MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

DANIDA | INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

EVALUATION OF DANIDA'S
'WOMEN IN AFRICA'
REGIONAL SUPPORT INITIATIVE

evaluation

2011.03

Evaluation of Danida's 'Women in Africa' regional support initiative

NCG

June 2011

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List of abbreviations

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AFRACA	African Rural Agriculture Credit Association
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
AWDF	African Women's Development Fund
AWEPON	African Women's Economic Policy Network
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EAC	East African Community
EASSI	Eastern African Sub-Regional Initiative for the Advancement of Women
EBWA	Egyptian Women's Business Association
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
IAC	Inter African Committee (for Harmful Traditional Practices)
IGA	Income Generating Activities
INAFI	International Network of Alternative Financial Institutions
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
KWFT	Kenya Women's Finance Trust
LEAP	Learning for Equality Access and Peace
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Danish if not otherwise specified)
MDRP	Multi-country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme
MRU	Manu River Union
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PENHA	Pastoral and Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VAW	Violence Against Women
WEEP	Women's Economic Empowerment Programme
WfWI	Women for Women International
WIA	Women in Africa budget appropriation
YWCAA	Young Women's Campaign Against Aids
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Executive Summary

Background and methodology

In 2006, the Danish government launched a five-step plan to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in Africa. A special allocation was earmarked for regional support initiatives to enhance African ownership and promote cooperation across boundaries. African organisations, think tanks and networks committed to promoting women's equal rights, including equal access to resources and political influence, qualified for this funding envelope which went under the name 'Women in Africa'. Another part of the funding envelope was geared towards international non-governmental organisations working for the promotion of women's rights in post-conflict countries, also with a regional perspective.

Aside from providing funding to individual organisations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFA) has also aimed to facilitate collaboration among the grantee organisations to promote experience sharing and the planning of joint regional initiatives. In 2007-09 four workshops for all grantees were conducted and a fifth undertaken in October 2010[1].

The 'Women in Africa' regional support initiative has two main components and types of grantees:

> (i) Funding to *African networks with a regional focus* in order *to support African ownership* and cross-border collaboration on the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality, and

> (ii) Funding to *international non-governmental organisations* (INGOs) and one *multilateral* initiative (the World Bank) that apply a regional approach to promoting gender equality in *post-conflict-countries and fragile states.*

These two categories of grantees differ quite substantially from each other in terms of institutional structures, operational approaches, technical, financial and organisational capacities and geographic targeting. This is also reflected in the size of grants and the disbursement rate, with INGOs and the World Bank programme in general receiving larger individual grants due to their ability to absorb and use funds in a timely manner, whereas delays and low internal absorption capacity were common obstacles for some of the African networks. In the period covered by this Evaluation, a total of DKK 141.4 million has been committed under the Women in Africa regional support initiative, with around DKK 101 million having been disbursed.

The requirement of applying a regional approach applied to both groups. For this funding initiative, the 'regional approach' was defined to mean simultaneous operations in at least three countries, with the scope for learning and exchange of lessons between countries[2].

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1) This falls outside of the Evaluation period which covers 2006-end 2009.
2) Identification and Organisational Capacity Assessment of African Networks to Promote Gender Equality. Capacitate & Kabell Konsulting Aps. February 2007.

The objective of the Evaluation was to assess results and identify lessons from the overall approach and from a sample of organisations and activities funded under the Woman in Africa regional support initiative. In particular, the Evaluation sought to strengthen the foundation for future directions of this or similar initiatives to promote gender equality in Danish bilateral assistance. Specific objectives, according to the Terms of Reference (TOR)[3], were to assess:

- The extent to which the activities financed have been relevant for the *promotion of gender equality in line with Danish policy priorities as well as regional* needs, priorities and possibilities, as well as other on-going activities supporting gender equality.
- The extent to which the funding has served to promote *African ownership* of gender equality initiatives by working with relevant regional networks and INGOs promoting gender equality in Africa.
- The extent to which the expected *outputs and outcomes have been delivered,*
- The degree to which *capacities, networks and practices of inter-organisational learning* for enhancing gender equality have been strengthened.
- The extent to which the funds allocated have been *efficiently spent*, both in relation to the individual activities selected, and in relation to the overall portfolio.
- The extent to which the results achieved are *sustainable*, with emphasis on the issues of ownership and capacity.

The Evaluation covered all 15 grantees[4] under the Women in Africa support initiative during the indicated funding period (2006-end 2009)[5]. It was conducted through a document review, interviews with all grantees and selected key informants, as well as an in-depth review of a sample of activities in Kenya and Uganda – the focus countries for the Evaluation according to the TOR. Visits were also undertaken to organisational headquarters or coordination offices of grantees based in the UK and Denmark.

The Evaluation has used similar criteria and overall evaluation questions for the assessments of INGOs and African network organisations. However, given that site visits were undertaken in Kenya and Uganda, where many grantees have coordination offices or partner activities, African networks were over-represented in the group of grantees undergoing in-depth assessments. The analysis has tried to distinguish between the two main groups where relevant, while acknowledging that there is also wide diversity within these two sub-groups. Danida also used a different modality and approach for each main group in terms of selecting grantees.

Portfolio – focus & composition

The funding is approved on a yearly basis against multi-annual proposals (2-3 years), and grants are generally relatively small in nature. This reflects the limited timeframe of the overall allocation, limiting the scope and period of the individual grants. All grants are administered centrally by the Africa Department in the MFA, with the help of out-sourced technical assistance.

The support initiative has a broad thematic focus within the areas of women's equal rights (political, civil, cultural, social), political empowerment and increased influence in decision-making, equal access to resources and economic empowerment of women. A

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3) Emphasis added for clarity by the consultancy team; not included in the original TOR.
4) Nine African networks, five INGOs and an initiative channelled through the World Bank.
5) Including 2010 reporting which contained the latter of 2009 activities.

majority of grantees focus on strengthening the international or regional policy framework to protect women's rights, typically in relation to follow-up on commitments under Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), or the Beijing Platform for Action. Most grantees focused primarily on awareness raising and lobbying around special provisions for women's rights in the international normative frameworks in order to strengthen the policy and legal environment for implementation. Yet, few organisations participated in actual implementation of such provisions through trainings and gender mainstreaming activities at different levels of operations.

Interventions in post-conflict areas often cut across the categories of economic empowerment, health and safety, including follow-up on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security.

In the area of economic empowerment, most activities have focused on income-generating activities for women and access to micro credit. The grant portfolio and funded activities shifted towards a stronger focus on economic empowerment in line with Danish policy priorities in 2008, with some of the previously identified grantees even stepping beyond their core mandate or comparatives strengths to do so.

The stipulated geographic priority areas for this regional support initiative, according the Danish five-point plan in 2006, were sub-Saharan Africa and post-conflict areas. Apart from that there was no specific geographic targeting of support. However, among African networks most grantees had an East African presence, whereas West Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi featured strongly for those working in post-conflict countries.

Key findings & overall conclusions

Relevance
Overall, the Women in Africa regional support initiative is in line with Danish policy priorities and has the potential to provide lessons around best practice on how to promote gender equality in Danish development cooperation. The way it was set up as a separate (and somewhat isolated) initiative, centrally designed and managed by the Africa Department of the MFA, has however limited its potential relevance for institutionalising and building lessons more widely into other areas of Danish development support.

Organisations selected for support are all thematically relevant given their focus and operating environments. There is evidence to suggest that the Women in Africa funding has been relevant for their internal learning, and for organisational strengthening in terms of having a stable funding base for African network organisations. For both groups of grantees (INGOs and African networks), the links between international/regional processes and national level implementation tended to be weak. Regional lobbying also tended to focus on special provisions and mechanisms for women's rights with less focus on broadening the agenda of gender equality across regional, national and local mechanisms for implementation.

A stronger implementation focus was, however, found in the World Bank programme that sought to mainstream gender equality into demobilisation and reintegration efforts in the Great Lakes region and Northern Uganda. Overall, operations in fragile and post-

conflict states served primarily as a laboratory for testing different approaches and cooperation modalities which can be of relevance to the wider agenda of promoting gender equality in such settings.

In terms of getting buy-in from local stakeholders, INGOs were generally successful in creating a strong sense of ownership into programmes at the lowest grassroots levels, but were often perceived by local stakeholders to be setting and driving the agenda rather than transferring this to local actors. Regional networks, on the other hand, tended to keep ownership of the Women in Africa supported initiative at the level of the regional secretariat. Lack of sufficient buy-in, and sometimes funds, at lower levels of operations were noted to negatively affect outcomes at operational levels beyond the regional headquarters.

Many of the projects funded under Women in Africa have included innovative elements on a smaller scale, even though these have not been aggregated or analysed in light of any strategic overall framework for the initiative. The initiative was assessed to be timely in line with the increased effort to use the African Union and regional economic organisations to promote peace and growth in Africa. However, there were missed opportunities in terms of having any lasting impact across African institutions on how gender equality and women's empowerment is incorporated and dealt with across different policy areas.

Effectiveness
All supported grantees (INGOs and African network organisations) reported delays in implementation during the evaluation period. These delays often related to difficulties in managing operations in three countries simultaneously, tensions and 'internal politics' within networks in terms of internal resource allocation, high turnover of staff within projects, and political instability particularly in post-conflict countries. In two cases, financial mismanagement was identified following influx of funds at the regional secretariat levels. The cases were later resolved.

Despite delays, most projects managed to complete activities, or were on track to do so at the time of the Evaluation, with the total number of direct women beneficiaries[6] being estimated to be around 30,000. Only very few organisations involved or targeted men in their activities.

The Women in Africa initiative has suffered from lack of a clear strategic orientation, including targets, benchmarks and selection criteria for grantees. The identification process preselected a number of potential grantees, and provided technical assistance to them during their programme formulation and finalization process. This resulted in a large degree of homogeneity in the structures of programme documents and progress reports, and a low level of participation and consultation between the regional headquarters and operational partners at lower levels of implementation. Even INGOs seem to have largely formulated their proposals without broad consultations among grassroots level partners and/or beneficiaries.

The unspecified nature of the support initiative – broadly covering any regional activities within the fields of women's rights, political and economic empowerment – and the way it was centrally managed, made it susceptible to Danish policy changes. This meant that some organisations focused on areas beyond their own strengths to fit with Danish policy interests, affecting the quality of outputs, or leading to steep internal learning curves

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6)   Not including indirect beneficiaries that benefit from favourable policy environments or provisions.

that took precedence over learning among beneficiaries and local stakeholders. Capacity strengthening rarely went beyond the coordinating secretariat of the African networks. Institutional investments were also high at coordination offices or secretariats compared to lower levels of operations.[7]

Increased networking and exchange of information among grantees could only very rarely be traced back to Danida's efforts of bringing all Women in Africa grantees together for annual (five-day) seminars in Denmark or in an African location.

Efficiency
In those cases where the Women in Africa grant has been used to boost existing programmes or initiatives, there is generally a higher degree of perceived value for money, with less spent on setting up expensive coordination mechanisms across countries – something which made up around half of the overall budget in some projects.

Overall, a more efficient division of labour among grantees and in coalitions could have benefited cost-effectiveness against more clearly defined objectives. With little involvement of stakeholders and implementing partners in the formulation of several of the funded projects, existing systems for organisation and mobilisation were not fully exploited. Examples include mobilising civil society organisations (CSOs) around the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, or working with regional bodies to implement their existing gender policies across operations. Instead, there are examples of grantees promoting the establishment of new protocols and coordination mechanisms at the highest levels. It is also unclear how the regional Women in Africa support interacts with supplementary funding earmarked for gender equality and women's empowerment provided through bilateral funding in Danish programme countries, thus potentially resulting in double-funding in these countries.

Neither has the set up design and administration of the support initiative ensured that there is complementarity between Women in Africa initiatives and other Danish multi- and bilateral interventions in and around fragile states, such as the Regions of Origin Programme as well as other humanitarian support channelled through multilaterals and INGOs. In Danida programme countries, national level activities by African network organisations often run in parallel with other gender equality special interventions or mainstreaming activities.

The regional focus was not always a natural fit with the grantees, and both INGOs and African network organisations often had to set up a parallel coordination and implementation process in order to carry out activities in a minimum of three countries simultaneously.

Although many project proposals and progress reports include information on 'exchange visits' between countries, there are few documented outcomes stemming from these, and the added value should therefore be scrutinized and questioned.

It is questionable whether the cost of holding annual seminars, bringing all 15 grantees from all over Africa together in Denmark or in an African location, is justifiable given that it did not seem to lead to the intended benefit of increased networking and collaboration across organisations. The seminars have also been used as the main monitoring

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7)   This was the case also when core funding was provided, compared to the overall budgets for the organisations' operations.

mechanism for the MFA. Yet, those closely involved in technical implementation are usually not the ones attending the Danida five-day seminars.

Sustainability
For most of the African network grantees, Danida is one of the main sources of funding. For several of the organisations – including all those who get the full grant or part of the grant as core funding towards institutional costs – the dependency on Danida funds has increased since the funding relationship began, and now constitute between 50-90% of the organisations' overall budget.

This reflects an overall funding scarcity for regional gender equality activities. However, many of the grantees are also beneficiaries of the Dutch MDG3 fund, and more interactions between the Africa Department in MFA and the managers of the Dutch MDG3 fund could help to strategise around ways to support and phase out grantees in order to ensure sustainability. Nevertheless, it is clear that a sudden decision by Danida to withdraw funds may have serious negative consequences for most of the African network grantees. For a couple of the grantees, the Danida support has helped them to ensure additional funding from other donors.

INGOs do not suffer from the same resource constraints as African networks. Yet, the *ad hoc* and short-term involvement of national partners (CSOs and community based organisations (CBOs)) can also put the long-term sustainability of the projects at risk, as is often the case in NGO support.

Recommendations

In the new Strategy for Danish Development Cooperation (2010), gender is one of five focus areas. Stability and fragile states is another priority area. The strategy emphasises the Danish wish to strengthen regional cooperation and to continue support to "relevant regional organisations". At the same time, the strategy also points out that Denmark want to ensure better results through a more "focused and effective development cooperation" based on long-term partnerships, where the Danish engagement shall be robust, flexible and dynamic. Furthermore, the strategy stresses that development results must be documented, evaluated and communicated.

In view of this, the Evaluation finds that the Women in Africa regional support initiative could have the potential to contribute to the implementation of the Danish strategic orientation. However, the Evaluation cannot recommend that the Women in Africa support continues in its current form. The recommendations thus outline considerations on how best to address challenges around regional support to gender equality, including some major adjustments to its strategic focus, grant portfolio composition, and the way it is set up and administered as outlined below:

Portfolio – focus & composition

- ***A clearer distinction and more adapted approaches are needed for the different categories of grantees.*** For continued support to a regional approach to promote gender equality, funding and technical support should be shifted to focus clearly on implementation of regional gender equality policy provisions and putting mechanisms in place, in order for them to be effective across regional and sub-regional

bodies, as well as at different levels of implementation. In relation to operations in post-conflict countries this should ideally include regional mechanisms for peace-keeping and security, which can be complementary to in-country and cross border interventions. For other activities in post-conflict countries, the necessity of a regional approach should be assessed on a case-by-case basis and focus on more immediate added value in e.g. cross-border or sub-regional conflicts.

Continued pressure through lobbying is needed particularly in African states that lag behind in the ratification of international or regional instruments that promote gender equality. Yet, a general shift towards implementation is needed to highlight and publicise best practice. With a sharpened focus on implementation, the links between regional and national initiatives will be even more important in the future. The Evaluation therefore recommends a revision both in the way the Women in Africa fund is managed (with much clearer links to national level support), and its criteria for selecting grantees that are able to collaborate with others to deliver on this agenda.

Considering that only relatively few donors are currently providing funding for regional organisations or initiatives that promote gender equality, the Evaluation finds a need for continued but targeted support to this area. However, the support must be clearly linked to processes and outcomes that go beyond just strengthening regional secretariats of African network organisations. Support should ideally provide sufficient funding to all different levels of implementation (regional/international, national, and sub-regional/local), but each grantee should not be required to cover all these different levels by itself. Rather, cost-efficient partnerships based on comparative advantage should be encouraged.

For organisations operating in post-conflict countries the regional dimension should not be imposed, but be assessed on a case-by-case basis in terms of added value.

- ***Danida should carefully consider the added value of different types/themes of interventions to be implemented regionally through African network organisations and INGOs.*** Linked to the above recommendation is the observation that different types of projects are more or less well suited to a regional approach. To have operations in a minimum of three countries simultaneously has allowed for a number of inefficiencies. Rather, existing structures and mechanisms should be used where possible to avoid creating parallel systems.

  Particularly in the field of economic empowerment, it would be good to allow for more flexibility, and to encourage interdisciplinary coalitions to identify best practice, combining gender equality and financial expertise.

- ***Danish embassies where applicable, and other relevant departments in MFA, should have a stronger influence and role in defining the overall strategy of the Women in Africa support initiative, which may affect the overall composition of grantees.*** In order to create stronger linkages with other ongoing initiatives both in bilateral programme countries and with other Danida support channelled through INGOs or multilateral bodies, it is recommended that relevant departments and embassies are more closely involved in the definition of the overall aims of the funding envelope, and in coming up with recommendations for its use, with

emphasis on its innovative and complementary nature and fairly large degree of flexibility. A more elaborate referral system should be developed for the identification and selection of grantees, coupled with a more decentralised monitoring system in line with a broad results framework.

