

**REPORT**

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# **Mapping Exercise on Gender Activities in Ghana**

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**Main Report**

**April 2000**

Advocates for Gender Equity (AGE), Accra

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**Sponsored by DANIDA Health Sector Support Office, Ghana.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The conceptualisation of women's role in development has seen tremendous paradigm shift since its inception at the first UN conference for women in 1975. Promoted mainly by the dismal progress made vis-à-vis considerable effort. The shift has been from WID to GAD, from targeting to mainstreaming, and from emphasis on practical needs to strategic ones which challenge the structural causes of inequality and subordination of women to men.

The status of women role in development in Ghana has followed these global trends closely. In keeping with the WID approach, a national machinery was set up in 1975. Its activities focused mainly on sensitisation, functional literacy, skill development and income generation with appropriate technologies. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have also chartered the same cause for the past two decades. Not suprisingly the results have reflected global trends - that is the continued marginalisation of women in mainstream development and unsustainable gains made in income generation activities and failure to address the root cause of inequalities in the society.

The status of Ghana in its movement towards the GAD approach has not lent its self for easy assessment for three main reasons:- the absence of a national policy framework on gender equity issues, a strong women's movement and a fragmented database on gender activities in the country.

Based on five regions in Ghana - Volta, Greater Accra, Ashanti, Central and Upper East. The gender mapping exercise was conceived with support from the DANIDA health sector programme to create a database on gender and development activities which envisaged among others to:

- Promote effective planning, implementation and monitoring of gender and development activities/trends in the country
- Strengthen networking among individuals/institutions involved in gender activities

## **MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Information generated by the study indicates that there are shifts from WID to GAD in interventions, such shifts are only marginal. Programmes/projects are highly skewed in favour of interventions addressing practical and basic needs of women.

Advocacy and other empowerment programmes that initiate change are very few.

Although governmental agencies, national and international NGOs are prime movers as far as gender and development activities are concerned, most institutions especially government agencies lacked the requisite capacity and were therefore not ready to mainstream gender in a sustainable manner. In a majority of case institutions had no clear vision, commitment of leadership and the necessary resources.

Most institutions targeted were observed to be networking with other local, national and international organisations. Lateral networks, that is, at the district and regional levels were

however rudimentary. Moreover there was no clear institutional framework for the co-ordination of gender and development activities at these levels since the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) the designated institution has a weak representation at the district level. Where present their capacities are too weak to play an effective co-ordinating role.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

All though the gender mapping exercise offers a relatively up to date picture of gender activities in the country, the study has to be extended to the remaining five regions to ensure a more comprehensive coverage for the nation.

Capacity building has to be placed on the agenda for NGOs, government agencies, Community based organisations (CBOs) in gender and development work to ensure effective mainstreaming within their structures.

In the absence of a strong co-ordinating institution using effective organisations involved in gender work at the various levels (districts, regional, national) networks should be created to support the NCWD to effectively co-ordinate and monitor trends in gender and development activities.

There is a need to develop a network of program managers/resource persons involved in gender and development activities for the purpose of building their capacity to spearhead the change from WID to GAD activities.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

The project was conceptualised at the request of Advocates for Gender Equity through the DANIDA Health Sector Programme.

Since the creation of the NCWD in 1975 and the declaration of the UN decade for women 1975-1985, several programmes and projects have been undertaken all aimed at integrating women into the development process.

Empirical evidence suggests that most of these initiatives have done little to improve the lot of women in Ghana.

In 1995 - 1996, the Women in Public Life Project undertook a pioneering research, training and documentation of women's experiences.

The WIPL project sought to enhance the role of women in public life through research, improve management training and public information.

During the last six months of the WIPL project, attention was focused on advocacy work using dissemination materials and professional and public group seminars based on the research findings.

When the project period came to an end, a gender-mainstreaming workshop was organised inviting NGOs, Public Sector, Ministries and Departments involved in gender activities.

The two-day forum reviewed the conceptual framework of gender and gender mainstreaming.

It is now almost twenty-five years since the issue of women's role in development was firmly placed on the international agenda at the 1<sup>st</sup> UN Conference on Women held in Mexico City in 1975. This view, expressed by SIDA, is now widely held by governments and development agencies, to the extent that almost all have made considerable efforts over the last twenty-five years to try to address women's needs and their exclusion from the benefits of development.

However, despite this considerable effort, progress has been very slow in bringing about real change in the situation of women. In recognition of this, over the last ten years there have been some fundamental changes in the way women's needs are addressed in development, changes which are found in almost all development agencies and governments. The two key changes have been:

- a change from a Women in Development approach (WID) to a Gender and Development (GAD) approach
- a change from targeting to mainstreaming

Although the words "gender" and "mainstreaming" are increasingly widely used, there is often a lot of confusion as to what they actually mean - about what has changed, why and how. It is also evident that the transition from WID to GAD, and from targeting women to mainstreaming gender, is often more evident in theory than in practice.

## **The Institutionalisation of Women in Development (WID)**

The Women in Development (WID) approach was institutionalised in governments and development agencies during the UN Decade for Women from 1976-1985. By the end of the UN Decade, WID has become an institutionalised aspect of most development agencies and NGOs, and many national governments have official programmes for women's advancement. WID units, policies, officers and publication have become widespread.

