for the Administrator from C/AID, K. Kammerer;
 Subject: Implementation of USAID's Gender Plan of Action

Clearances:

SDAA/G:AVanDusen	cleared	Date	<u>6/6/96</u>
AA/G:SShelton	cleared	Date	<u>6/6/96</u>
AA/LPA:JBuckley	cleared	Date	<u>6/4/96</u>
AA/BHR:MDStafford	cleared	Date	<u>6/5/96</u>
AA/LAC:MSchneider	no comment*	Date	<u>6/6/96</u>
AA/ENI:TDine	cleared	Date	<u>6/7/96</u>
AA/ANE:MCarpenter	cleared	Date	<u>6/7/96</u> * <i>See attached memo</i>
AA/AFR:JHicks	cleared	Date	<u>6/7/96</u>
AA/PPC:CBradford	cleared	Date	<u>6/7/96</u>
AA/M:LByrne	<i>L</i>	Date	<u>6/10/96</u>
ES:AWilliams		Date	_____

*AA/LAC has reviewed the document and prefers not to comment.

mj
 G/WID:MALycette:5/28/96:816-0291:GPA.REV