Organisational levels

- ***Organisations should strengthen efforts to move from focusing on activities and outputs, towards a more explicit operational focus on result-orientation in clearly identified change processes. In doing so, positive as well as negative outcomes should be recorded in order to adjust strategies accordingly.*** The Evaluation found that although relatively well-designed programme documents with targets, indicators etc. had been developed for a number of the organisations, the working "culture" within the organisations was generally not adapted or aligned to report against this. Indicators presented were rarely monitored or tracked and were rarely connected to the organisational planning process. Reporting was instead largely undertaken to fulfil Danidas requirements. Although this may be a common dilemma in civil society organisations with limited resources or monitoring and evaluation skills in-house, it means that gender outcomes and potential backlashes from interventions targeting only women (not men or male attitudes) were not regularly recorded and fed into the planning processes.

  Moreover, organisations had no way of assessing whether their 'pressure point' for change was bearing fruit, or whether they should refocus efforts e.g. by channelling a larger proportion of funds downstream to national and local partners. Many grantees, both among African network organisations and INGOs carried out work based on huge assumptions that remained untested. Progress reports were also largely uncritical to their own performance.

- ***Grantees – and INGOs in particular – should clearly identify at what level(s) they want to act as an additional leverage to on-going regional, national or local change processes, and how they will ensure that the agenda is broadened and transferred to relevant national/local stakeholders throughout the implementation process.*** The findings from the Evaluation point towards instances where the INGOs 'take on' and mobilise around a specific agenda (like UNSCR 1325), thereby raising expectations among local groups and stakeholders, without necessarily transferring back the driving force and momentum of the agenda to its proper stakeholders. More explicit intervention strategies including the division of roles with other partners, and when/how to exit is therefore of essence without capturing and 'externalising' the agenda of women's rights and empowerment in a given context.

Portfolio management by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- ***Danida's support to regional organisations and initiatives (African-led and INGOs) within the Women in Africa context should in the future be based on a strategic framework with some clear targets and priority areas. It should explicitly be defined what will be expected from support provided to this type of regional interventions and through which channels the interventions are likely to work most effectively.*** During the evaluation period, the pressure to quickly identify potential grantees seems to have over-ridden a strategic analysis of issues and

targets, locking Danida into funding arrangements with individual grantees before it was clear what specific objectives this support was expected to fulfil. The strategic framework should also include more explicit consideration on how partnership models and synergies may be generated among and between the organisations and projects supported as well as with other on-going national or regional processes supported by Danida (see also recommendation above under 'portfolio composition').

- ***Danida should strengthen the existing procedures and set-up for monitoring and quality control of the Women in Africa regional support initiative. An internal revision of the way the Women in Africa fund is managed (with clearer links to bilateral level support or other departments in the MFA where relevant), and of the criteria for selecting grantees should be undertaken with the aim of partly decentralising administration at embassies and/or the relevant departments of MFA***. The Evaluation recommends a revision both in the way the Women in Africa fund is managed, and its criteria for selecting grantees. The Africa Department in the MFA has regularly consulted with relevant embassies and the departments in charge of civil society and humanitarian support during the evaluation period. Such cooperation should be encouraged and intensified, to explore and enhance synergies with other ongoing initiatives. Likewise support that involves Danida programme countries should ideally include embassies more actively.

A challenge is the fact that embassies may not play a substantial role in the regional context. However, monitoring closer to the regional headquarters would be more cost-efficient and could also more regularly incorporate issues related to regional relevance in terms of implementing regional provisions at national levels. Embassies in the countries where African networks are implementing activities could also be more actively drawn in, since there may be synergies or overlaps with other Danida supported programmes at national level.[8] Another practical suggestion, if the Women in Africa seminars were to continue in its current format, would be to schedule it in connection to the Gender Focal Point seminar, held every second year for gender focal points across all Danish embassies.

With a more decentralised monitoring framework in place, the frequency of such joint seminars could be reduced to every second or third year, compared to holding them annually as is currently the case. They could then be used much more for thematic lesson learning, and less for monitoring purposes as is the case at present. Instead, they could be a way of institutionalising and sharing lessons across different departments of the MFA that administer special allocations for gender equality, and not be shouldered by the Africa Department alone.

Recommendations for Development Partners (including Danida)

- ***Development Partners should take the initiative to coordinate and pool funding (e.g. basket funding) for supplementary and issue-specific funds to avoid potential double funding and funding overlaps and provide a more solid and predictable funding base for regional organisations and initiatives through a transparent and open selection processes.*** Dialogue and cooperation between

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8) For instance, the Kenya Women's Finance Trust, the national grantee of AFRACA, is a relevant actor in relation to the Danish private sector development programme in Kenya.

e.g. the Danish MFA and the Dutch MDG3 fund would have been beneficial, at least related to regional support initiatives and provision of funding to the same grantees. In this way it may be possible to establish longer-term partnerships with selected regional network organisations, which would be a big advantage in terms of strengthening the relatively weak capacities within regional organisations.

Moreover, the Evaluation recommends opening up such supplementary thematic funds to a wider number of grantees through transparent application and selection processes where organisations are allowed to submit parts of their strategic plans for funding (moving away from short term 'project mode'). This could also help to make funding issues driven against clearly identified strategic objectives – rather than be organisation driven.

- *Future support to regional African organisations and initiatives (including NGOs/multilaterally funded programmes) should focus more explicitly on how to deal with capacity constraints.* The Evaluation found that most of the regional African network organisations visited during the field mission were very weak and fragile organisations with large dependency on few funding sources and little ability to further capacitate members operating at grassroots levels. The Evaluation suggests addressing this issue from this outset, with clear capacity building and exit plans in place, preferably co-funded with other donors. If this aspect is not being addressed more strategically, it is doubtful how sustainable the supported activities will be. Given the funding constraints, a step-wise approach to capacity development interventions would be desirable, based on more realistic expectations as to what may be possible to obtain within the resource and time-frame, given the annual funding provisions.

  Few of the INGOs had good systems in place for building the necessary capacities among their local partners and implementing organisations. A future requirement for INGO support should therefore be to more explicitly improve information flows to and from local partners by involving them in all aspects of programme design and implementation.

- *Development Partners should support regional/sub-regional studies and analyses that could provide a better common guidance and best practice for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the region and sub-region, in particular within the thematic field of women's economic empowerment where few of the more experienced women's organisations in the African women's movement has any substantial experience.* The rationale and strategic advantage for applying a regional approach particularly to women's economic empowerment needs to be clarified to ensure that interventions are based on – or are clearly contributing to – the accumulation of best practice.

  Such research and analysis was not done at the stage of conceptualising the Women in Africa regional support initiative, with the result of having several African networks focusing on the same type of economic empowerment, encountering the same limitations along the way. Institutional links to regional trade arrangements could for instance be further explored in the future, instead of investing heavily in exchange visits between countries with limited applicability in the local context.

A recommendation is also to explore and encourage collaborations between financially oriented organisations (such as those providing micro-finance for women) and those in the African women's movement that traditionally has focused more on women's rights. This is based on the finding that women's rights organisations generally are ill equipped to link women's empowerment to economic sustainability on their own, whereas micro-finance institutions tend to have an insufficient understanding of gender equality issues.

- ***Development Partners should unpack and disentangle the issue of 'ownership' to make it clear whose ownership is essential for what change processes in order to most effectively promote gender equality.*** It is evident from this Evaluation that the promotion and broadening of 'ownership' of gender equality issues have more to do with grantees' efficient use of their individual comparative advantage and methods applied, rather than the origin or nature of the organisation implementing the project (international or African-led). It would be simplistic to assume that a broadened and locally rooted ownership of the gender equality agenda will occur by channelling funding through African networks as opposed to networks that are global or international in nature, just as it would be equally simplistic to assume that INGOs are necessarily the best qualified to intervene in post-conflict areas. Earmarking of funds for African and international networks therefore seems artificial, and the quality and track record of the organisation and its proposal should instead be guiding the selection. In other words, in the future, this basic premise for the Women in Africa support needs to be questioned and replaced with a more nuanced approach based on transparent management and selection criteria that are geared towards an outlined strategy and results framework.

1　Introduction

In 2006, the Danish government launched a five-step plan to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in Africa. A special allocation was earmarked for regional support initiatives to enhance African ownership and promote cooperation across boundaries. African organisations, think tanks and networks committed to promoting women's equal rights including equal access to resources and political influence qualified for this funding envelope which went under the name 'Women in Africa'. Another part of the funding envelope was geared towards INGOs working for the promotion of women's rights in post-conflict countries, also with a regional perspective. In the evaluation period (2006-end 2009), DKK 141.4 million have been channelled into these activities, managed by the Africa Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFA). Aside from providing funding to individual organisations, MFA has also aimed to facilitate collaboration among the grantee organisations to promote experience sharing and the planning of joint regional initiatives. In 2007-09 four workshops for all grantees were conducted and a fifth undertaken in October 2010[9].

In February 2010, a team of consultants from Nordic Consulting Group (NCG) was chosen to carry out an evaluation of activities funded under the 'Women in Africa' regional support initiative.[10]

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation of funding provided for regional initiatives under this Danish special budget appropriation referred to as 'Women in Africa'.

1.1　Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The overall objective of the Evaluation was to assess results and identify lessons from the overall approach and some specific experiences from sampled projects under the Women in Africa portfolio. This is to feed into the continued improvement of Danish support to gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. In particular, the Evaluation was to serve as a foundation for future directions of the Women in Africa initiative by assessing the value added of the approach and funded activities.[11]

Specific objectives, according to the TOR, are to assess:
*   The extent to which the activities financed have been relevant for the *promotion of gender equality in line with Danish policy priorities* as well as *regional* needs, priorities and possibilities, as well as other on-going activities supporting gender equality.
*   The extent to which the funding has served to promote *African ownership* of gender equality initiatives by working with relevant regional networks and INGOs promoting gender equality in Africa.
*   The extent to which the expected *outputs and outcomes have been delivered*.
*   The degree to which *capacities, networks and practices of inter-organisational learning* for enhancing gender equality has been strengthened.

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9) This falls outside of the evaluation period which covers 2006-end 2009.
10) It should be noted that the team of consultants was fully independent and that none of the consultants had been involved previously with the "Women in Africa" funding initiative.
11) TOR, Annex 1.

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- The extent to which the funds allocated have been *efficiently spent*, both in relation to the individual activities selected, and in relation to the overall portfolio.
- The extent to which the results achieved are *sustainable*, with emphasis on the issues of ownership and capacity.

1.2 Scope and coverage

The Evaluation covered, at varying degrees, all 15 grantees[12] under the Women in Africa support initiative during the indicated funding period (2006-end 2009)[13].

Kenya and Uganda were identified in the TOR as entry points for in-country field work and in-depth analysis of selected activities, given that most of the African grantees and two of the international organisations had operations and/or coordination offices in either of these countries. In addition to the visits to Kenya and Uganda, the Evaluation has carried out visits to headquarters or coordination offices of the INGOs in UK and Denmark.

1.3 Organisation of the report

The report is organised as follows:

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the Evaluation.
Chapter 2 describes the background and context of the regional support provided through the 'Women in Africa' budget appropriation.
Chapter 3 details the Evaluation approach and methodology.
Chapter 4 contains a mapping of grantees and activities supported.
Chapter 5 presents the detailed findings of the Evaluation related to the DAC standard evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.
Chapter 6 presents the conclusions from the Evaluation.
Chapter 7 presents the lessons learned from the Evaluation.
Chapter 8 lists the recommendations resulting from the Evaluation.

The report also includes the following annexes:

Annex 1: Terms of Reference
Annex 2: Table of geographical spread and coverage of funded activities
Annex 3: Example of cost analysis for central to lower levels of operations: AWEPON (Uganda/Kenya)

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12) Nine African networks, five INGOs and an initiative channelled through the World Bank.
13) Including 2010 reporting which contained the latter of 2009 activities.

2 Background and context to 'Women in Africa'

The 'Women in Africa' regional support initiative refers to MFA funding set aside in 2006 in response to the Danish five-step plan[14] to boost support to gender equality and women's empowerment through regional interventions. It has two main components and types of grantees:

(i) Funding to *African networks with a regional focus* in order *to support African ownership* and cross-border collaborations on the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality, and

(ii) Funding to *international non-governmental organisations* (INGOs) and one World Bank initiative that apply a regional approach to promoting gender equality in *post-conflict countries and fragile states*.

The two main sub-groups of grantees differ quite substantially from each other in terms of institutional structures, operational approaches, technical, financial and organisational capacities and geographic targeting. The requirement to apply a regional approach applies for both groups, however. For this funding envelope, the 'regional approach' was defined to mean operations in at least three countries, with scope for learning and exchange of lessons between countries[15].

An allocation of DKK 40 million was made for African networks in 2006. In 2007, another DKK 40 million was set aside for African network organisations and INGOs plus DKK 20 million earmarked for (Danish) INGOs for initiatives in post-conflict countries. Since then, around DKK 30 million a year is channelled into these activities. In the 2006-2009 period covered by this evaluation, a total of DKK 141.4 million has been committed under the Women in Africa regional support initiative, with around DKK 101 million having been disbursed[16]. An overview of all Women in Africa grantees and the projects funded under this budget line is provided below in Table 2.1.

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14) Other types of funding made available in response to the five-step plan were: additional support for enhanced gender mainstreaming in bilateral programmes (Mali, Burkina Faso), and support to a Special Intervention in South Africa to combat victims of gender-based violence.
15) *Identification and Organisational Capacity Assessment of African Networks to Promote Gender Equality.* Capacitate & Kabell Konsulting Aps. February 2007.
16) Until April 2010.

Table 2.1   Overview table of Women in Africa grantees

Organisation	Project name/ Main focus	Allocation (DKK)	Time period
African-based networks			
African Rural & Agricultural Credit Association (AFRACA)	Micro-finance Consortium in Africa: Improving the economic base of rural women through credit facilities in Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia	2,607,018	2008-09 (2 yrs)
African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)	Strengthening AWDF's grant-making in the areas of HIV/AIDS and economic empowerment and institutional capacity	7,600,000	2007-09 (3 yrs)
African Women's Economic Policy Network (AWEPON)	Women's Economic Empowerment Programme (WEEP): Building productive capacities and access to markets for rural women, monitoring of economic policy for women's economic empowerment	7,221,638	2008-10 (3 yrs)
Egyptian Business Women's Association (EBWA)	The African Training Centre: Tailored training and mentoring for women entrepreneurs, including exchanges between Egyptian, Sudanese and Ethiopian partner organisations	2,835,000	2009-12 (3 yrs)
Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI)	Implementing the EASSI Strategic Plan, (Phase 1 and 2): Contributing to regional monitoring of implementation of commitments (BPfAs, MDGs, and UNSCR 1325).	2,600,000 7,000,000	2007-08 (2 yrs) 2009-11 (3 yrs)
Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)	Economic empowerment of girls within post-conflict countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi) through vocational training	4,975,000	2009-12 (3 yrs)
Gender Links	(i) Support to Gender Links activities on equal rights and good governance in Southern Africa (ii) Gender and the media	(i) 4,500,000 (ii) 4,800,000	(i) 2007-09 (3 yrs) (ii) 2008-10 (3 yrs)
Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices (IAC)	Support to continue implementation of the Common Agenda for Action for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (Phase 1 and 2)	3,500,000 6,425,770	2007-2009 (2 yrs) 2010-2013 (3 yrs)
Pastoralist & Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa (PENHA)	Women's Economic Empowerment in the Pastoral Areas in the Horn of Africa (Sudan, Uganda, Somaliland)	3,951,702	2008-10 (3 yrs)

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I NGOs and World Bank			
ActionAid International	- Reducing Violence Against Women in Humanitarian Emergencies (2007-09) - Enhancing Access to Justice for Conflict Affected Women (2010-12)	9,700,000 4,985,000	2007-09 (2.5 yrs) 2010-12 (2.5 yrs)
Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)	- Women in Post-conflict Situations: Sharing stories that bring change in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC Congo (Phase 1), - Voices for Hope: Women raising debates for change (Phase 2)	8,500,000 1,432,000	2007-2009 (2 yrs) 2009
Danish Refugee Council	Women Building Peace in Liberia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire	9,500,000	2007-08 (2 yrs)
International Alert	(i) Supporting women's peace-building priorities: Implementing UNSCR 1325 (ii) Promoting human security, anti-VAW	(i) 9,700,000 (ii) 4,840,256	2007-09 (3 yrs) 2008-10 (2.5 yrs)
Women for Women International	Women's economic empowerment: Developing business skills training	4,999,000	2009-2012 (3 yrs)
Learning for Equality Access and Peace (World Bank)	LEAP (Phase 1 & 2): Gender mainstreaming in demobilisation and reintegration programme in Great Lakes	9,000,000 12,600,000	2007-08 (2 yrs) 2008-10 (2.5 yrs)

All grants under the regional Women in Africa support initiative are managed and administered by the Africa Department in the MFA.

2.1 Identification and selection of grantees

A first identification mission to select African networks was undertaken in 2006-07 during which 22 networks in East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa and the Horn of Africa were identified. Seven African networks funded under this initiative were identified during this first identification mission[17].

In relation to regional initiatives in post-conflict areas, a gender and learning component to World Bank's Multi-country Demobilisation & Reintegration Program for the Great Lakes Region (MDRP), was funded (Learning for Equality, Access and Peace – LEAP), along with projects of ActionAid International and International Alert. Among the Danish NGOs, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and the Danish Refugee Council were selected for funding.