Research prior to and during the UN Decade has gathered mounting evidence from all over the world that women had been marginalised from the processes of economic and social development - and increasingly lost out as new opportunities, training and technologies were directed almost exclusively at men.

What was needed, it was felt, was a chance for women to catch up and be integrated into development - so WID policies and units were designed to bring new economic opportunities directly to women. Translated into practical projects this tended to mean:

- Projects and programmes targeting women as a group, groups run by women for women
- Projects and programmes concerned with women's economic rather than their domestic role.

The main manifestation of WID policies was a proliferation of women's ministries and women's units largely concerned with developing projects for women. The principle focus was on women's income generation, and more recently, micro credit projects.

### **Problems with WID approach**

Gender Analysis - like WID - started through research into the effects of development interventions on women's lives.

Academic gender analysts analysed WID interventions - and found that in many cases, they were doing very little to improve the status of women, or to tackle effectively the real problems women faced. Income generation projects were commonly found to be:

- Unsuccessful in generating income
- Completely marginal to the mainstream of development, which continued as before
- Ineffectual in bringing about any sustained impact on women's lives
- Artificially isolating women as a group, assuming all women have the same needs and failing to recognise the ways women's and men's lives are interrelated.

Academic gender analysts also continued to investigate the impact of mainstream development on women's lives since this continued to take the lion's share of resources. Their research indicated that it is not possible to make sweeping statements about the effects of mainstream development on women because the same development intervention in different social contexts had completely different impacts.

The main purpose of the study is to facilitate the process of establishing a national data bank on gender and development, which can serve as a resource centre for planning and implementation of programmes accessible to all interested organisations. Additionally, to improve inter-sectoral collaboration and efficient use of resources and avoidance of duplication.

The exercise commenced in November 1999 after the design of the database program for the storage and retrieval of field data to be collected, and an orientation workshop held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 1999.

There was an initial pre-testing of questionnaire in the Ga District and the Greater Accra Metropolitan area.

There was a reconnaissance of all the initially selected regions of study - Volta Greater Accra, Ashanti, Northern, and Upper East. The exercise served as a basis for the design of work plans for each region, and assessed the volume and scope of work to be done in the region. All the regions except the Northern region were approved for the take-off of the exercise. Due to the excessive rainfall in the northern part of the country and the resultant flooding, the Northern Region was considered inaccessible for this phase at that time of the year. As a substitute, the Central Region was selected as an alternative for this phase of the exercise. Work plans were prepared based on the feedback from the reconnaissance.

## **1.2 Justification**

Serious interventions began in 1975 when the NCWD began to sensitise the society about the problem faced by women. Initially, the NCWD focused on education activities - functional literacy. This gave way to teaching women to earn a living through skills training and establishment of income generating activities and the introduction of technologies to improve production activities.

NGO's proliferated in the 1980s and 1990s with support from donors to set-up income generating activities across the length and breadth of the country.

The absence of a strong women's movement and a national policy framework for dealing with gender equity issues makes gender as a concept weak and programmes and projects are consequently affected.

Most programmes and projects deal with the improvement of the practical or basic needs of women and often do not deal with issues of human rights, justice and equity. Gender equity is a political issue dealing with fundamental questions of power relations between men and women in society.

Most activities documented follow the WID paradigm of development, which concentrates, on increasing women's contribution to the development process. The WID paradigm seeks to increase output and efficiency rather than redistributing power and changing structures to reflect women's needs.

Main issues of gender in equity could be summarized into three main areas:

- Tradition and customary practices which reinforce and support the subordination of women, for instance, structural inequalities such as in land ownership have origins in traditional norms.
- Low levels of education of women at all level.
- Women reproductive roles.

#### A Review of Gender Documentation Centres.

There are a few Gender Documentation Centres in the country.

These include the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre. The GSHRDC is a non-profit organisation, which came about through the collective effort of various Ghanaian women's organisations and other NGO representatives. The main objectives of GSHRDC is to provide a safe environment for individuals and groups to build support systems, gather information and share facts insights in discussion forums. Its main activities include the maintaining of a resource base with gender disaggregated data including statistics. The centre also facilitates forums and training workshop, to share, develop and analyse socio-economic issues. A major activity the centre is carrying out currently is the nation wide research on Violence against Women and Children in Ghana. This research project which is being sponsored by donor agencies such as DANIDA, Hanns Siedel, UNIFEM and British Council is likely to be published by August 1999. The centre has some amount of gender disaggregated data but not on a large enough scale.

The University of Ghana Department for Women Studies (DAWS) has started an MA and MPhil programme on Gender. DAWS is in the process of compiling materials on Gender. Most of DAWS documentation can be traced at the Institute of African Studies main library. The immediate future plan of DAWS is to establish documentation Centre. Currently the Balm Library has a section within it that covers women issues and not gender per se.

The National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) has established a Documentation Centre with partial support from the DFID. The status of the Documentation Centre is operational but lacks adequate data and a lot more needs to be done to upgrade it.

Presbyterian Women's Centre, Abokobi. This Training Centre is in the process of establishing a Documentation and Resource Centre. It is yet to become fully operational to serve the numerous participants who patronise the centre for various courses.

GIMPA has a Resource and Documentation Centre established with funding from the University of Alberta, Canada but is yet to become fully operational.

The Forum for African Women Educationalist (FAWE) has a established a documentation centre at Achimota.