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17)   AWDF, AWEPON, FAWE, IAC, EASSI, PENHA, Gender Links.

In 2007, the revised Danish Strategy for sub-Saharan Africa[18] put an emphasis on economic growth and regional cooperation, as well as on fragile states, which also influenced the focus of the regional Women in Africa initiative. A second identification mission was commissioned by the MFA to *"further enhance its support to regional initiatives which can enhance women's economic empowerment, in particular activities aimed at promoting women's access to credit and women entrepreneurship."*[19] The increased Danish focus on women and economic growth was further confirmed by the Africa Commission, launched by the Danish Prime Minister, which called for a refocus of the development agenda for Africa on private sector-led growth and job creation.[20]

In addition to this regional support initiative, the Danish programme countries also received separate bilateral allocations, starting with the new programme countries. The regional focus was meant to *"complement on-going efforts in bilateral development cooperation among Danida partner countries and NGO efforts at national and community levels undertaken with financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs"*[21]. The increased focus on economic empowerment in 2007 proved challenging, however, as the second identification report – finalised in April 2008 – pointed out that *"previous research has shown that women's economic empowerment does not feature high on the agenda in regional cooperation, which has been more dominated by women's rights issues and setting regional goal posts for women's political representation."*[22] The second identification report included consultations with selected African networks and organisations to prepare specific project proposals which Danida could consider for funding.[23] All of the proposals were accepted for funding with financing agreements signed late 2007[24].

Of those grantees identified and selected for funding during the second identification phase, all but one[25] had already been identified during the initial identification mission undertaken in 2006-07. Organisations that were revisited at this stage were asked to reintroduce or further develop their initial project ideas with a stronger focus on economic empowerment and women's entrepreneurship[26]. Others, such as AWEPON, which were identified in 2006 but considered weak at the time, were now included for funding given their economic focus. As part of this identification and selection process, a couple of additional projects from existing grantees were also assessed even though it was not focused on economic empowerment[27].

18) Danmark i Afrika – Et Kontinent på Vej. Africa Strategy, August 2007.
19) Terms of Reference for Identification and Organisational Capacity Assessment of Networks to Promote Women's Economic Empowerment in Eastern and Southern Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007.
20) Africa Commission, Realizing the Potential for Africa's Youth. Report of the Africa Commission. May 2009.
21) Five-point plan to support gender equality and women's empowerment in Danish development cooperation, 2006.
22) Networks to Promote Women's Economic Empowerment in Eastern and Southern Africa. A study undertaken for the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. April 2008, Capacitate.
23) TOR for Identification and Organisational Capacity Assessment of Networks, MFA 2007 (as above).
24) Funding to one of the organisations was discontinued and returned to Danida due to irregularities in the organisation's governance structures and the potential for mismanagement of funds. This organisation is therefore not included in the Evaluation.
25) The Micro-finance Consortium led by AFRACA.
26) E.g. FAWE, PENHA – based on interviews with the organisations who said they were asked to tailor their proposals around women's economic empowerment and women's entrepreneurship.
27) Gender Links initiating its 'Gender and media' project and International Alert introducing a second project to address security threats for women and girls in MRU countries. The rationale for their selection in relation to economic empowerment is not detailed in the identification report.

No clearly defined selection criteria were identified apart from the consultant's TOR for the identification missions. However, according to the second identification report for selection of grantees to enhance economic empowerment, the following criteria were used for identification of project organisations: (i) relevance of mandate and programme to Danida objectives, (ii) outreach to regional membership and linkages to other relevant organisations, (iii) capacity to manage staff and donor funding, (iv) financial sustainability avoiding heavy reliance on Danida funding, (v) availability of project proposals and/or specific ideas to promote women economic empowerment.[28]

For the INGOs and the World Bank programme operating in post-conflict countries, selected organisations were approached and invited to submit proposals directly to Danida in 2006 (ActionAid, International Alert and the World Bank's LEAP programme). In the case of Danish NGOs, the invitation to express interest was open through the NGO network. Thirteen Danish NGOs submitted their interest, of which two were selected[29]. Women for Women International (WfWI) approached Danida directly with their proposal, and joined as a grantee in 2009.

2.2 Start-up support and monitoring

The identification and start-up phase was lengthy with identification taking place in 2006, and some initially identified organisations starting their activities as late as in 2009. Due to the perceived low level of capacity among identified African networks, the start-up phase also involved extensive training and coaching from Danida to identified grantees. An initial training seminar was undertaken at the Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke (MS) Training Centre for Development Cooperation in Arusha in May 2007 to provide hands-on assistance to previously identified and potential grantees in formulating their proposals. The Micro-finance Consortium in Africa, channelled through AFRACA, sprang out of this process in which AFRACA and the International Network of Alternative Financial Institutions (INAFI) came together specifically to qualify for the regional funding available through this initiative. Further coaching from Danida to finalise proposals and to set up systems for monitoring and reporting followed this initial phase.

In addition to the African networks identified during the two identification missions in 2006-07 and 2007-08, the Egyptian Business Women's Association (EBWA) joined in 2009 based on a referral by the Danish Embassy in Cairo. Given the regional focus of activities covering at least three countries, EBWA teamed up with their partners in Sudan and Ethiopia for their proposal development.

Yearly seminars over five days have been organised by Danida to gather and meet with all 15 grantee organisations to get updates on implementation for monitoring purposes. During the evaluation period (2006-09) four seminars were organised, of which three were held in Denmark and one in Johannesburg.[30] A grant allocation of DKK 2,332,000 was approved in 2008 to organise three of these seminars, not covering the initial identification and training costs of grantees.

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28)   Extracted from the two identification reports referred to.
29)   Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA Denmark) and Danish Refugee Council.
30)   Seminars were intended to alternate between being held in a country in Africa and Denmark in the future.

Discussions on project progress with the organisations were considered an integrated part of the yearly seminars, where specific time slots were dedicated to bilateral sessions with each of the supported organisations to discuss implementation progress. Given that the monitoring approach was to bring grantees to a central location for dialogue, rather than visiting projects and grantees in their areas of operations, no additional reviews or monitoring missions have been undertaken by the MFA. Danish embassies have not been actively involved in liaising with Women in Africa grantees. However, occasionally embassy staff has commented on project proposals. In some cases, where proposals or organisations related to countries with no embassy, relevant staff in other departments of the MFA has been consulted.

Another purpose of the seminars have been to encourage networking, sharing and learning between different grantees.

2.3 Regional policy and country contexts

A unique feature of the Women in Africa funding was its exclusive focus on support to regional initiatives to promote gender equality in Africa. The added value of the regional dimension of the support was also emphasised in the TOR for the Evaluation. The background to gender provisions in the pan-African and regional context is explained below, as well as linkages to country contexts exemplified by the two focus countries for this evaluation.

During the identification phase for the Women in Africa support initiative, Kenya and Uganda served as a platform and entry-point in the identification of initiatives to support given the presence of several regional women networks and INGOs in either of the two countries. For the same reason, these two countries were preselected[31] as case countries for in-depth study for this Evaluation.

The pan-African context
Recent years have seen an upsurge of initiatives at the regional level across Africa and at a pan-African level through the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has also gained importance and influence in upholding standards and mutual commitments across African states.
Some of these initiatives have also successfully included provisions for women's rights and gender equality, and have potentially provided for new entry-points for advocacy and lobbying for women's rights at different regional, sub-regional and national levels.

For instance, AU member states have adopted the AU Gender Policy, the Africa Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (the "Democracy Charter") among others. So far, 27 countries have also ratified the African Women's Rights Protocol which came into force in 2005, a protocol all AU member states committed themselves to ratifying through the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) in 2004. In 2009, AU Heads of States and Governments also declared that 2010-20 would be marked as the African Women's Decade.

In other words, there are many positive developments that have already taken place at the highest policy level in pan-African institutions, and there is momentum and political will at that level to advance the gender equality agenda.

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31)   As per TOR for this Evaluation.

An important challenge lies in translating these policy commitments and guidelines into action at national level, and the rate of reporting is still low. Most African countries that have ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa have not reported annually to the AU on the progress made on its domestication and implementation as required under the SDGEA.

On the side of civil society, a number of international, regional and nationally based civil society groups have also organised themselves to influence and monitor the ratification and domestication of the African Women's Rights Protocol through Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition.[32]

The increased focus on looking for pan-African and regional solutions is mirrored by an increased interest among CSOs to engage with and influence such processes. Regional institutions have been slow to open up to constructive engagement with civil society, partly due to their own weak capacities to do so and in relation to establishing effective engagement frameworks.[33]

Based on initial experiences from involving civil society in national African Peer Review Mechanism processes at national and grassroots levels in Kenya, civil society has also generally been slow in the up-take of the new opportunities provided at country-level for influencing and inputting into wider regional processes and mechanisms.[34]

The Africa Women's Regional Shadow Report on Beijing +15, compiled by the African Women's Development and Communications Network notes that women's civil society organisations have expanded the democratic spaces for women to engage in global and regional fora. At national levels, gender mainstreaming in development planning and implementation of poverty reduction strategies have been adopted in many countries as a benchmark for good governance. However, the report also notes that few of the women's organisations are equally involved in operationalising gender mainstreaming at national and sector levels – an area that some of the women's networks are just now slowly getting into in order to gather best practices.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) is also active in monitoring government implementation of commitments. It produces the African Women's Report as a stock-taking mechanism, with the African Women's Progress Scorecard as a widely accepted set of indicators.[35]

The regional and national contexts in Evaluation case countries
The East African Community (EAC) has developed a Gender Strategic Plan covering the period 2009-14 which sets out targets, activities and responsibilities among partner governments[36]. It covers all relevant areas to operationalise gender mainstreaming policies and ensure effective gender machineries and institutions at national levels. Moreover it covers the role of women in social development, the role of women in business etc. The EAC has acknowledged that implementation of this strategy will be a challenge, and has

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32) See www.soawr.org
33) For various examples and research on this topic, see: Forum International de Montréal at www. fimcivilsociety.org
34) Research undertaken by Open Society International East Africa, 2007 on CSO involvement in the APRM concludes that most CSOs "maintained a sporadic and uncoordinated involvement, mainly consisting of attending meetings".
35) See African Gender and Development Index, Economic Commission for Africa, www.uneca.org
36) Downloadable from www.eac.int

identified partnerships with civil society as a means of working with national governments for its implementation.

At national levels, both Kenya and Uganda have gradually seen the widening of space for women to influence and participate in public policy over the last decades since introduction of multi-party democracy in the early/mid-nineties. Though this has led to a gradual increase of the number of women in Parliament, remaining challenges include the process of bringing gender into policies and structures of different political parties, and coalescing women around issues of common interests above and beyond party and ethnic lines.

In Kenya, the oldest women's organisation, which has the largest membership of individual women's groups at grassroots level[37] was politically co-opted during the Moi-era. Other well-established and older organisations, specifically catering for the practical needs of women, spring out of the former missionary and faith-based tradition.[38] Since the introduction of multi-partyism in the early nineties, numerous other women's organisations have emerged at national level, often elite-led and engaged in advocacy, with weaker grassroots ties. Coalitions and networks have formed largely along ethno-political lines. This has led to the emergence of a national women's movement that in the past has been vulnerable to political wrangling and which has remained divided along ethnical lines in debates around e.g. the proposed new Constitution when it was first up for national referendum in 2005 and in the lead-up to the national elections of 2007. This also slowed down the national response from civil society in general, including CSOs involved in gender equality issues, in relation to the post-electoral violence that broke out in early 2008. However, Kenya has many vibrant and influential groups in the women's movement, as does Uganda. In Kenya, the multi-donor basket fund Gender and Governance Programme, administered by Unifem, is an important effort to coordinate donor support to women's political empowerment and influence in local and national decision-making.

Both Kenya and Uganda have committed to gender equality through international law and is party to many key international conventions on the status of women, including the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Only some of these commitments have been effectively translated into domestic law and operationalised in practice. Personal law is the area where the most blatant gender inequalities are accepted, through discrimination against women in customary law, which is founded on social, cultural and traditional practices and norms.

The Social Institutions and Gender Index, developed by the OECD Development Centre, examines women's status in five key areas: (i) family code: early marriage, parental authority, polygamy and inheritance rights; (ii) physical integrity: violence against women and female genital mutilation, (iii) son preference: 'missing women'; (iv) civil liberties: women's freedom of movement and dress; (v) ownership rights: women's access to land, property and credit. In the 2009 ranking, both Kenya and Uganda are among the bottom half of the 102 non-OECD countries, with Kenya being somewhat better at 57 compared to Uganda being ranked at 73[39].

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37) Maendaleao ya Wanawake.
38) Organisations such as Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the umbrella network National Council of Churches of Kenya.
39) See: http://genderindex.org/ranking.

There have been positive policy developments in the field of gender both in Kenya and Uganda.

The Government of Uganda (GoU) endorsed its first Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) in 1997, as well as its first national Gender Policy the same year. The PEAP was subsequently revised in 2000 and 2004, with considerable effort to mainstream gender into the latest version. The Uganda Gender Policy was revised in 2007 in line with the Uganda's Vision 2025. It recognises the importance of using Sector Wide Approaches and the Medium Term Expenditure Framework as mechanisms to enhance gender focused programming and gender equity budgeting. In 2009, a national policy on gender-based violence was developed to operationalise the National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 and 1820.[40] The main objective is to protect women in armed conflict zones and the internally displaced living in camps. This is further supporting on-going efforts to involve women in the peace building, reconciliation, rehabilitation and recovery processes as reflected in the Peace Recovery and Development Plan 2007-10; a framework that is expected to guide the recovery and rehabilitation process in Northern Uganda.

The GoU is also actively participating in efforts aimed at strengthening regional integration. At the regional level, new developments include processes alluding to further regional integration. These include revival of the East African Community and subsequently the establishment of the East African Legislative Assembly with representatives from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

In Kenya, the Sessional Paper No. 2 2006 on Gender and Development provides a framework for operationalisation of gender mainstreaming into policy, planning and programming. Other important legislation includes the Sexual Offences Act (2006) which addresses rape, defilement, sexual assault, child trafficking (including child sex tourism and prostitution), trafficking for sexual exploitation and incest. Of importance is also the Children's Act for protection of the girl child (including prohibition of FGM on minor girls)[41]. A new bill has also been prepared to legally ensure a total ban of the practice of FGM, as only women below 18 years were protected previously under the Children's Act. The Kenyan government has institutionalised its commitment to addressing gender inequalities by creating a National Commission on Gender and Development (2003), the National Gender and Development Secretariat and the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services in 2004, as well as initiating Gender Desks in various ministries (gender focal points/divisions). A Parliamentary Committee on Gender and Development has also been established.

Moreover, largely as a result of Kenya's participation in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) under NEPAD, there is a Presidential Decree of 30% affirmative action in terms of minimum number of women for formal appointees to public posts. A 'Women Enterprise and Development Fund' has also been established as an initiative towards reducing poverty through economic empowerment of women.

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40) UNSCR 1325 aims to strengthen women's participation in decision-making in the prevention of conflict and peace-building, whereas UNSCR 1820 aims to end sexual violence and impunity.

41) However, this law only gives legal protection to girls under 18 years of age, which is why a new bill to be tabled in Parliament on abandonment of FGM is currently being prepared.

3 Methodology and approach

3.1 Application of evaluation criteria

In terms of the analytical approach, the evaluation has been based around four of the five OECD/DAC standard evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability)[42].

It is important to keep in mind however that this regional funding initiative under the common name of Women in Africa has not been guided by any strategic targets, or explicit rationale for how different types of grantees or approaches are to complement other Danish support in the area of gender equality. There is therefore no clear foundation for assessing its collective contribution to other on-going efforts to promote gender equality in Danish bilateral assistance, other than against what was stipulated as objectives and rationale in the initial five-point plan[43] along with recommendations from the Africa Commission emphasising economic empowerment and a focus on fragile states.

It is also necessary to keep in mind the vast differences between the two main groups of grantees (African networks and INGOs), identified and selected through different selection processes[44], for different purposes and on different grounds. At the same time, as explained in Section 3.3 below, the groups have been covered with rather different intensity by this Evaluation. It has therefore been necessary in the overall portfolio assessment, to distinguish between the two main groups, knowing that there is also wide diversity within these two sub-groups. The Evaluation has used similar criteria and overall evaluation questions for the assessments of INGOs and African network organisations and projects. However, subsequent analysis reflects the differences in their institutional structures as well as the grounds for selecting grantees within the two groups.

Another factor that should be kept in mind is the fact that that several of the Women in Africa grantees, such as INGOs, PENHA and FAWE – are working in post-conflict states/fragile areas, where the challenges related to implementation may have implications for the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability aspects of the support negatively. This must of course be considered in relation to the evaluative assessments.

Below is briefly presented the overall definition of how the OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria were applied, together with the key questions[45] and issues through which this Evaluation has adapted these criteria:

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42) The Evaluation has not looked into the fifth criteria, *impact*, due to the very recent start-up of most supported project activities.
43) As referred to above.
44) The identification reports are unclear on this matter. The first identification report (2007) only assesses African networks, while the second identification report on economic empowerment includes the proposed inclusion of a project from International Alert on 'Empowering women and girls to alleviate the security threats in their communities: promoting human security in Manu River Union (MRU) countries', which does not have any specific focus on economic empowerment.
45) The questions are a further development and fine-tuning of the evaluation questions from the TOR.