ABANTU for development a Human Resource Network Promoting A Gender and African Perspective will be setting up a documentation centre in Accra with the Gender Training Network.

From the above status report, it appeared that the whole database in the country is fragmented.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Exercise**

The objectives of the exercise as indicated in the project proposal were to;

1. To elicit information on gender activities at all organisational levels (*both public and private sectors*), assess the impact made so far, and identify information needs to create the appropriate attitudes and environment for networking;
2. To categorise target institutions according to their areas of operation; - *whether in WID specific focus or gender approach*, and identify structures and approaches being utilised in their WID/gender activities;
3. To catalogue profiles of key individuals involved in the above activities;
4. To identify challenges institutions are facing in the implementation of gender activities; and,
5. To document future directions on gender of the surveyed institutions.

### **1.4 Outputs of the Exercise**

1. A compilation of gender related programmes/projects completed and undergoing in the survey areas.
2. Sector categorization of the programmes/projects of target institutions.
3. Profile catalogue of individuals involved in gender development activities to facilitate any networking activities in the future.
4. Documentation of operational and institutional bottlenecks in gender related activities.
5. Assessment of the capacity of the surveyed institutions to accelerate the growth and development of gender programmes/projects.

### **1.5 The Research**

The research covers five regions, Central, Ashanti, Greater Accra, Upper East and Volta regions.

In designing the questionnaire, the following were considered.



## **1.6 Methodology**

Data was collected both quantitative and qualitative with the target audience identified as policy makers, implementers (*Project Co-ordinators/officers of gender specific programmes and activities*), and beneficiaries of gender programmes.

The interview guide was used with the questionnaire.

## **1.7 Limitations of the Research**

The research had a number of limitations. It covered five regions instead of the ten because of budgetary limitations. The research findings is based on these five regions and it is important to cover the remaining five regions (Northern, Upper West, Brong Ahafo, Eastern and Western regions) to obtain a holistic review of activities being undertaken in the country as a whole.

## 2.0 MAIN FINDINGS

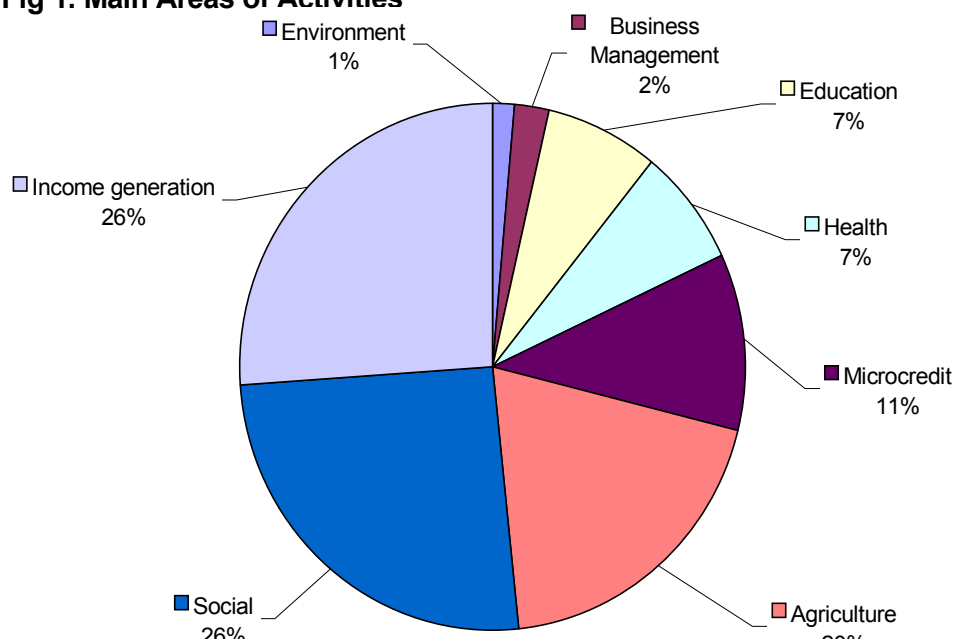
This section discusses the outputs of the study - that is, a catalogue of gender related programmes, sectoral categorisation of the programmes documented, Profile catalogue of personnel engaged activities, institutional and operational bottlenecks of institutions and their gender receptivity level - that is, the capacity of surveyed institutions to accelerate the growth and development of gender programmes/ projects.

### 2.1 SECTORAL CATEGORIZATION

Activities documented by the study (pages ) have been categorised under the following broad sectors - Income Generation, Social Development, Agriculture, Micro-credit, Health, Education, Business Management and the Environment.

The cluster of activities on small scale enterprises constitute the dominant activity (40%) with income generation (27%), Micro-credit and Business Management taking up 11% and 2% respectively. ( fig. 1)