Relevance

According to the OECD/DAC "relevance" is defined as the *extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.* The Evaluation has used the following sub-headings and key questions/issues for the relevance analysis:

Relevance at overall Women in Africa portfolio level:
- The degree to which portfolio activities are *thematically* and *geographically* relevant for the promotion of gender equality as reflected in *Danish policy priorities.*

- The degree to which the selected overall approach (of channelling regional support via African networks, INGOs and multilaterals in post-conflict countries) is relevant in order to *contribute to African ownership at different levels.*

- Appropriateness of *portfolio composition and/or diversity* in relation to the grounds covered and results produced by the regional initiatives of the budget line, including division of labour between and within the networks.

Relevance at the project level:
- The degree to which project activities are relevant in light of *local/national and regional priorities, needs and possibilities.*

- The degree to which the project designs include *innovative elements.*

Effectiveness

According to OECD/DAC "effectiveness" is *a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives.* The Evaluation has developed the following key questions/issues for the effectiveness analysis at the project activity level:
- The extent to which activities have led to the intended *outputs and outcomes*, or are likely to do so.

- Identification and assessment of the *major factors influencing* the achievements or non-achievements, including potential complementarities and synergies with other Danida supported programmes.

- The degree to which *capacities, networks and practices of inter-organisational learning* for enhancing gender equality has been strengthened.

- Evidence of *strengthened capacities* at organisational and/or beneficiary level that have led to change(s) in work processes or approaches.

Since no objectives have been established at the overall portfolio level, the Evaluation will use the assessments made at the project levels to make an overall judgement of the effectiveness at the overall portfolio level of the Women in Africa regional support initiative, by looking at the average performance and variations at the project activity level. Those projects where the findings seem to be more robust and triangulated will be weighted higher.

Efficiency

According to OECD/DAC "efficiency" *measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs.* Efficiency is therefore, in principle, an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired

results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. Given the diversity of grantees and approaches under the Women in Africa initiative, it is difficult to apply this strict interpretation of efficiency to the grantees collectively or individually since all work in different contexts and with different objectives. The Evaluation therefore interprets the term more loosely in terms of assessed 'value for money' for different types of interventions and approaches with an effort to compare general patterns across the portfolio of grantees where and when possible. Nevertheless, some patterns can be discerned from the main groups of grantees such as African networks, INGOs and one large multilateral World Bank programme. In order to assess the efficiency, the Evaluation has focussed on the following key questions/issues:

*Efficiency at **overall portfolio level**:*
- Evidence of *synergies or collaborations from inter- or intra-network sharing, or from cross-country learning* that has led to improved outputs and outcomes (e.g. evidence of members within or between networks carrying out new or joint activities leading to improved outputs and outcomes),

- Level of investment in *administrative costs, management, coaching and overall portfolio monitoring versus supporting activities* to generate expected outputs and outcomes.

- Extent of *added value of regional approach* in relation to accompanying investments and expected learning.

*Efficiency at **project level**:*
- *Transaction cost, and 'value for money'* in relation to project outputs and outcomes against overall goal achievement.

- The extent to which the project activities have contributed to generating *synergies and linkages to other Danida supported initiatives* to promote gender equality.

- The degree to which project activities have been implemented in a *timely manner*, with appropriate sequencing of interventions and handling of programme funds.

Sustainability
According to OECD/DAC "sustainability" is concerned with *measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.* Within this context, a key concern is to what extent the benefits of a project or an initiative continue after ceasing of donor funding. The following key questions/issues have been used by the Evaluation as guidance for this analysis:

*Sustainability at the **overall portfolio level**:*
- Level of *replication of good practice*, including across organisations and borders.

- Level of perceived *learning and sharing of best practice* between grantees at Danida-funded annual Women in Africa seminars.

*Sustainability at the **project level**:*
- Level of the organisations' *financial dependency* on Danida and/or few funding sources.

- Degree of *coherence* between project activities and core functions (strategic plans) of grantees.

- Level of *involvement* and *perceived ownership of grantees and project beneficiaries* in identification, design and implementation of the projects.

- Likelihood for activities to *sustain momentum* beyond project period, e.g. through links to broader 'women's movement' or other on-going policy or change processes.

Below follows a detailing of the key methodological tools applied by the Evaluation, including for sampling and analysis.

3.2 Methodological issues

A number of specific methodological tools have been applied by the Evaluation. These have included:

Document review: With the assistance of Danida, a wide range of documentation was made available covering policy documents, identification reports, project proposals, project documents, financing agreements, budgetary information, project progress and completion reports etc. Other material was assembled directly from the organisations supported, from other key stakeholders met and interviewed, from web-sites etc.

Key informant interviews: A number of individuals have been interviewed as part of this evaluation, including Danida and Danish embassy staff in the two focus countries (Kenya and Uganda), management and staff from the supported organisations and their national/local counterparts, end-project beneficiaries, key government persons in the focus countries, representatives from other donor agencies and funding partners, consultants and researchers from academic institutions. The interviews have been guided by semi-structured interview guides.

Study country visits: Around two weeks was spent in Kenya and Uganda, which were preselected study countries for project sampling and field visits to according to the TOR. The time spent in each country was split between meetings with key stakeholders in and around the capital cities (Nairobi and Kampala) and visits to sites where interventions were taking place and where local implementing organisations and a range of beneficiaries and other local stakeholders were met.

Visits to headquarters of INGOs in UK (London) and Denmark (Copenhagen): A two-day visit was carried out to UK (London) to visit and make interviews with the INGOs that have been supported. Likewise, visits and interviews were made at the headquarters of the supported Danish NGOs.

A key methodological concern for the Evaluation has been that no explicit objectives and targets were established for the Women in Africa regional support initiative at the overall portfolio level during the identification and management of these grants. Likewise, at the project level, interventions are in general not guided by result-oriented frameworks and the existence of relevant monitoring data is limited[46]. At the same time, many of the projects are still on-going or even in their very initial stages of implementation. This clearly

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46) This is particularly the case for projects channelled through African networks.

presents limitations to the evidence-base for this Evaluation. Since the Evaluation covers the period 2006-09, those projects approved for a start-up in 2010 falls beyond the scope for further analysis[47] but were included in the overall mapping when allocations were made before the end of 2009[48].

Following the above-mentioned data limitations, the Evaluation has to a large extent had to rely on stakeholder perceptions. In general, opinions have been diverse and contested. Whenever possible, perceptions and judgments have been validated with information across different groups and documentary sources. However, even the literature is diverse and debated on issues of e.g. women's economic empowerment. There is also a relative lack of documentation specific to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment through a regional approach.

3.3   Sampling and coverage

The two selected case countries for this Evaluation, Kenya and Uganda, allowed for the Evaluation to cover as big a sample as possible during the limited time available, given that it was the countries with the largest number of grantees present. Selecting two countries from the same region also allowed the Evaluation to look more in-depth at the regional dimension and how it was carried out at different levels. All grantees with organisational headquarters and/or operations in either of the two countries could be sampled to varying degrees.[49] Among the African networks, those based in Kenya and Uganda were also among the first to be identified as grantees for the budget line – several signed Finance Agreements with Danida already in 2006 – whereas others identified at the same time joined as formal partners later.

In Kenya and Uganda, the Evaluation was able to meet grassroots level implementers and end beneficiaries of six of the nine African networks[50], regional coordination offices of five of the African and two of the international grantees[51], and national level counterparts/implementers of four of the African networks[52]. The field visits also included interviews with key stakeholders and informants, grantees and other relevant organisations as well as direct beneficiaries.

For four of the African networks, the Evaluation was able to follow *the full implementation chain* through personal meetings and validation meetings, namely:

- *Pastoralist & Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa (PENHA)* where visits included: international coordination offices in London (UK), project/regional coordination office in Kampala, and field visits to grassroots implementers and end beneficiaries among pastoralist groups in Western Uganda.

- *African Women's Economic Policy Network (AWEPON)* with visits to regional headquarters in Kampala, the national counterpart Young Women's Christian Associa-

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47)   ActionAid's "Access to Justice" project, IAC Phase 2.
48)   E.g. Women for Women International.
49)   With the exception of IAC, for which a site visit was only possible to carry out in Uganda, while only telephone contacts were made with the organisations headquarter in Addis Ababa. In Kenya, it was not possible to visit IAC operations due to logistical challenges in the area of operations.
50)   AWDF, AWEPON, AFRACA, EASSI, IAC and PENHA.
51)   AWEPON, AFRACA, PENHA, EASSI and FAWE as well as ActionAid and LEAP (World Bank).
52)   AWEPON, AFRACA, PENHA and EASSI.

tion (YWCA) in Nairobi, and field visits to three women's groups of end beneficiaries in two districts of the Nyanza Province in western Kenya,

- *African Rural & Agricultural Credit Association (AFRACA)* through a visit at the headquarter office in Nairobi, the national focal point the Kenyan Women's Finance Trust (KWFT), and field visits to see the regional coordination office in Eldoret for the North Western province, and visits to rural women's groups and micro-finance clients around Eldoret, including field staff that benefitted from the Danida-funded training of trainers.

- *Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI)* with regional headquarters in Kampala was visited at regional level, at country-level through the national focal point in Nairobi – The Caucus on Women's Leadership – and among grassroots organisations collaborating with EASSI on the specific issue of anti-FGM campaigns, namely the Karpchorwa Paralegals Association in Uganda.

A complete list of grantees present in Kenya and Uganda, covered by the Evaluation is included in the box below.

Kenya:
(a) **Organisations with HQ or regional offices in Kenya, but operations elsewhere:** FAWE[53], ActionAid International.
(b) **Organisations with operations in/covering Kenya:** EASSI through its national focal point Caucus for Women's Leadership, AWDF local grantees under HIV/AIDS fund (two organisations sampled), IAC national focal point, AFRACA Secretariat and its national implementer Kenya Women's Finance Trust (KWFT), AWEPON through its national focal point Young Christian Women's Association (YWCA).

Uganda:
(a) **Organisations with HQ or regional offices and operations in Uganda:** AWEPON, EASSI.
(b) **Organisations with operations covering Uganda:** AWDF grantees, ActionAid Uganda, LEAP-II, PENHA, IAC (national focal point).

Sampling among organisational activities at lower levels of operation in the two focus countries was often determined by where the national counterpart had its activities. For instance, AWEPON was only implementing field level activities through one local branch of its national partner Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Kenya, and AFRACA's national counterpart in Kenya was only present in one geographic area with Danida-funded activities. AWDF as a grant-making body, however, had six Danida-financed grantees in Kenya, and 12 in Uganda at the time of the Evaluation. Of these, one Danida-financed grantee and one other AWDF grantee were sampled in Kenya from their HIV/AIDS fund, and two grantees were sampled in Uganda.

Given the central objective of the Evaluation to assess the extent to which the portfolio of activities has promoted African ownership of the gender equality initiatives, it seemed

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53)   Skype meetings were organised with programme coordinators in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burundi.

relevant to cover in-depth as many as possible of the African networks. The Danish five-point plan specifically argued for a special allocation for *"African actors and their work"* to promote gender equality. The initial allocation of DKK 40 million to be spent for this purpose was to: *"anchor the work ... in African regional and sub-regional organisations as well as in African think tanks and networks"*.[54]

The other initial allocation under the Women in Africa envelope of DKK 20 million for *"strategic interventions and methods development regarding women in conflict and post-conflict countries"* does not have the same pronounced focus on African ownership, but rather places emphasis on innovative approaches and methods development.

The sampling implies an implicit information bias, however, since operations for in-depth analysis in Kenya and Uganda do not include any sample from the group of INGOs selected to work in post-conflict countries and fragile states. The INGOs were covered through visits and personal interviews at their headquarters in UK/Denmark. However, this did not allow for validation of information to the same extent as for information on the sampled African networks in Kenya and Uganda. Other African networks, such as Gender Links, operating in Southern Africa and the Egyptian Business Women's Association based in Cairo[55] were also covered less in-depth as part of the overall portfolio assessment without field validation and assessments of specific activities. EBWA also started to implement its activities in early 2010, beyond the time period of the Evaluation.

In the case of FAWE, with organisational headquarters in Nairobi, a more in-depth discussion could be conducted at headquarter level, including Skype interactions with the implementing Chapters in Liberia, Burundi and Sierra Leone. Given that FAWE is a well-known actor in Kenya, key informants could also validate some of the information about FAWE as an organisation. However, no site-visits and meetings with project stakeholders and end-beneficiaries at national level could be undertaken. FAWE were also at the very early stages of implementation, with their financing agreement with Danida signed only in July 2009[56].

For IAC, with only small country-level operations in specific (often remote) areas, it was possible to make a visit to their operations in Uganda, whereas it proved too logistically difficult in Kenya. Phone interviews were instead conducted with the IAC national focal point in Kenya and with their organisational headquarter in Addis Ababa.

Key informant interviews to validate the information gathered in the two focus countries included representatives from Danish embassies, other donor agencies, academics, consultants/national gender experts, representatives from national and regional women's organisations.

The table below outlines the extent to which the different organisations have been covered by the Evaluation in addition to a literature review for each of organisations including review of all programme documents, progress reports and, where relevant, end of project reports.

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54) "Kvinder som drivkraft for udvikling: Hovedelementer i 5-punktsplan for kvinder i Afrika" (2006). English translation in the text is done by the Evaluation and is not an official translation of the plan which was only available in Danish.

55) National partners in the consortium are in Ethiopia and Sudan.

56) FAWE was identified as a potential grantee already in 2006 and had an initial allocation in 2007. But due to leadership changes and a revised Strategic Plan, FAWE's initial contract with Danida was discontinued, and a new proposal and financing agreement was established in late 2009.

(i) African network grantees

Organisation	Personal visits to headquarter / regional coordination office	Personal interviews/ visit to national focal point or chapter	Visit to local implementing branch or organisation	Interviews with end beneficiaries	Phone/ online interviews with implementers/ managers	Validation of information with key informants
AFRACA	√	√	√	√	N/A	√
AWDF	--	--	√	√	√	√
AWEPON	√	√	√	√	N/A	√
EBWA	--	--	--	--	√	--
EASSI	√	√	√	N/A*	N/A	√
FAWE	√	--	--	--	√	√
Gender Links	--	--	--	--	√	--
IAC	--	--	√	--	√	√
PENHA	√	√	√	√	N/A	√

(√ = coverage, -- = no coverage at this level, N/A= not applicable for this organisation)
*End-beneficiaries of EASSI's operations are unclear as they work mostly 'upwards' towards regional bodies

(ii) Danish and international NGOs and World Bank

Organisation	Personal visits to international headquarter/ office (UK, Denmark)	Personal visit to regional/ national coordination office	Visit to local implementing branch or organisation	Interviews with end beneficiaries	Phone/ online interviews with implementers/ managers	Validation of information through other external evaluations/ literature
ActionAid-I	√	√*	--	--	--	√
ADRA	√	--	--	--	--	√
DRC	√	--	--	--	--	√
Int. Alert	√	--	--	--	--	√
WfWI	√	--	--	--	--	√
LEAP (WB)	--	√	--	--	√	--

(√ = coverage, -- = no coverage at this level, N/A= not applicable for this organisation)
*Visit to ActionAid-Uganda, however the project carried out during 2007-09 was not coordinated from Uganda, and the project scheduled to start in 2010 was not covered by this Evaluation as it had not yet started

3.4 Analytical strategy

As indicated above, at the overall portfolio level, there are considerable differences in relation to the depths of the project analysis. For sampled activities in focus countries, where visits have been carried out by the Evaluation to both international and/or regional headquarter offices, national partner organisations and to project sites and beneficiary groups, the analysis is obviously based on more solid and validated information than in those cases where the major source of information has been through a review of the organisations' own reports, and other secondary information, complemented by telephone interviews.

Furthermore, the Women in Africa portfolio combines two points in the Danish five-point plan to promote women's empowerment, and thus two quite different groups of grantees: (i) *African networks with a regional focus* in order to support African ownership and cross-border collaborations, and (ii) *Danish and international NGOs and organisations* for initiatives that apply a regional approach to promoting gender equality in post-conflict countries and fragile states.

The imbalance in information on different projects and grantees and the difference between the groups of grantees has obviously been a challenge to this Evaluation with a view to carry out an *overall mapping of activities* supported in the Women in Africa portfolio, as well as more *in-depth assessments of a sample* of activities.

A comparison across *all* grantees cannot be exhaustive or conclusive, but can at best give some indications, or highlight specific examples of what seems to work well, or less well under different circumstances, e.g. by using different approaches, institutional set-ups, or different entry-points in a regional context. Given the diverse level of coverage by the Evaluation of different grantees, in line with the scope and limits of the assignment, the in-depth project assessments of sampled organisations and activities have therefore also been used particularly to highlight examples and trends in overall portfolio performance.

Overall portfolio level assessment
This assessment was conducted against the criteria outlined in Section 3.1.

It is necessary to keep in mind the vast differences between the two main groups of grantees (African networks and INGOs), identified and selected through different selection processes[57], for different purposes and on different grounds, with INGOs focusing exclusively on post-conflict countries and the funds for African-led networks being earmarked to increase African ownership. It has therefore been necessary, in the overall portfolio assessment, to distinguish between the two main groups, knowing that there is also wide diversity within these two sub-groups.

During in-country interviews in Kenya and Uganda, key informants from other donors, academic and research institutions, independent experts and from national women's organisations were also interviewed to validate information both on organisational level and in relation to the overall approach of the Women in Africa support initiative. Information was also reviewed from other similar initiatives, such as the Dutch MDG3 Fund.