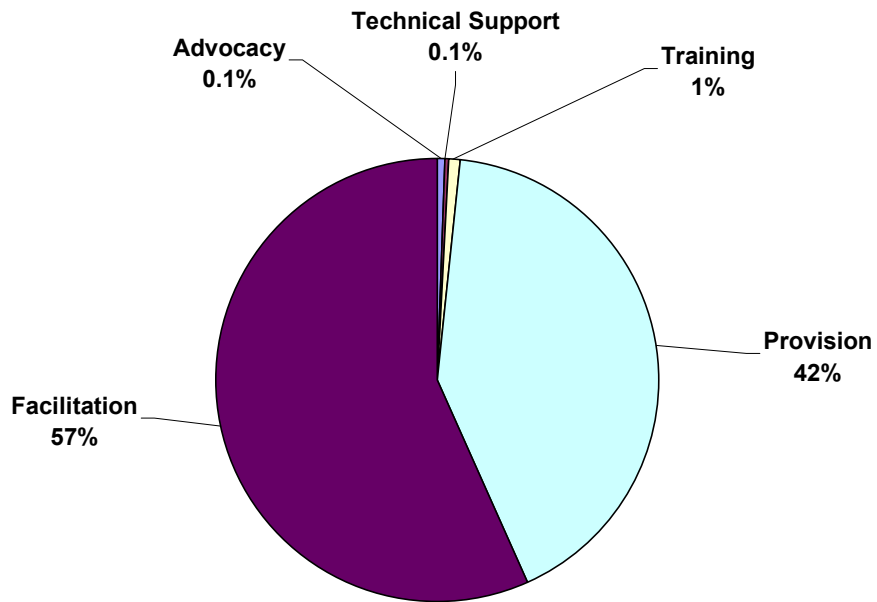
**Fig 1. Main Areas of Activities**



A break-down of the broad categories (fig. 2 following) indicates that a vast majority of gender projects still focus on integrating women into the development process and meeting women's practical needs - for example - income generation, agriculture, health and education among others, thereby improving their condition and not their position. Most NGOs perceive their interventions primarily as service providers, and therefore do not actively embark on advocacy, which centres primarily on initiating change.

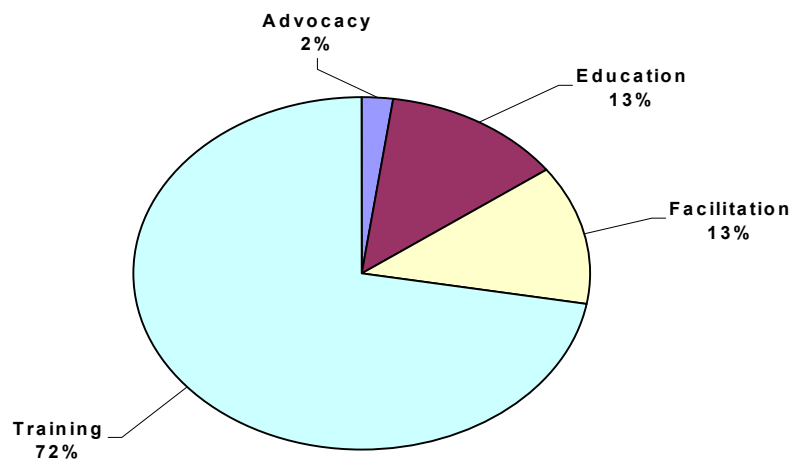
Under the Micro-credit sub-category, as depicted in figure 2, facilitation (which encompasses financial inter-mediation activities) is the main activity (57%) with credit provision and training taking up 42% and 1% respectively.

**Fig. 2 Microcredit sub areas**



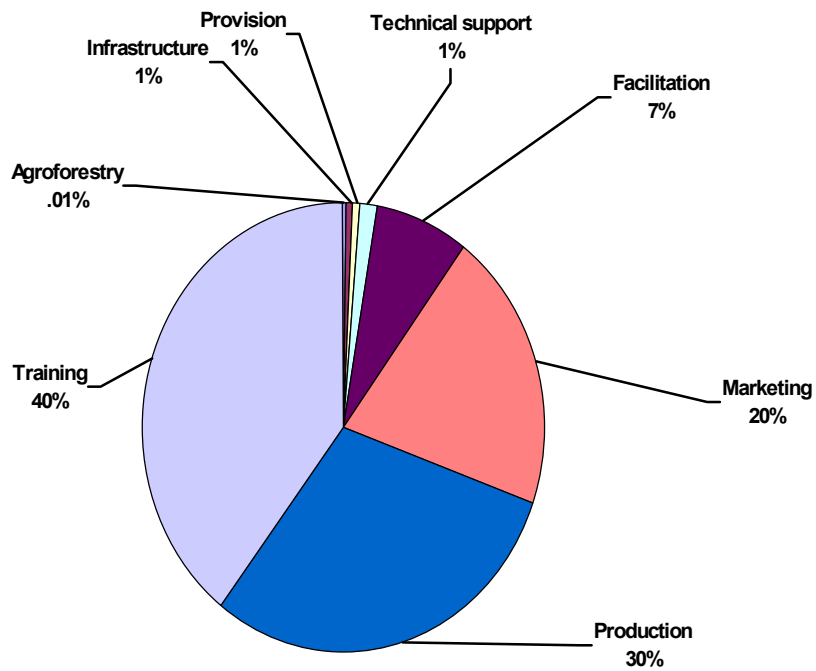
The Business Management sub-category ( fig. 3) is generally confined to Training (72%), Facilitation (13%), Education (13%) and Advocacy, which represents 2% of activities in the sub-sector.