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57) The identification reports are unclear on this matter. The first identification report (2007) only assesses African networks, while the second identification report on economic empowerment includes the proposed inclusion of a project from International Alert on 'Empowering women and girls to alleviate the security threats in their communities: promoting human security in MRU countries', which does not have any specific focus on economic empowerment.

In-depth organisational/project assessments

The sample for in-depth organisational assessments was defined by the organisations' geographic locations, as outlined in Section 3.3. Within the case countries, site visits were organised in consultation with the grantee organisations[58]. The selection was based on getting a wide coverage of the different thematic orientations (in the areas of income generation, sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, political empowerment). Other considerations were also taken into account, such as covering the whole chain of operating levels (international-regional-national-beneficiary levels) when possible.

Given the focus on strengthen the organisational capacities of African networks, the Evaluation sought to assess grantees at a more overall organisational level as well as in relation to their specific Danida-funded project activities.

In-depth organisational/project assessments were carried out for all grantees that the Evaluation had an opportunity to review more in-depth through visits in Kenya or Uganda, and where both end-beneficiaries and key informants were interviewed to validate findings. *Partial organisational assessments/organisational profiles* were compiled for those organisations where the level of coverage was less complete. These assessments contributed to the mapping and analysis of the overall budget line.

For organisations covered more in-depth it should be noted that they are all are African-led networks (even though PENHA has a small London-based coordination secretariat) that generally are smaller in size, and with weaker institutional structures than many of the international organisations and implementers for the budget line. Three of the five organisations for more in-depth assessment have had issues with mismanagement of funds at secretariat level, which led to severe delays in implementation for one of them[59]. This may have had a *negative bias* on the overall findings.

On the other hand, for some of those organisations covered less in-depth, the basis of organisational and project assessments was information provided by the organisations themselves (through literature review, and interviews with the organisations). This could lead to a *positive information bias* since much of the information was not validated by independent sources or through interviews with implementers at lower levels and/or end beneficiaries. These sources of potential bias will be addressed in the discussion and analysis of the findings (Chapter 4).

Interplay between organisational and overall portfolio levels

Although a comparison across *all* grantees cannot be exhaustive or conclusive, the Evaluation has tried to ensure, to the extent possible, a fruitful interplay between the different levels of analysis in order to give some indications, or highlight specific examples of what seems to work well, or less well under different circumstances, e.g. by using different approaches, institutional set-ups, or different entry-points in a regional context.

Given the diverse level of coverage by the Evaluation of different grantees, in line with the scope and limits of the assignment, the in-depth project assessments of sampled or-

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58) Except for Single Mothers' Association Kenya (SMAK) for which the meeting was set up directly by the consultants. SMAK is an AWDF grantee, but did not directly benefit from Danida funding. However, they were included as a sample of a grantee of the AWDF HIV/AIDS fund. They were also a point of reference in relation to another HIV/AIDS project visited in collaboration with AWDF (Young Women's Campaign Against Aids, YWCAA) that had received Danida funding.

59) Relates to AFRACA, PENHA and AWEPON. In all cases, the issues were detected and followed up on internally with rigorous processes put in place to address them.

ganisations and activities is used particularly to highlight examples and trends in portfolio performance, either at the overall portfolio level or for a sub-group of the portfolio. By using largely the same assessment criteria and overall evaluation questions at overall budget level and for more in-depth analysis of sampled projects in focus countries, the Evaluation has tried to strengthen the interplay between the two levels.

Since only African network organisations (and not INGOs) were sampled for in-depth analysis, this initially created a particular methodological challenge on the Evaluation on how to ensure an appropriate analytical interplay when the two groups of grantees were not covered to the same extent. However, the INGOs projects have in most cases been initiated before those of the African network organisations, and many INGO projects are therefore now completed. This made it possible for the Evaluation, in case of most INGO projects, to acquire reports from independent end-of-project evaluations and reviews, which have somehow compensated for not being able to go to the field and visits these projects.

Therefore, the Evaluation has been able to extract some conclusions and lessons also in relation to the *overall direction* of the portfolio and some *emerging patterns* relating to obstacles and opportunities for future engagement in the field of support to gender equality and women's empowerment through a regional approach.

# 4   Mapping of 'Women in Africa' grantees

4.1   Scope of mapping

The aim of the mapping was to provide an overview of the portfolio of initiatives under the Women in Africa regional funding envelope, while clustering grantees and types of support into different sub-groups to visualise support patterns. This served as a foundation for analysis of findings at the overall portfolio level which were further explored and exemplified through in-depth assessments of sampled activities (see Chapter 3).

All grants approved for funding with signed financing agreements between Danida and the grantee in place before the end of 2009 have been included in the mapping. This means that some projects were included in the financial and geographical mapping even though the activities did not start until 2010.

4.2   Grantees by origins and main functions

Of the Women in Africa regional support grantee organisations[60], nine are African-based and led[61]; five are INGOs – of which two are of Danish origin, two are UK-based, and one has headquarters in the US, but with offices in the UK that manages the project. There is also one project channelled through the World Bank (see graph).

Number of grantees by origin
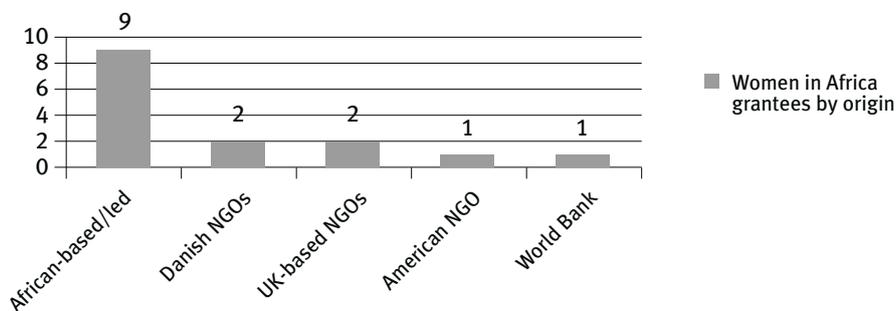
Of the African organisations, there are three organisations with a pan-African focus (FAWE, AWDF and IAC), covering more than 20 countries across the continent, and four sub-regional networks that work in one or more sub-regions (Gender Links, EASSI, AWEPON, PENHA). Two consortia: the Egyptian Business Women's Association in association with their Sudanese and Ethiopian partners (constituting the African Training Centre) and the Micro-Finance Consortium in Africa with funds channelled through AFRACA, constitute loose alliances of individual organisations set up with the purpose of managing the grant from the Women in Africa initiative, i.e. their structures are solely constructed to qualify for the Danida grant under this allocation.

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60)   Defined as those that receive funds and hold financing agreements directly with Danida.

61)   PENHA has a small office and is led from the UK, but with offices in all countries at the Horn, and with a decentralised structure; IAC has offices both in Addis Ababa and in Geneva with National Chapters in a number of countries.

Of those organisations that work at regional or sub-regional level, only EASSI and Gender Links specifically target regional institutions in their programmes as well as national or regional shadow reporting on international commitments, with the pan-African ones also targeting AU and the UN system at the international level. INGOs also focused more on getting localised voices and experiences into the international policy stream.

4.3   Funding by type of organisation

African network organisations received 41% of the funding during the Evaluation period, with the rest going to the World Bank and INGOs. There is also an allocation for TA support and the yearly seminars that bring all grantees together in Denmark or a location in Africa.

Some of the larger commitments via INGOs and the World Bank contributed to already existing programmes, whereas the identification and start-up was slower for African networks.

The graph below illustrates the share of financial commitments by type of organisation.

Funding by type of organisation
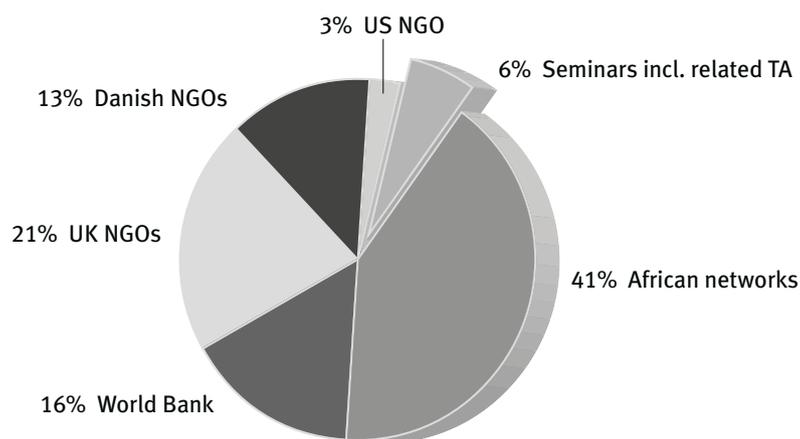
4.4   Types and size of grants

The funding is approved on a yearly basis against multi-annual proposals (2-3 years), and grants are generally relatively small in nature. This reflects nature of the funding, limiting the scope and period of the individual grants. Individual funding commitments range from DKK 2-9.5 million with the exception of the World Bank LEAP programme, which has an allocation of DKK 12.6 million for its second phase. Allocations to INGOs operating in post-conflict countries are generally larger than those to African networks due to higher operational costs. However, multiple layers of coordination and the use of expatriate staff also drive up the operating costs of the internationals.

Most of the original grantees are by now on its second round of funding, though at the end of the evaluation period some organisations (e.g. FAWE) was still on its first round of tapping into Danida funds. For some of the organisations, the second phase of the funding has included an increase in the size of the funding. For instance, for EASSI, the

funding has nearly doubled in the second phase, with a yearly allocation of an average of DKK 1.3 million in the first funding phase (2007-09) to a yearly allocation of institutional funding of DKK 2.3 million during the second tranche of funding. The same is true for IAC from a yearly DKK 1.7 million in the first phase to DKK 2.1 million yearly in the second funding phase.

Through the support to African Women's Development Fund, a range of smaller grants are also being funded by Danida, ranging from USD 1,000-50,000, with around 100 grants financed by Danida funding in the 2007-09 period[62]. Of the overall grant to AWDF, around 72% of the money is redistributed to smaller grants (the rest going to institutional strengthening), and is therefore seen as an important way of reaching a wider scope of grantees for Danida[63]. A large majority of AWDF grants focus on some sort of income generating activities for women's groups through purchase of equipment, trainings to learn specific trades or skills, or setting up credit facilities and providing seed capital to members in women's income generation groups. Other AWDF grants go to activities that are linked to strengthening the 'women's movement' by sponsoring participants to attend international and regional conferences, or to carry out specific advocacy campaigns. Grantees range from small CBOs to large INGOs, like ActionAid.

4.5 Functions

The initial identification report for the Women in Africa regional initiative[64] (early 2007) outlined a number of categories and generic functions of networks. Acknowledging that networks can fill several of these functions (but usually have one main function), these categories were not used for a strategic mapping or to come up with selection criteria for grantees at the time. However, for the purpose of this Evaluation the categories and functions are relevant to create an overview of the *main* functions and purposes as translated into their Danida-funded projects (see table below).

Table: WIA grantees by network category and main function

Network description	Main network function	Key value added	WIA grantees
Common platform for members to meet and share experiences	Convenor/facilitator (thematic workshops, newsletters, e-discussions etc.)	The extent to which members use contacts and relevant experiences to improve own practice and programmes	- AFRACA (Micro-finance Consortium in Africa) - EBWA - AWEPON (- FAWE) (- PENHA)

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62) Source: The African Women's Development Fund Danida Grantee List 2007-09. However, some discrepancies were discovered compared to other lists and progress reporting. The amount is therefore an approximate estimate.

63) See Danida Styrelsesformandsnotits, 2006.

64) Identification & organisational assessments of African Networks to Promote Gender Equality – A study for the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Capacitate (L. Udsholt et al), February 2007.

Network description	Main network function	Key value added	WIA grantees
Service providers to its members	Investor in member organisations' capacities and programmes; provides a filter through which information and funding is channelled to members (trainings, hosting of joint website, fundraising for members, funds management etc.)	- The extent to which a broad cross-section of members can access services and funds - That services are considered cost-effective and relevant	- AWDF
Programming and implementing institution	Laboratory, piloting methods and approaches on specific thematic area which member organisations later take up and use (building effective community of practice in a distinct line of programming)	- Ability to anticipate new opportunities and challenges within own area of expertise - Capacity to translate new thematic evidence into programming - Ability to offer relevant support in terms of learning and innovation to members	- ActionAid - International Alert - Danish Refugee Council - ADRA - Women for Women International - FAWE - PENHA - Gender Links - LEAP (World Bank)
Representation of members in relation to external action/ advocacy	Amplifier of members' voices and concerns (promoting common advocacy agendas, interests)	The extent to which the network can get other actors to adopt its policy agenda	- EASSI - IAC (-AWDF)

From the above one can conclude that most of the grantees operate primarily as programming and implementing institutions within a specific thematic area. Some combine this role with a less pronounced role[65] of advocacy and service provision to members in terms of fundraising and representation of member or constituency interests. Many of the international organisations selected for their competencies in post-conflict areas can be characterised as organisations rather than networks – even though many work in larger networks with locally registered partners and affiliates at national level (e.g. ActionAid International).

4.6   Main entry-points for influence

Grantees and projects differ quite substantially in their institutional arrangements and main focus, including their main operational entry-points.

Several of the organisations claim in their project proposals to operate at all or several different levels (beneficiary, sub-national, national, regional, pan-African and international).

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65)   Indicated in brackets.

However, most have a specific level as their area of strength or entry-point for influencing change.

Two of the organisations have a clear focus on influencing pan-African policies and processes through their Danida funded activities (IAC, AWDF) with other sub-regional networks participating in pan-African policy making through various coalitions (e.g. EASSI). Of those who target regional bodies and policies, EASSI (for the EAC) and Gender Links (for SADC) have been the most active.

The INGOs have generally been strong at the international level for lesson learning, creating best practice or influencing multilateral policy-making (e.g. the UN). Many also have an extensive network of grassroots partners. On the other hand, they are less present in national policy-making processes.

Most of the grantees[66] still identify the national level as their main entry-points for influence[67], regardless of their own institutional set-up.

Only WfWI has a clear focus on the end beneficiaries as their main entry-point for change, whereas others support individual women and girls at end-beneficiary level in order to gather best practice or influence policy-making.

4.7 Geographic focus and coverage

The stipulated geographic priority areas for this regional support initiative, according the Danish five-point plan in 2006 were sub-Saharan Africa and post-conflict areas. This is also in line with the Danish Africa Strategy (2007).

Largely this has also been the focus for the funded initiatives, possibly with the exception for the Egyptian Business Women's Association (EBWA), which teamed up with partners in Sudan and Ethiopia to qualify for support. AWDF, though based in Ghana, also has as its main activity to do re-granting to other women's organisations across all of Africa. Most of the funded activities take place in Uganda (by seven grantees) where two of the African networks also have their organisational headquarters[68]. This is followed by Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi where five organisations have activities, with a predominance of African networks in Kenya and INGOs in DRC and Burundi.

Kenya also hosts the coordination offices of two organisations whose funded operations take place elsewhere (West Africa and Burundi), namely FAWE and ActionAid International. Only one organisation, Gender Links, works with Southern Africa as a region, though a few countries in Southern Africa are also represented in other networks (e.g. Zambia through AFRACA). The graph below provides a visual overview of coordination offices and areas of operations.[69] For more detailed information, see Annex 2.

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66) 10 out of 15 grantees.
67) AFRACA, AWEPON, EBWA, FAWE, PENHA, ActionAid International, ADRA DK, Danish Refugee Council, International Alert, LEAP (WB).
68) EASSI and AWEPON.
69) Since Gender Links cover many countries in Southern Africa for their networking and coalition building, but with activities mainly in South Africa, only South Africa has been plotted for them in the graph.
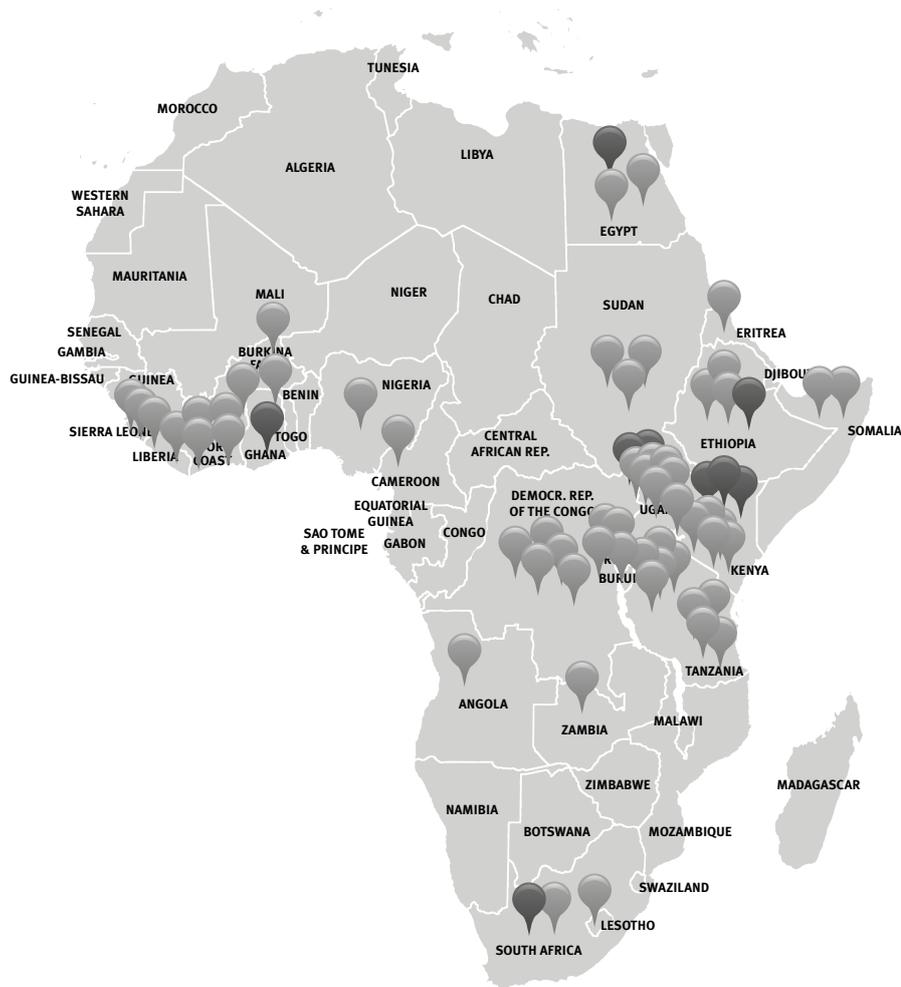
Women in Africa regional support initiative grantees and activities (See Annex 2 p. 90)

4.8 Thematic and policy areas

Several of the 15 partner organisations work on more than one thematic area, though most have identified a specific area as entry-point for this programme. Below is a summary of organisations working in each thematic policy strand:

Equal rights (political, civil, economic, cultural, social – including sexual and reproductive health and rights)
Most organisations apply a rights-orientation in a wider sense, often linked to monitoring commitments under CEDAW or the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). This is e.g. the main focus of EASSI. With the exception of the abolishment of FGM (targeted by IAC, and to a certain extent EASSI), few organisations work on lobbying for any specific area of rights, or any specific rights issue affecting women disproportionally.

Organisations focusing on economic empowerment generally have a weaker rights dimension as many (with the exception of WfWI) work on the assumption that women's access to financial resources in itself leads to empowerment and women more effectively claiming their rights. Interventions in post-conflict areas typically cut across the categories of economic empowerment, health and safety including the formulation and implementation of National Action Plans for UNSCR 1325 (women, peace and security).

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Most grantees focused primarily on awareness raising and lobbying around special provisions for women's rights in the international normative frameworks in order to strengthen the policy and legal environment for implementation. Yet, few organisations participated in actual implementation of such provisions through trainings and gender mainstreaming activities at different levels of operations.

Some of the organisations engaged in the cultural aspects of socialisation of rights into societal norms and/or touch on issues such as gender-equal division of labour, male attitudes and/or discriminatory gender stereotypes. Examples are FAWE and WfWI. Though both are primarily concerned with economic empowerment of women and girls, they also both carry out sensitisation campaigns with the families and leaders in the communities where they work. FAWE also sensitises vocational training teachers in traditional male trades on how to deal with girls in the classroom, and does public campaigns to increase public acceptance of women in occupations that are usually dominated by men. Similarly both FAWE and WfWI ask for a 'serious commitment' from women and girls who sign up to their sponsored training programmes, which they are given for free through 'scholarships'.

In terms of economic rights, only AWEPON has as a specific objective to monitor implications of macroeconomic policy on women and to lobby for an "enabling environment for the economic empowerment of women in Africa". Due to delays affecting programme implementation, no work had been done in this field during the evaluation period.

Three grantees work on areas directly or indirectly linked to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). IAC focuses on the prevention of harmful traditional practices (HTPs) with a strong emphasis on the abolishment of FGM, an agenda that EASSI has also pursued from a broader advocacy perspective. International Alert, Danish Refugee Council, ADRA, ActionAid and LEAP also covered gender-based sexual violence and violence against women including through its work around implementation of UNSCR 1325.

AWDF has an HIV/AIDS fund which is partially funded by the Danida support. Small CBOs as well as large organisations like ActionAid has accessed financing of specific activities from this fund. Generally they are geared towards service delivery, income generation, and access to credit for women living with, or with high risk of being infected with the virus and have less of a pronounced rights angle. In the projects visited (Kenya, Uganda), the link to HIV/AIDS was unclear.

Political empowerment & increased influence in decision-making
Women's rights have been advocated for primarily in the context of implementing international and regional treaties on gender equality through public institutions. EASSI, IAC, Gender Links and many of the INGOs have been involved in this through their Danida funded programmes. Comparatively less attention has been given to the empowerment of women to influence decision-making in the homes and communities, including in local politics.

Those engaged in supporting women's movement building – such as AWDF and EASSI – also spend a considerable amount of funding on providing women leaders with networking opportunities though attending international conferences, getting access to trainings etc. ActionAid and FAWE also feature frequently in relation to women's organising and leadership.

A characteristic for women's organisations involved in movement building is that they frequently fund and liaise with each other – also long before the Danida budget line brought them together for trainings and seminars. There are however much fewer examples of the organisations working to strengthen grassroots political organisation and women's economic influence in local committees or in the homes.

Equal access to resources and economic empowerment
Apart from the 'cross-cutting' issue of women's rights, the most common thematic orientation across all countries (post-conflict and non-conflict countries) is that of economic empowerment in line with the increased Danish policy interest in this field. Methods and approaches differ quite substantially, however.

Organisations involved in the Micro-finance Consortium in Africa, managed by AF-RACA, have as their main aim to broaden their female client base through more extensive targeting and outreach to rural women for micro-credit and banking services. WfWI, on the other hand, discourage women in post-conflict areas to incur expensive loans[70] until they have completed year-long trainings, have been connected to a potential business market, and/or have completed tailored vocational training. WfWI also has quite a unique and comprehensive monitoring system in place that measures improvements related to both income and non-income factors such as health status, influence over decision-making, social networking etc. that can be linked to economic empowerment.

Others involved in trainings and exchanges for income generating activities are AWE-PON, EBWA, and PENHA. Many of the AWDF grantees are also involved in income-generating activities.[71]. IAC has also been involved in financing alternative sources for access to income by women practicing the traditional cutting in FGM[72].

4.9   Funding patterns across budgets

A comparison of budgets of the different grantees shows great variance in levels and entry-points for investments. For EASSI, which receives core funding against their strategic plan, a higher percentage of the budget is spent on staff and operational costs than on operations. However, in the case of IAC, the Dutch MDG3 fund supports operational costs of the strategic plan whereas Danida funding goes to core activities.

Projects that are developed and run as stand-alone components in conflict countries, and especially where expatriate staff is used, generally also have high staff and coordination costs with large budget posts for security and logistics. On the contrary, when the Danida funding feeds into already ongoing programmes with a specific aspect or component[73] these 'supporting costs' (compared to actual investments in end-beneficiaries) are low.

Regional activities are usually a costly component of the budget, with extensive travel and seminar costs being incurred. Coordination is also generally costly due to the complexity

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70)   Interest rates are usually in the range of 20-30%.
71)   30% of the Danida-funded grants go to running credit facilities or buying equipment for income generating activities. Another 25% goes to trainings which often are related to income generation.
72)   According to key informants this is not necessarily 'best practice' however, since it can serve as a perverse incentive for women to take up the practice in order to get access to finance.
73)   See e.g. WfWI, where staff, coordination and administrative costs were a mere 9% of the overall budget.

of coordinating activities across several countries. Committee and board meetings, when specified as separate line items, tend to be costly.

Several of the organisations have large budgets set aside for the development of business manuals (AWEPON[74], EBWA[75], PENHA[76]) along with a specific business training module for the curriculum used by WfWI. Separate manuals are being developed even though organisations in some cases operate in the same countries (AWEPON and WfWI in DRC; EBWA and PENHA in Sudan etc.). Although this may be justified given the specific focus of the different projects, some further collaboration around core components could be encouraged, given the networking focus of the Women in Africa support initiative, and the similarities between some of the income-generating activities that are being funded. Exchange of information and lessons between groups could also be of relevance, especially in relation to doing market and value chain studies that feed into the development of training materials.

How budgets are divided between different operating levels varies with the main purpose and function of the NGO, network and its programme. For instance AWDF, whose main function is '*service delivery to its member grantees*' spends a large majority of funds on individual grants with a smaller share on institutional strengthening. For those involved as a *convenor of a platform to share experiences* (AWEPON, AFRACA and to some extent PENHA and FAWE), the learning and facilitation components are usually well resourced, but in some cases, it is more doubtful that enough is invested at lower levels to develop and identify the best practices. Organisations involved in *advocacy and representation* as its main mandate (EASSI, IAC) usually transfer less money to lower levels of operations (national focal points and steering committees) with more funding kept at central levels.

Finally, those involved primarily in developing *innovations in specific lines of programming* usually have higher supporting costs in terms of staff, coordination, the provision of technical assistance, experts and consultants.

Within two of the 15 grantees, there was occurrence of corruption at the secretariat level of the African network (AWEPON and AFRACA). This led to the temporary freezing of funds for both networks until a detailed response mechanism had been put in place in both institutions. In the case of AFRACA, a former accountant misappropriated USD 38,000. The money was not directly related to the Danida project. The case was taken to court. In AWEPON's case, the mismanagement can be linked to the infusion of large funds into the secretariat after a period of lower levels of funding and is as such directly linked to the Danida project. The misappropriated money was also partially Danida funds. Claims related to unsupported payments to secretariat staff, consultants fees etc. An external audit and a detailed internal response has been put in place which meant that funds were released again as of late 2009 after nearly a year's suspension. At the end of 2009, Danida funding constituted 87% of donor contributions to AWEPON's operations.

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74) DKK 473,000.
75) DKK 153,000.
76) DKK 258,000.

5 Evaluation findings

5.1 Relevance in line with Danish and regional policies and priorities

The findings below look at the extent to which the activities funded under the Women in Africa regional support initiative have promoted gender equality in line with Danish policy priorities as well as regional needs, priorities and possibilities.

5.1.1 Danish policy priorities
The Evaluation has made a number of findings in relation to the relevance criteria both at the overall portfolio level of the Women in Africa regional initiative as well as in relation to the specific project design and approach applied.

Regional priorities in Danish policies & relevant strategies
Recent Danida policies and strategies have emphasised regional cooperation as a priority for development assistance. The Danish Africa strategy for the period 2005-09[77], as well as the strategy for sub-Saharan Africa published in 2007[78] stress the need for regional integration, and the role of regional governmental institutions to promote business development and economic growth, trade, conflict resolution and stability in Africa.

The role of the African Union (AU) as an important player in peace-keeping and conflict resolution is recognised through the AU Peace Facility set up in 2003. In general, recent efforts of the AU and the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) are considered important initiatives to promote ownership and contribute to the development of African solutions. Support to the implementation of NEPAD and civil society involvement in peer reviews have been specifically mentioned as an area for potential Danish support. The integration of gender equality aspects in NEPAD has also been mentioned as a Danish priority.[79]

The Danish gender policy (2004) is focusing on rights, political and economic influence and access to resources that enable opportunity. It does this by proposing the two-pronged approach of mainstreaming and targeted special interventions. A third dimension is the use of political dialogue as a point of leverage. Through the work of the Africa Commission, there was furthermore a pronounced policy priority on private sector-led growth and the role of women in the economy and women's employment. The Africa Commission also emphasised the need to focus on fragile states.

Given that most of the Women in Africa support is channelled through civil society (international, Danish and African NGOs), the Danish Civil Society Strategy (December 2008) is also relevant to this funding envelope. It emphasises capacity building of locally rooted civil society as a means towards poverty reduction and the need to hold governments to account in line with Paris Agenda principles. It further emphasises the role of civil society in relation to peace-building and democratisation in fragile states.

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77) Africa Development and Security: The Danish Government's Priorities for Danish Cooperation with Africa 2005-2009. MFA, 2005.
78) Danmark i Afrika – Et kontinent på vej, Afrika Strategi, August 2007.
79) Africa Development and Security. The Danish Government's Priorities for Danish Cooperation with Africa 2005-09 (2005).

The strategy for Gender Equality in Danish Development Cooperation[80] stresses the fact that gender equality also must be promoted regionally as a complement to international and national efforts. According to the policy, this should primarily be done through the operationalisation of NEPAD, particularly when it comes to the involvement of civil society and the integration of gender equality issues. The comparative advantage of international and regional NGOs are seen to be their comparative advantages related to networking among Southern-based civil society, research institutions and other actors, including the dissemination of such knowledge. NGO engagement on specific issues, such as gender-based violence, FGM, trafficking, HIV/AIDS and women in armed conflict are also considered as potential areas for future Danish support.[81]

From the above, it is clear that both regional cooperation and the promotion of gender equality are central Danish policy priorities. Apart from the need to include and operationalise the incorporation of gender in NEPAD, there is, however, little discussion around how to make best strategic use of a regional approach in support to gender equality as opposed to a national or issues-specific focus.

The overall Women in Africa regional initiative level
In terms of Danish policy priorities, the Evaluation finds that the interventions supported through this regional initiative had a ***high relevance*** in relation to the following:

1) ***Thematic orientation in line with Danish policies.*** The supported interventions have in general been *thematically relevant*. The Women in Africa projects fall under the broad thematic orientations in Danida's gender equality strategy, even though there is a lack of focus on men and their involvement to advance gender equality[82]. The majority of the projects focus on women and economic growth as well as on women's access to resources as is also the policy focus of the Africa Commission and the new Africa strategy[83]. The emphasis on capacity building of African networks and local partners is in line with the Danish civil society strategy which also puts emphasis on the role of civil society in fragile states, including the role of international and Danish NGOs in relation to local capacity building.

2) ***Support to fragile states.*** During the period covered by this Evaluation, there was an increasing attention on support provided to fragile states through the Danish Development Policy, both in terms of humanitarian support, development and security interventions. Many projects supported under this initiative have included implementation of activities within fragile states, which have on the one hand been of more risk and complexity, but on the other hand served as a laboratory for testing of different approaches, themes and cooperation modalities within these states. In this sense, the regional Women in Africa initiative has contributed positively to support the Danish engagement within fragile states and has provided learning and experiences which could be useful also for other development interventions in these countries.

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80) Gender Equality in Danish Development Cooperation. Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004.
81) Ibid.
82) References to Danida's gender equality strategy refer to "Gender Equality in Danish Development Cooperation, Strategy". MFA, 2004.
83) "Danmark i Afrika – Et kontinent på vej. Regeringens prioriteter for samarbejdet med Afrika syd for Sahara." MFA, August 2007.

3) *Support through multilaterals.* The Danish Africa strategy (2007) states that support to fragile states primarily should be channelled via multilateral organisations. As such the World Bank's LEAP projects (LEAP I and LEAP II) are very relevant as they seek to mainstream gender equality into demobilisation and reintegration efforts in the Great Lakes region and Northern Uganda. Similar efforts to mainstream gender into AU's Peace and Security programme[84] is however absent within the budget line, but would have been of high relevance.

4) *Support through INGOs.* The Africa strategy also suggests channelling Danish efforts in fragile states through INGOs in collaboration with local civil society. This is also well reflected in the current budget line portfolio since ADRA, the Danish Refugee Council, ActionAid and International Alert all operate through local civil society partners, often at sub-national level. It is noteworthy, however, that some of the challenges faced by INGOs in their work with local partners are the same as for African networks who operate through their membership base. It includes the fact that engagement of local partners is primarily activity-based and short term, with limited amounts of funding reaching grassroots levels.

5) *Support through African network organisations.* It is stated in the Danish Africa strategy that an objective with the Danish development assistance to Africa is to support a process where Africa's own organisations become more able to manage the many continental and regional challenges. The strategy emphasises that "It is important that the international support is based on sound African ownership and that it goes to the African organisations' own initiatives". The selection of African network organisations as one category of grantees under this budget line was clearly in line with this thinking. However, the Evaluation also found that the concept of 'African ownership' needs to be unpacked since many of the organisations operating at pan-African or regional levels tend to be elitist, and often removed from what is happening at national or sub-national levels (see below).

At the same time, the Evaluation finds that *relevance is low and/or unclear* at the overall portfolio level in relation to the following:

1) *Clear strategic guidance and results framework.* Relevance is not optimised due to the lack of strategy and guidelines for the regional Women in Africa support initiative, indicating what can be funded to enhance innovation and gather relevant lessons for replication in other programming areas. An overall results framework is missing against which to monitor progress and take stock of lessons. The lack of such framework has resulted in thematic overlaps within some policy areas (e.g. use of micro-credit and small-scale income generating activities), whereas lessons in other areas are missing. Likewise, it would have been relevant to clarify beforehand the strategic comparative advantage for intervening at regional or national level and how this works in conjunction with other international, regional and national networks.

2) *Geographic targeting.* Contrary to overall Danish policy[85] to concentrate support geographically, this regional support initiative is used widely across 23 countries in Africa. No apparent geographic targeting has been guiding the project selection process, apart from an initial desire to focus on sub-Saharan Africa for African net-

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84) It is the intention that LEAP II will make linkages to this programme.
85) Freedom from Poverty, Freedom for Development, Strategy for Denmark's Development Cooperation, 2010.

works[86] and post-conflict countries. The links between operations between national and regional levels are often weak. Focus of the Danish Africa strategy has been on fewer countries, but with larger efforts, and to align support with the ten priority co-operation countries in Africa[87]. Since the Women in Africa initiative is largely NGO and CSO support, it could be argued that it should fall under the Danida Civil Society Strategy where a focused geographic targeting is not required. Yet it is not clear whether and how projects funded under the Women in Africa regional initiative are filling programming gaps in relation to overall Danida presence in Africa.