**Fig. 3. Business Management sub areas**



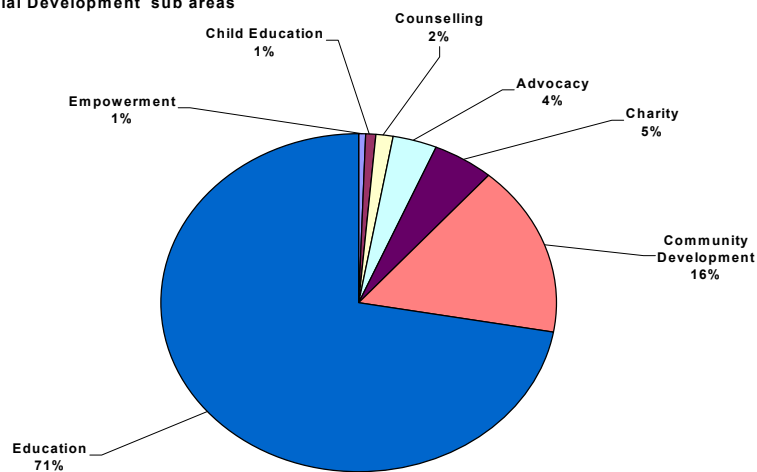
Income Generating Activities constitute 27% of activities covered, Training (40%), Production (29%) and Marketing (20%) are the predominant activities while Facilitation, Technical support and infrastructure provision take up the Remaining 11% as indicated in fig. 4

**Fig 4. Income generation sub areas**



Social development ranks as the second predominant activity that is 26%. Activities under this category include awareness creation/education (71%), Community Development (16%) (fig 5)

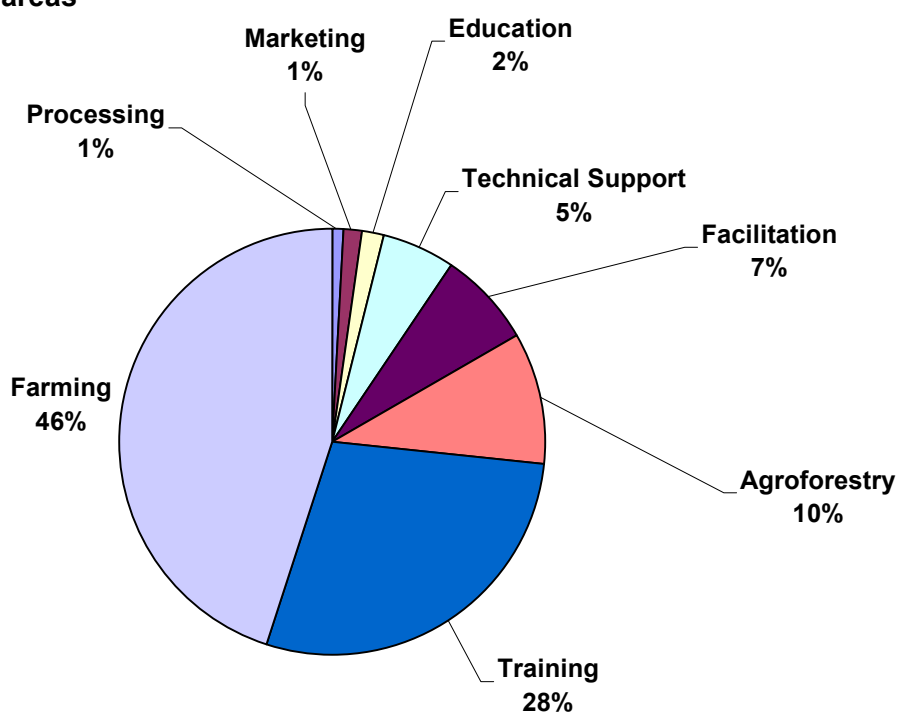
**Fig. 5 Social Development sub areas**



activities here revolve around infrastructure provision and rehabilitation, clean up campaigns and mobilisation of communal resources for development. Charity and advocacy also feature on a minor scale.

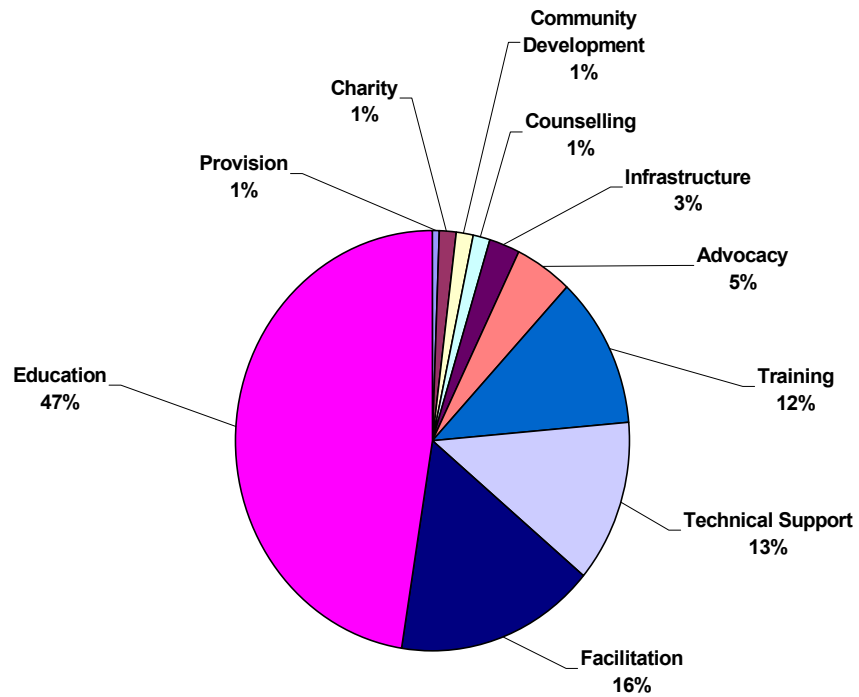
Agriculture constitutes 19% of activities covered. Farming is the main activity in this sector (43%), followed by Training (29%), Agro Forestry (10%), Facilitation (7%) and Technical support (6%). Marketing, education and processing constitute the minor activities in the sector.

**Fig 6. Agriculture sub areas**



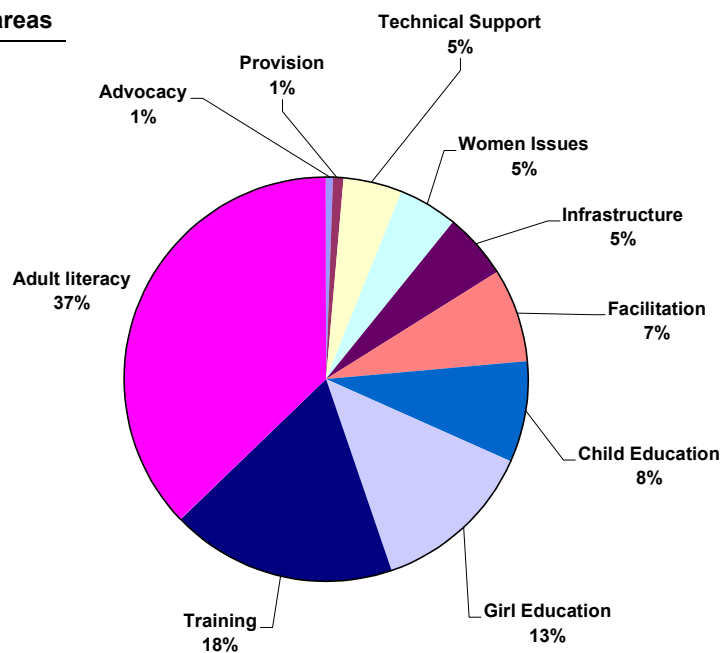
Health related activities constitute 7% of the whole, with health education and facilitation taking up 47% and 16% of all activities in the sub-sector fig 7. Provision of technical support (13%), Training (12%), Advocacy (5%), Infrastructure and service provision (4%) also feature prominently, while charity, counselling and community development are undertaken on a small scale in the sub-sector.

**Fig. 7 Health Sub Areas**

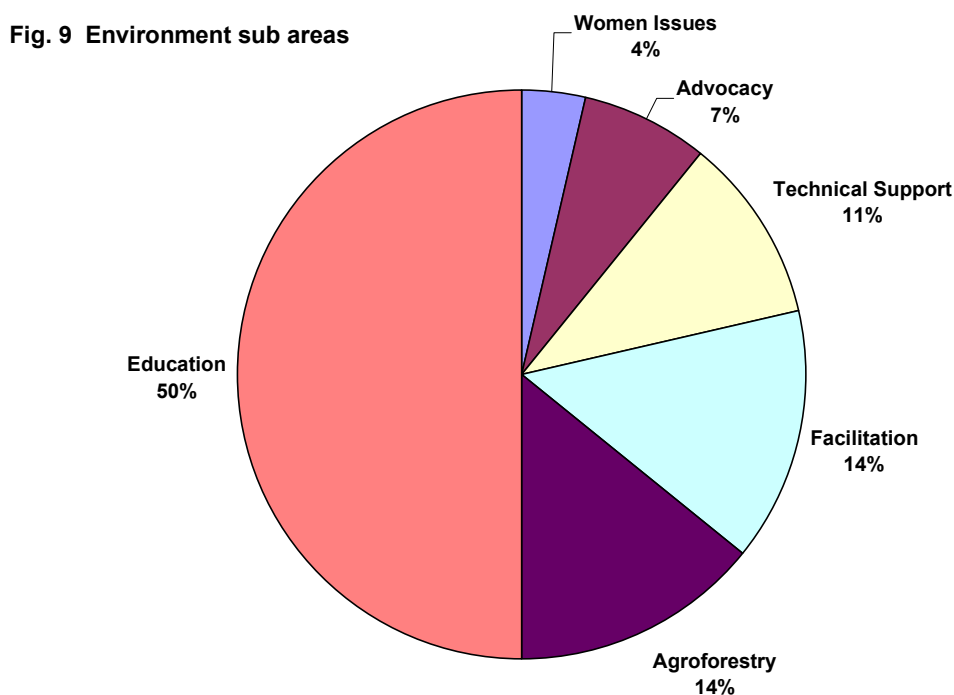


Educational activities also take up 7 % of the total. Of these Adult literacy (37%), Training (18%), Girl Education (13%), Facilitation (7%), Provision of technical support (5%) and Women and Development (5%) constitute the major areas of endeavours while Advocacy and service provision rank lowest in the sub-sector ( fig 8 )

**Fig 8. Education- Sub areas**



The environment sub-sector (figure 9) makes up 1% of the whole, and encompasses activities such as awareness creation (50%), Agro-Forestry (14%), Facilitation (14%) and Provision of technical support (11%). Advocacy and women in Development also make up 7% and 4% respectively of the sector's activities.