3) *Ownership issues.* One of the justifications set out in the five-point plan for using and strengthening African networks to channel funds to support gender equality and women's empowerment was to promote African ownership of the agenda. However, the formulation documents of the Women in Africa regional initiative is not clear on what it wants to achieve in terms of promoting African ownership; whether it is to strengthen the ability of small groups of women's advocates to influence regional and international processes, or whether it is to transfer and broaden the base for ownership of the gender equality agenda among all different stakeholder groups of relevance. Evaluation findings from the in-depth assessment of African network organisations show, that the same actors are not necessarily good at doing both[88].

Project design and approach

In terms of project design and approach, the Evaluation finds that the *relevance is high* in relation to the following:

1) *Innovation.* Many of the supported projects have included innovative elements. These include e.g. new modalities and approaches for support to media for mass campaigns as well as campaigns for targeted audiences (e.g. ADRA[89]), introduction of gender aspects in programming (e.g. LEAP, Danish Refugee Council[90],), women economic empowerment activities (AFRACA/KWFT[91], WfWI), use of theatre/performance at village level as communication/information strategy on FGM (IAC and EASSI), and influencing policy (International Alert[92]).

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86) TOR for first identification mission, 2006.

87) MFAs Africa Strategy (2007), p. 12. These are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique.

88) For instance, from the organisational assessment of AWDF, the Evaluation finds that support becomes less relevant as an effective means of getting support to the grassroots levels in a way that make sustainable impact on women's lives. On the other hand, AWDF are a relevant player for the African *women's movement* and use this strategic niche placement to be present in international fora.

89) An independent review concluded that:"the project has been able to develop an innovative approach to respond to very important problems for women in the three countries affected by past and ongoing conflicts", by combining media output with organising listeners committees on the ground.

90) An independent synthesis report concluded that within the West African region, the project served as" ...a stepping stone project that addressed key problems in the region using relevant gender related approaches to solution".

91) Danida funding enabled KWFT to enter into a completely new market segment in the North of Kenya, in the Turkana district – a market that was considered too expensive to logistically enter before. Being the first micro-finance institution in the area, there was a high response rate to turning up to information sessions. Another interesting innovation from the project was that they allowed for camels to qualify as collateral in this highly impoverished nomadic area.

92) An independent evaluation of International Alerts peace-building programme found that its research helped shape the EU's "Comprehensive Approach to SCR 1325 and 1820" policy which was adopted in December 2008.

2) **Lessons.** Some specific lessons that could be extracted from funded project activities would be relevant to implementing Danish policy priorities in other sectors. For example, lessons on how best to mobilise women for credit and banking services for micro-finance institutions (through AFRACA) do not add to the regional knowledge on the relationship between micro-finance and gender equality/women's empowerment as this is not the focus of the consortium's activities. However, investments in this type of knowledge generation would be relevant for and complement sector- and country-specific initiatives if linked to the relevant sector programmes.

The Evaluation finds that *relevance is low or unclear* on the following project design/approach issues:

1) **The regional approach.** There is no strong evidence of the advantage of strictly applying a regional dimension in the project designs (to cover at least three countries within each approved project), and why this was seen as the most effective approach to support gender equality and women's empowerment in any given context. On the contrary, based on the interviews carried out with both INGOs and African network organisations, the Evaluation found that in most cases the organisations had to 'invent' a regional project structure to be able to qualify for this grant facility. The relevance of the regional approach applied must therefore be questioned since it is not based on proper consultation with stakeholders, or any thorough assessment of added value.

2) **'Project mode'.** Contrary to an overall trend in Danida to move from projects to programmes in order to support more long-term partnerships that stretch beyond specific project implementation, also in NGO/CSO support[93], most organisations and proposals funded under the Women in Africa initiative have a short-term project focus. This is linked to the way funding is allocated and approved on an annual basis. However, a consequence is that it leads to short-term and 'projectised' results, with difficulties to track outcomes towards systemic change. At best, the support is being used to 'top up' existing work and ongoing processes or to establish the foundations for a more diversified funding base (e.g. for Gender Links). Most support is, however, designed as individual stand-alone projects with local partners being involved on a very ad hoc basis around specific activities. The finding cuts across both African networks and INGOs.[94]

5.1.2 Regional, national and local needs, priorities and possibilities

Among the African networks, those targeting regional or pan-African policy processes seemed to use their strategic advantage better, and thus be more overall relevant at that level. Their relevance diminished at national and local levels where their main purpose was to 'extract' lessons for higher level lobbying or policy-making. The regional dispensation of these networks was rarely used to push stalled national or local policy processes on specific gender issues.

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93) Strategy for Danish Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries, December 2008.
94) For instance, an independent evaluation of International Alert's activities point to the need to redefine the partnership model so that longer term agreements are signed with local implementing partners for the entire duration of the project period to move away from ad hoc engagement around specific activities. AWEPON also provided short-term funding to the local (sub-national) implementing partner at random intervals and without them being a part of the larger programme outcomes and objectives.

The Evaluation finds that *relevance is high* in relation to the following areas:

1)   *Regional integration.* Given the increased effort to use the African Union and economic regional organisations to promote peace and growth in Africa, the Women in Africa initiative is timely and topical. There are several examples of positive engagement between grantees and regional bodies at policy level. Nevertheless, only Gender Links has been able to follow such regional policy openings through to implementation and action at national and sub-national levels.

2)   *Regional approaches to women's empowerment in post-conflict countries.* There are some examples of successfully applying lessons from one area of conflict and post-conflict to another in terms of responding e.g. to violence against women and sexual gender-based violence. This is exemplified by the work of ActionAid in this area, and the efforts to draw up National Action Plans around UNSCR 1325 by International Alert. The LEAP project was also able to successfully mainstream gender issues into the area of demobilisation, and to replicate good practice in the second phase of the programme.

The Evaluation finds that *relevance is low or unclear* primarily in relation to missed opportunities to maximize effects of applying a regional approach. Such missed opportunities include:

1)   *Implementing and using regional policy commitments.* Whereas pan-African and regional frameworks for gender equality are broadly in place already (for instance through the African Women's Rights Protocol), mechanisms for reinforcing and implementing them at national levels are weak or missing. Yet linkages from regional to national levels are generally weak also in the Women in Africa funded activities.[95] Few of the networks facilitate linkages between regional, national and sub-national levels. Those organisations (e.g. EASSI) with a clear regional focus are more focused on regional policy advocacy than on strengthening the policy framework at lower levels for its implementation.

2)   *Use of lessons from regional activities.* INGOs, such as for example ADRA Denmark and ActionAid International, have used the regional dimension to transfer lessons from one area of their own operations to another, with less focus on regional mechanisms, regional integration or the implementation of regional provisions as a goal in itself. While this may have helped INGOs to increase internal learning and establish a track record in this field[96], it implies a strong upwards and 'inwards' accountability to internal processes rather than focusing primarily on involving implementers and beneficiaries in the regional learning and transferring the agenda to others more closely embedded in localized social change processes at different levels of operations.

3)   *Capturing instead of transferring ownership of the agenda.* There was also evidence of INGOs 'taking on' and mobilising around a specific agenda (like UNSCR 1325, or running women's listening committees), thereby raising expectations among lo-

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95)   EASSI aims to focus on monitoring of international and regional commitments for women's rights and gender equality, but ownership of national partners seems weak from the visited projects, and not enough resources are available for primary data gathering at sub-national levels.

96)   Some INGOs, such as ADRA, had little experience of working specifically with gender equality before the project was initiated.

cal groups and stakeholders, without necessarily transferring back the driving force and momentum of the agenda to its proper stakeholders. Instead, the focus has been on replicating methods and lessons in its own operations and country programmes elsewhere.[97]

4) ***Mainstreaming gender into regional interventions and bodies.*** There is notable success in approaches that work on mainstreaming gender into broader programming agendas of e.g. demobilisation (through the LEAP project). However, there is still need to strengthen technical skills for gender mainstreaming within the regional bodies and initiatives as integrated components of regional programming. Gender training of peace-keepers mobilised through the AU Peace Facility could be such an initiative. However, these types of integrated mainstreaming initiatives at regional levels have so far not been funded through the regional Women in Africa initiative.

5.2 Effectiveness in terms of delivering outputs and outcomes

In terms of effectiveness, the Evaluation has assessed the extent to which the expected project outputs and outcomes have been delivered, as well as the degree to which capacities, ownership, networks and practices of inter-organisational learning for enhancing gender equality has been strengthened. The assessment was carried out with a view to the overall portfolio of support provided as well as to what may be particular findings for sub-groups of grantees.

At the level of overall Women in Africa regional support, the Evaluation finds that effectiveness in terms of outputs and outcomes achieved is mixed: The projects are in general planned according to well established timelines, and often with simultaneous implementation of rather similar project activities (baseline studies, training activities, manual development, exchange studies, documentation and sharing of best practice etc.) within different countries in the region. Danida's "coaching" role in relation to preparation of the project documents seems to have resulted in a large degree of homogeneity in the structure of programme documents and progress reports.[98]

A review by the Evaluation of the latest progress reports (most of them dated September 2010) and completion reports submitted by the projects, show varied level of effectiveness in terms of progress (see table below).

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97) This finding relates in particular to ActionAid, ADRA Denmark and International Alert.
98) With the exception for the budgets which follow no homogenous format, making it very difficult to compare costs and budget lines between different grantees.

Overview table of Women in Africa grantees and status on targeted beneficiaries

Organisation	Project name/ Main focus	Number of expected beneficiaries	Status on implementation
African Rural & Agricultural Credit Association (AFRACA) 2008-09	Micro-finance Consortium in Africa: Improving the economic base of rural women through credit facilities in Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia.	1,000 women (through MFI), 5,000 family members, 30 staff, six institutions.	1,500 women (2010) Activities and plans for 2009 were stalled due to mismanagement in the secretariat which was effectively detected and dealt with. Implementation continued in late 2009/2010 through a no cost extension.
African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) 2007-09	Strengthening AWDF's grant-making in the areas of HIV/AIDS and economic empowerment an institutional capacity.	Not available in programme proposal. In progress report only mentioning of # of organisations supported by AWDF.	
African Women's Economic Policy Network (AWEPON) 2008-10	Women's Economic Empowerment Programme (WEEP): Building productive capacities and access to markets for rural women, monitoring of economic policy for women's economic empowerment.	7,500 women facilitated and trained in income generating activities (IGA). Direct beneficiaries at grassroots level: 150 in each of the six countries (total 900 women).	At the time of the Evaluation, only Kenya had started training of rural women, totalling 100 women from one region (Nyanza) in Kenya. Implementation was delayed due to financial mismanagement during 2009. The project is now scheduled to end in late 2011.
Egyptian Business Women's Association (EBWA) 2009-12	The African Training Centre: Tailored training and mentoring for women entrepreneurs, including exchanges between Egyptian, Sudanese and Ethiopian focal points.	600 women trained.	Implementation recently initiated.

Organisation	Project name/ Main focus	Number of expected beneficiaries	Status on implementation
Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI) 2007-08 2009-11	Implementing the EASSI Strategic Plan, (Phase 1 and 2): Contributing to regional monitoring of implementation of commitments (BPfAs, MDGs, and UNSCR 1325).	Not available in project proposal – support mainly provided for policy advocacy, development of tools etc.	i) Completed - most of planned activities implemented. ii) Implementation recently initiated.
Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) 2009-12	Economic empowerment of girls within post-conflict countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi) through vocational training.	600 girls.	Implementation recently initiated. Girls have been selected and 'recruited' into the training programmes.
Gender Links 2007-09 2008-11	(i) Support to Gender Links activities on equal rights and good governance in Southern Africa (ii) Gender and the media.	Not specified in project proposal.	i) Completed (Phase 1), ii) Implementation of Phase 2 recently initiated.
Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices (IAC) 2007-09 2010-13	Support to continue implementation of the Common Agenda for Action for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (Phase 1 and 2).	1,000 women.	i) Completed, ii) Implementation recently initiated.
Pastoralist & Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa (PENHA) 2008-10	Women's Economic Empowerment in the Pastoral Areas in the Horn of Africa (Sudan, Uganda, Somaliland).	1,200 women in three countries will receive training, credit and productive assets.	127 women (40-45 in each of the three countries) have now benefitted directly from the project (July 2010). Project implementation delayed (due to mismanagement in Somaliland office and political issues in Sudan). Project completion extended to September 2011.
ActionAid International 2007-09 2010-12	i) Reducing Violence Against Women in Humanitarian Emergencies (2007-09) ii) Enhancing Access to Justice for Conflict Affected Women (2010-12)	i) 37,362 direct beneficiaries (including awareness raising), ii) 50,000 conflict-affected women (access to justice).	i) Completed, ii) Implementation recently initiated.

Organisation	Project name/ Main focus	Number of expected beneficiaries	Status on implementation
Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)

2007-09 | Women in Post-conflict Situations: Sharing stories that bring change in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC (Phase 1),

Voices for Hope: Women raising debates for change (Phase 2). | Approx. 12-15,000 (most of them through radio programmes, cultural event, video. Others from panels, Listeners Committees). | Completed. Approx. 1,400 have participated in training workshops.

Approx. 4,000 have participated actively in radio programmes (completion report). |
| Danish Refugee Council

2007-08 | Women Building Peace in Liberia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire. | 2,500 on Income Generating Activities (IGA). | Completed. 2,678 women trained on IGA (completion report). |
| International Alert

2007-09

2010-11 | (i) Supporting women's peace-building priorities: Implementing UNSCR 1325

(ii) Promoting human security, anti-VAW. | i) 470 through training and indirectly approx. 240,000 (through radio programmes),

ii) 1,800 through training. | i) Completed.

ii) Completed. |
| Women for Women International

2009-12 | Women's economic empowerment: Developing business skills training. | 14,475 (1,325 women to be trained in rights, 13,150 women to be trained in business skills). | 1,325 women are currently being trained in rights and 22,500 women in business skills. |
| Learning for Equality Access and Peace (World Bank)

2007-08

2009-11 | LEAP (Phase 1 & 2): Gender mainstreaming in demobilisation and reintegration programme in Great Lakes. | Not available in project proposal. Focus on gender mainstreaming and generation of data, guidance and good practice. | LEAP I: completed, covered in MDRP evaluation report. LEAP II: Implementation recently initiated. |

Out of the 21 projects supported, implemented by 15 grantees, the Evaluation finds that:

- Nine of the 21 supported projects have now been completed[99]. Five of the completed projects have submitted completion/end-of project reports (DRC, ADRA, Gender Links, International Alert, ActionAid) and four of the projects have carried out independent evaluations/reviews (DRC, ADRA, EASSI, International Alert). Independent reviews were also done of the support from the Dutch MDG3 fund to AWDF, and by Comic Relief to AWDF as an institution.

- From the completed projects that have been reported on either through project completion reports and/or independent evaluations or reviews, most of the expected project outputs and outcomes[100] are reported to have been achieved.

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99) Another three projects were supposed to be completed by now, but have been extended due to serious delays in implementation.

100) It must be noted however, that in most cases the assessments of project outcomes/results presented in these reports are not based on solid evidence but on qualitative judgments and perceptions.

- For those projects there are still in implementation, it is the overall assessment by the Evaluation that while some projects are on track and seems to reach or even exceed the expected number of direct beneficiaries[101], other projects seem to have more difficulties in achieving their goals, without affecting the quality of the services provided. This is in particular the case for some of the African network organisations (see discussion of this under "Efficiency").

- By September 2010, more than 27,000 women direct beneficiaries already had received, or were in the process of receiving, support on IGA (business skills training, credit, productive assets). Although, the Evaluation assesses that not all projects may achieve the expected number of women beneficiaries, it is highly probable that the total number will exceed 30,000 when the ongoing projects are completed[102].

- In terms of other deliverables, including the content/quality of services/products to be delivered to the direct beneficiaries, at some project sites visited by the Evaluation in Kenya and Uganda it was found that, by the time of the visits, the organisations were having serious difficulties in delivering according to the expectations/ambitions in the project documents[103].

- Eight of the 21 project have only started implementation recently and it has therefore not been possible for the Evaluation to carry out any meaningful assessment of their performance.

In terms of timing and work planning, it is notable that *all* supported grantees[104] that have submitted progress reports on implemented project activities so far, INGOs as well as African network organisations are reporting delays in implementation. The delays are typically reported in the first 6-12 months of project implementation, and the main reasons provided for these delays are:

- Political instability, tensions and conflicts in project countries.
- Weak technical and institutional capacities within local, implementing partner organisations.
- Tensions in 'internal politics' within networks in terms of internal resource allocation, roles and responsibilities among network members.
- Operational difficulties related to implementation of the projects' "regional approach" (often through planned simultaneous implementation of project activities within, at least, three different countries).
- Administrative difficulties in standardizing project procedures and implementation process across project offices within different countries in the region.
- Barriers related to information and communication flows between partner organisations (language issues, IT etc.)
- High staff turnover within project organisations.