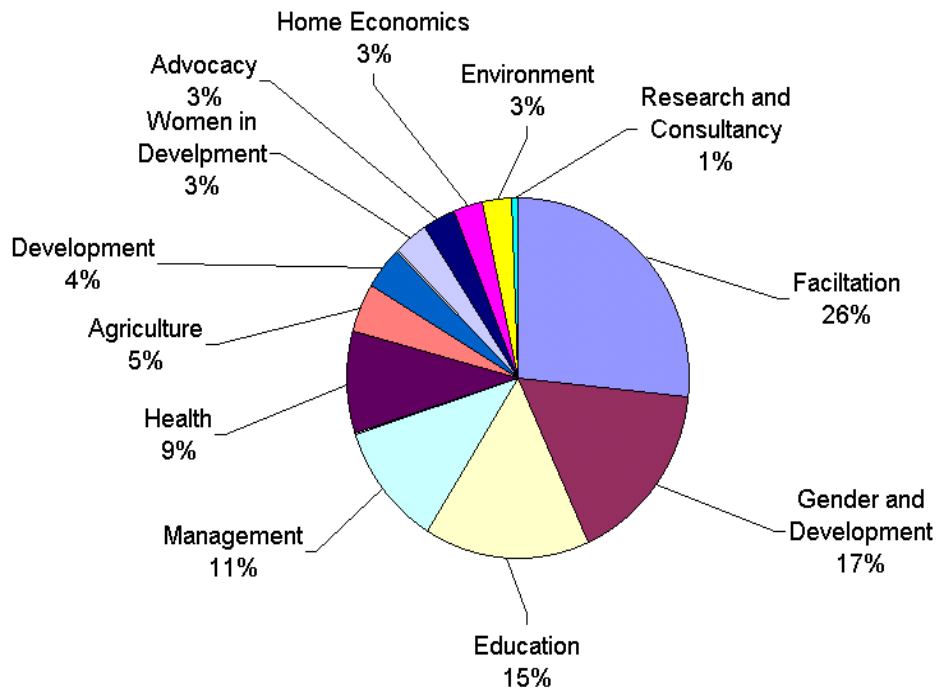


## 2.2 PROFILE OF INDIVIDUALS WORKING ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Data derived from the research has provided a catalogue of individuals - policy makers, programme/project managers on the one hand, and resource persons on the other. In both instances, women far outnumber men. For example, women programme managers constitute about 73% as opposed to 27% men in the same category.

The various areas of specialisation of gender programme managers are indicated in figure 10. The facilitation sub-group (that is, those related to community mobilisation/ organisation and co-ordination) constitute the largest group (26%), followed by Gender and Development (17%), Education (15%), Health, (9%) and Management categories (11%). Others include Agriculture, Women in Development, and Law, with research and consultancy as the least observed area of specialisation.

Fig 10. AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION OF PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN GENDER



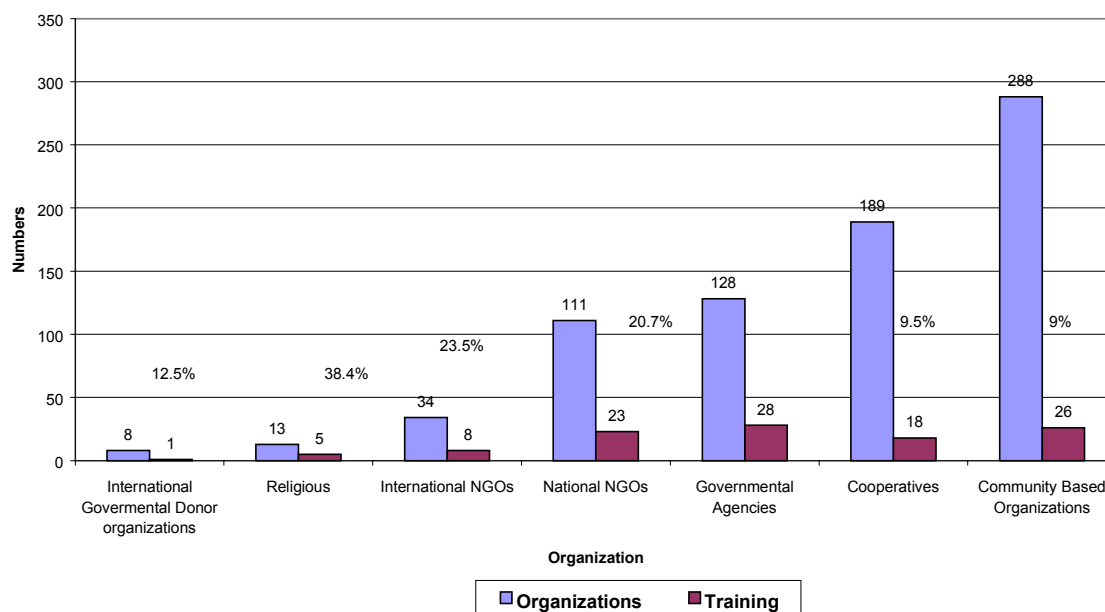
Individuals serving as resource persons are drawn from a variety of institutions - universities, Government Agencies, National and International NGOs and a few private consultants. The Resource persons areas of specialisation follow almost the same broad outlines of the Programme Managers and are indicated in the catalogue attached.

### 2.3 GENDER TRAINING

Figure 11 depicts the gender training provided by institutions to their staff. Formal Institutions - in descending order- religious institutions (38.4%), International NGOs (23.5%), National Governmental Agencies (21.8%), and International Governmental Donor Organisations (12.5%) give more training to their staff than quasi /informal institutions such as Co-operatives and other community based organisations which recorded 9.5 % and 9 % respectively.



Fig 11 . Gender Training Provided by Organizations



Most gender training is locally based - 83.4% as opposed to foreign based ones. Training offered is also mostly short - term, with most cases, 88.6% lasting under a month , 8.8% range between one to nine months, and are mostly foreign based. Only 2.5% recorded training lasting for more than a year.

## 2.4 CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

All institutions interviewed indicated they had challenges and setbacks. Challenges identified could be summed up under the following broad headings: **Marketing**- lack of infrastructure, low market demand/ poor prices; **Attitudinal** factors, emanating from cultural norms and superstitions; **Organisational** - low commitment to groups especially with regard to attendance of meetings, weak financial base because of inability to generate funds internally- mainly due to poor payment of financial obligations; inability to manage conflicts, and lack of leadership skills.

**Inadequate infrastructure** - clinics, access roads, communication channels, and storage facilities; **Low educational level** - Illiteracy, lack of skills and capacity for mobilisation; **Seasonal constraints** - affecting availability of raw materials and inability to produce all year round; **Access to Resources** - land, labour and credit; **Climatic** - vagaries of the weather adversely affect outputs and physical accessibility during periods of heavy rainfall; Chieftaincy, land disputes and political interference; **Health and safety** - protective clothing such as wellington boots for work in swampy areas.

Setbacks identified by the institutions interviewed were classified into four main categories - **financial, organisational, administrative** and **operational**. Financial setbacks were the predominant feature of all institutions covered. Others, such as administrative and organisational setbacks ranked second, with operational setbacks in the third category.

## **2.5 GENDER RECEPTIVITY LEVEL**

Most institutions studied, whether governmental or non - governmental were aware of the need to incorporate gender into their activities, and some have initiated measures to incorporate this in their organisations. These initiatives are however not concrete in terms of a clear policy, structure and commitment of resources to integrate gender properly into their activities. The norm appears to be the training of a staff or two to undertake the task of ensuring gender equity in the operations of these organisations as opposed to a Leadership commitment, which would ensure the necessary change in the organisation.

## **2.6 SUMMARY OF FIELD REPORTS**

This section documents difficulties encountered by researchers in the five regions, the differential presence of targeted institutions, general trends, peculiarities and constraints in gender and development work.

### **DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY RESEARCHERS**

Reluctance of some respondents to provide information was typical of all regions covered. The reasons for this were varied - fatigue with researchers who raise peoples hopes about supposed benefits of the exercise, but do not live up to or make good their promises; lack of interest in gender issues; mistrust of the use of information being solicited for; others were inhibited by internal controls on divulging information to the public.

The absence of a co-ordinating body for gender activities was felt by most researchers. However a clear pattern of institutional framework emerged in the course of the study. Institutions such as the Departments of Community Development, Social Welfare and Co-operatives, the Non Formal Education Division of the Ministry of Education, District Water and Sanitation Teams, National Mobilisation Programme, 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement and some religious bodies, especially the Catholic and E P churches were instrumental in the formation of community based organisations or groups for the purpose of gender interventions.

The various regions exhibited some variations however. For instance, in Central and Ashanti regions, national and community based NGOs seem to be spearheading gender activities while government agencies, international and national NGOs are the dominant promoters in the Volta region. In the Upper East, government agencies, religious organisations, national and international as well as community based NGOs are the main promoters of gender activities. Overall the Ashanti region registered the least NGO presence. In the Volta region, governmental agencies such as the Community Water and Sanitation Programme, 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement, National Mobilisation Programme and Non Formal Education Division, community based NGOs appear to be giving the needed impetus for self development. The presence of NGOs was unevenly distributed in the Volta and Ashanti regions. The 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement was more active in the Volta region, while the Ghana Red Cross Society concentrated on the Volta and Upper East regions

## 2.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

All though the gender mapping exercise offers a relatively up to date picture of gender activities in the country, the study has to be extended to the remaining five regions to ensure a more comprehensive coverage for the nation.

Capacity building has to be placed on the agenda for NGOs, government agencies, Community based organisations (CBOs) in gender and development work to ensure effective mainstreaming within their structures.

In the absence of a strong co-ordinating institution using effective organisations involved in gender work at the various levels (districts, regional, national) networks should be created to support the NCWD to effectively co-ordinate and monitor trends in gender and development activities.

There is a need to develop a network of program managers/resource persons involved in gender and development activities for the purpose of building their capacity to spearhead the change from WID to GAD activities.

In order to ensure its continued relevance for the purposes it was created to serve, there is the need to upgrade the database at regular intervals. It is therefore recommended that the database expert who worked on the project be retained to undertake the upgrading exercises as recommended.

Since the district assemblies are the recommended co-ordinating bodies for gender activities, planning officers should be made the focal points for the collection of information and new activities in the districts for onwards transmission to Danida or the designated institution for the revision of the database.

There is the need to disseminate the findings at regional level to appraise actors in gender and development work on activities going on in districts in their respective regions and other parts of the country. The dissemination would also serve to publicise the availability, location and purpose of the database to ensure that it is serving its purpose as a resource centre to under gird the activities of the various actors.

### **3.0 Outputs of the Study**