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101) E.g. WfWI.
102) The reporting style is highly focused on "numbers" (e.g. number of women trained) but very little attention is on the quality and the package of services provided.
103) E.g. PENHA in Uganda had challenges in relation to facilitating access to credit and productive assets to women beneficiary groups; the local IAC partner organisation in Uganda had not received any institutional support at all and was unable to provide monitoring reports as requested; AWDF grantees in Nairobi suffered from poor project management and inefficient use of funds given the methods applied.
104) Except AWDF, possibly due to the nature of the activities undertaken and reported on in the form of distributed grants only.

In addition, in case of two of the supported African network organisations[105] delays have been encountered due to financial mismanagement, which have resulted in temporary suspension of project activities until problems had been resolved and the necessary measures had been put in place.

Even though most projects suffer from delays during the first year of implementation, nearly all projects[106] manage to catch-up and complete activities (or be on track to do so) with no or only little deviation from the originally agreed timeframe. One consequence of this is that the amount of activities implemented during the last part of the project period often becomes quite intensive, with limited possibility for "digesting" the results and products produced, thereby possibly reducing the quality and value of end-products. This aspect becomes even more critical when considering the projects' high level of complexity, in particular for many African network organisations, over a relatively limited implementation horizon (2-3 years)[107]. This concern was raised by many of the project implementers visited by the Evaluation, INGOs as well as African network organisations.

African networks and INGOs that worked on well-defined issues with targeted stakeholders (e.g. sensitizing teachers for vocational training in typically male professions by FAWE, local government officials by Gender Links, community leaders by WfWI) achieved substantial success in terms of effectively achieving outputs and outcomes related to broadened ownership of the gender equality agenda. Among groups within the African women's movement, ownership of the gender equality agenda is evidently already strong. Many of these groups (EASSI, AWDF) are led by a small group of well-connected and elitist women leaders, many who fund and interact with each other without necessarily targeting or monitoring outcomes in terms of changed behaviour of those outside the movement.[108] Groups like EASSI and IAC, though they have substantial influence at international and pan-African levels, have less developed grassroots links.

The identification documents for the Women in Africa regional initiative, or the Danish five-point plan to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, have not defined the concept of ownership which needs to be further unpacked in order to assess the effectiveness in choice of approach to achieve it (See also Section 5.1 under 'relevance'). From the activities reviewed, ownership seemed to be directly linked to whom was identified as the main beneficiaries of the activities: women beneficiaries (from service delivery or trainings), other CSOs, local leaders or women leaders in the African women's movement. There were no marked differences between African networks and INGOs. Howev-

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105) AFRACA, AWEPON and PENHA.
106) Except those that have been suspended (AFRACA, AWEPON and PENHA).
107) An external evaluation of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) funded project concluded that "The project was too short for the goals and objectives desired, as peace building projects which ideally should result in the reduction of conflict, and individual behaviour change should be at least three years of not five years in length. The project had too many, and too varied activities, as the PM, the DRC staff and the IPs had difficulty managing the large numbers and types of activities".
In addition, the Project Completion Report for the same project noted that "The time constraints to timely execute a complex project in a difficult post-conflict environment has been a challenge. In order to ensure a more timely delivery of planned outputs, four-year project duration would be more suitable, given that preliminary assessments and groundwork had absorbed half of the project's time…"
108) Sampled AWDF grantees referred to their own personal benefits from specific material inputs to their businesses, or in terms of attending international conferences. There was less apparent links to the benefit of the wider communities in which they operated, and methods were not always deemed to be appropriate given the issues they were trying to address.

er, as pointed out in some evaluations of INGO activities[109], international organisations often missed opportunities and had legitimacy problems in trying to transfer the agenda to other national stakeholders (such as the government, leading CSOs) and interacted with local groups as implementers rather than strategic partners. ActionAid also spent more time exchanging lessons and learning between their own offices than with other national stakeholders and change agents in-country. Some of the leaders of African women's NGOs and foundations tended to operate in more 'closed circles' with less apparent interface with those outside it to affect systemic changes.

In addition, through *the in-depth assessment of African network organisations*, the Evaluation identified the following weaknesses that affect the effectiveness (as well as the efficiency) of the projects:

• The preselection of grantees (instead of project proposals), and close coaching to make proposals match Danish policy interests, made some organisations specialize on areas beyond their own strengths, such as economic empowerment or starting income-generating projects for rural livelihoods when their true strengths and expertise is in high-level economic policy[110].

• Despite intentions of the Africa Department of MFA to keep a high degree of flexibility and openness in terms of adding new grantees, this only partially happened due to internal lack of human resource capacity to manage a large granting-making mechanism. Consequently, the way in which grantees were selected and coached has given it the image of being a relatively 'exclusive club' of preselected grantees among other stakeholders in this field[111]. A certain degree of "group think"[112] was also evidenced by efforts of grantees to come up with joint statements and have a common identity which could be seen to ring-fence the process.[113] This, in itself, goes against the main purpose of the initiative in terms of using it for innovation and learning and rooting it firmly in the African context. The central management of the funding also led to it being more accessible to international or elitist groups than to grassroots networks. In one instance[114] a new grantee was referred to the initiative by a Danish embassy, but embassy involvement and knowledge of the Women in Africa support initiative is generally low.[115] WfWI also joined as a grantee at a later stage by directly contacting the MFA. Managers of the initiative have, however, not proactively looked at the optimal portfolio composition or sought out new potential partners during the Evaluation period.

• Practices of sharing learning within networks or between organisations have seen very little progress: The mechanisms for transferring and sharing of learning from

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109) International Alert, ADRA.

110) The example refers specifically to AWEPON with origins in the faith-based networks taking a stand against Structural Adjustment policies in the 90's.

111) Informed by interviews with key informants, who were not grant beneficiaries, during field work.

112) The phenomenon of 'group think', which can occur in small cohesive "in-groups" with a strong incentive to get along, actually limits, rather than expands knowledge sharing and critical examination of new ideas.

113) A joint statement was produced by grantees during an Elsinore meeting in 2008, and the suggestion was put forward to formalise special a network of Women in Africa grantees with its own secretariat and coordination mechanisms.

114) EBWA, referred to the initiative by the Danish Embassy in Cairo.

115) Based on observations from evaluation team in the two focus countries, and feedback from the Africa Department of MFA.

the centre (central or regional headquarter offices) to the local levels (implementing organisations and end-beneficiaries) are in general not well developed within the organisations, and the Danida-funded project activities have not changed much in this respect. The learning process from the projects tends to be one-dimensional, focusing at the centre.

- Capacity development has been more effective at the individual than at the institutional level. Moreover, capacity strengthening rarely goes beyond the coordinating secretariat of the African network. Institutional investments are disproportionally high at coordination secretariat level, compared to lower levels of operations. The capacity development activities implemented have focused mainly on training of key persons within the organisations responsible for financial and project administration /management, yet capacities rarely trickled out to others in the network, such as implementing partners or national/local focal points.

- It was very rarely evident how personal learning had been translated into changed work processes or approaches within the organisations. Most often key staff or officers in charge referred to trainings and interactions with Danida as something they had 'personally' benefitted enormously from in terms of learning, exposure etc. Capacity development processes are still ongoing in most of the non-completed projects, including on support to development and implementation of M&E systems within the organisations, where progress in most cases is limited, mainly due to capacity constraints.

- Among the lower level implementers below the regional grantee recipient, limited capacity development has taken place. It is mostly in the form of participation in seminars, and in terms of receiving occasional newsletters or brochures from the network centre. In terms of targeted training and supply of office equipment, these lower level implementers have not received much support. The implementing and administrative capacities at the local levels were mostly found to be very low in the sampled projects selected for site visits[116].

- There are only a few concrete indications[117] of African network organisations carrying out activities jointly or in support of each other as a direct consequence of their participation in the annual seminar for all project holding organisations, sponsored by Danida. In general however, evidence is rather weak on the degree to which the Danida supported activities have contributed to increased effectiveness from strengthened networking among the organisations. Initially, networking among grantees was difficult since they were also, at some level 'competitors' for the same funding. These tensions have gradually decreased as they have secured

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116) Examples: In a local implementing IAC office in Uganda, supported through WIA funds, staff had to borrow a laptop from another project in the area, in order to be able to prepare and submit progress reports for the project. In another case, an EASSI national focal point raised concern that so little money was attached to the Danida initiative for them as a national counterpart organisation within the regional EASSI network, that it was hard to justify their staff's engagement in the process.

117) Gender Links and EASSI have established a working relation after they met at the Danida-financed seminar in South Africa and, as one concrete example of a result of this cooperation, EASSI has chosen to campaign and advocate for a Gender Protocol to be adopted by the East African Community (EAC) – drawing on lessons from Gender Links who successfully managed to do this in collaboration with SADC. AWDF is providing funding to some of the other Danida project holding organisations; some of them met during the Danida seminars.

and received renewals of their funding proposals. Yet, many grantees knew each other beforehand and already had established networking links, whereas others do not interact, even if they have coordination offices in the same capital.

- Within regional secretariats and among those of the grantees who have been personally involved in the annual Danida seminars organised by MFA, there is a strong sense of ownership of this initiative – both in terms of their own pro-grammes and for the Women in Africa initiative as a whole. The annual seminars, such as the one in Elsinore in 2007, and in Johannesburg in 2009 are usually at-tended by the Executive Directors of the coordinating secretariats. Grantees also commented that to date, the aspect of getting to know Danida funding priorities and procedures has been the most beneficial to them. This indicates a stronger upwards than downwards accountability. This strong sense of ownership at the top management level of the grantee organisations is not necessarily anchored at lower levels of their operations.

  Ownership tends to focus on 'ownership of funding access' via the Women in Af-rica initiative rather than creating broad-based ownership of the targeted change processes in the regional or country contexts that are being supported.

It is important to emphasise that the above mentioned findings are first of all based on the in-depth study of a number of supported African network organisations and their projects and that these findings cannot be generalized to cover also projects implemented through INGOs or those African networks operating mainly in post-conflict areas where in-country visits for this Evaluation was not undertaken.

As explained in the methodology section, the assessment of the INGOs, is based on a less comprehensive level of field evidence (mainly through desk study and visits to the INGO's HQs), however independent evaluations/reviews have been reviewed to validate information. Based on this, the Evaluation finds in relation to the effectiveness of the supported INGOs and their projects that:

- The INGOs are in general more familiar with the use of a log-frame in their opera-tions than are the African network organisations. This is being reflected in better planning and monitoring of project implementation[118].

- The INGOs have in general more streamlined and documented reporting proce-dures throughout the organisations than the African network organisations. This is in particular notable in relation to the documentation and learning flow from the local implementation levels to the regional/international offices.

- Capacity development on gender issues among targeted stakeholders seems in general to have been more effectively delivered by the INGOs than by the African network organisations. In particular, the World Bank demobilisation and reintegra-tion programme LEAP has been instrumental in providing technical assistance to implementation partners and project counterparts on gender at the national and regional level, including support to development of national Gender Action Plans in partnership with identified "gender focal points" within National Commissions and provision of specialized training for gender focal points across the region.

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118) A notable exception from this general picture is Gender Link, which is more comparable to the INGOs in terms of capacities for planning and monitoring.

On the other hand, there is no concrete evidence that the yearly seminars organised by Danida for all Women in Africa grantees have led to increased cooperation of INGOs with other INGOs and/or African network organisations due to their involvement in this regional support initiative.

5.3 Efficiency and 'value for money'

The Evaluation has assessed the extent to which the funds allocated have been efficiently spent, both in relation to the sample of individual activities, and in relation to the portfolio of activities. The efficiency assessment has therefore been carried out both in relation to the overall portfolio of funded activities in the Women in Africa regional initiative as well as in relation to sub-groups of projects/organisations where it has been relevant to make such distinction.

Given the weak monitoring systems and documentation of outcomes, an assessment of cost-effective use of money was difficult to undertake. However, value for money was found to be *high* under the following conditions:

1) *Efficient 'boosting' of ongoing initiatives.* In those cases where the Women in Africa grant has been used to top up existing programmes or initiatives, there is generally a higher degree of perceived value for money since a large share of the funds can go directly to programme implementation, and less is spent on setting up coordination mechanisms and planning meetings among partners. This is for instance the case for WfWI, where Danida funds added another dimension to the training that was already in place, which benefitted a selected number of women in addition to the many other services of WfWI in each respective community in which they operate. Another example comes from the LEAP programme. Once operational mechanisms for gender mainstreaming was set up in the programme, the second phase saw close to 90% of funds go to programme activities, with the rest allocated to regional learning seminars to identify best practices. Gender Links also had over 80% of funds go directly to programming, with DFID and other donors coming in to cover some of their operational costs.

    This can be contrasted to other organisations where around half or less than half of the overall budget went to costs other than programming, which was the case particularly for organisations that ran Women in Africa projects as stand-alone initiatives with dedicated personnel from their own headquarters (ADRA and Danish Refugee Council had particularly high human resource costs through the extensive use of expatriate staff).

At an overall, Women in Africa funding portfolio level, the Evaluation finds a number of *inefficiencies*:

1) *Strategy for selection of grantees.* As pointed out also in relation to relevance, the lack of a clear and consistent strategy to guide the identification and selection of organisations for project funding under the portfolio le to an inefficient division of labour between organisations, and collaborations between different types of organisations (those involved in research, programming, and/or advocacy) would have been more efficient than having each network cover all aspects among its own members/structures.

2)   *Project formulation & coordination.* Many African network organisations elaborated and fine-tuned their project proposals only after they had been pre-identified and signed a funding agreement with Danida. Being coached through that process at a joint five-day training in Arusha in 2007 organised by Danida, many included 'standard' components to fit with the regional agenda, of which exchange visits, training manuals, hosting regional seminars, and regional Board/Steering Committee meetings were included as relatively costly components.[119] With little stakeholder and partner involvement in the project formulation, best use of existing systems and structures seem, in several cases, to have been overlooked.

3)   ***Complementarity and coordination with other Danida interventions.*** Complementarity has not been ensured between Women in Africa initiatives and other Danish multi- and bilateral interventions in and around fragile states, such as the Regions of Origin Programme, targeted bilateral support (some channelled through UNDP and the African Union Mission in Somalia, African Union Peace Initiative) as well as humanitarian support channelled through multilaterals and INGOs. It is also unclear how this regional Women in Africa support interacts with supplementary funding earmarked for gender equality and women's empowerment provided through bilateral funding in programme countries. This is particularly pertinent to sub-regional initiatives where national activities supported through this regional envelope runs in parallel to other national planning and programming efforts.

Likewise, there is no coordination of activities undertaken through the regional Women in Africa funding, and other special interventions for women's empowerment administered by embassies – both in following up on regional commitments in sector gender mainstreaming at national and sub-national levels, and in relation to special interventions for gender equality undertaken by embassies. This is particularly an issue in Danida programme countries that also get bilateral supplementary funding for gender and women's empowerment as there is a risk for duplication of effort and double funding (e.g. when funding is channelled through regional networks to national and local counterparts).

Given the relatively large presence of Women in Africa grantees in West Africa and in post-conflict areas, this regional support initiative can be seen to complement other NGO funding channelled that is not restricted to Danida programme countries. However, this complementarity has not been mapped out or looked into during the identification missions from a strategic perspective, so synergy gains between e.g. Women in Africa initiatives and other NGO/civil society programmes are at best accidental and not consciously maximised.

4)   *Transaction costs.* Although all project organisations supported by Danida have operations and partner organisations in a number of countries in the region, many organisations (INGOs as well as African network organisations) referred to high transaction costs in relation to implementation of Danida's "regional approach" for the projects. The main explanations for this are:

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119)   Adding those budget lines that specifically mention costs for regional meetings of steering committees/Board Members, regional fora or regional exchange visits comes to around DKK 13 million with another million spent by the grantees on consultants to guide programme development (around DKK 800,000 of Danida-funded AWDF grants also went to the sponsoring of meetings and conferences).

Most of the organisations supported are not used to work regionally in the way the framework was set for this regional support initiative by Danida with simultaneous implementation of parallel activities in at least three different countries. Therefore, planning, communication, logistics and reporting across and between the various organisational levels involved in the projects often become complex processes.

As a consequence of the above, planning and implementation of exchange visits across project countries are often difficult and resource draining processes for the projects, with numerous layers of committees and structures, travel arrangements, logistics etc. that 'drain' the projects of resources before it reaches grassroots levels (women's groups) from where lessons are to be generated and shared.

There is very limited evidence of any replication of (good) practices from the implemented exchange and demonstration visits across project countries, in particular when considering the relatively high level of investment in these types of activities[120]. This seems in general to be a weak point in the project designs. Most project documents include "exchange visits" between groups of women from different countries in the region as part of its core activities, but without any analytical or strategic considerations on how exchange visits are expected to provide value-added, be replicable and/or include scaling-up potential, more than sharing of experiences, information etc.

The Evaluation found indications that these transaction costs appear to be lower when the Women in Africa project activities contribute to already existing, larger programmes where e.g. staff costs can be shared by several programmes and funding sources.

Furthermore, through the in-depth assessment of a number of African network organisations supported through the Women in Africa regional initiative, the Evaluation noted:

- *Regional vs. national policy level.* Weaknesses in the abilities of regional bodies to implement gender policy commitments are at present reflected in the way several of the African network organisations work and operate, i.e. those that have an influence at regional level have weak presence and influence at national and local levels and vice versa. As examples can be mentioned:

  - IAC aims to work both at the level of international advocacy and to affect national policy dialogues around HTPs (and particularly FGM) through its national members and National Focal points. In reality, however, they are small and unknown at national level, and in Kenya where a new anti-FGM bill has been prepared and tabled in Parliament, they are not part of the national Government-led steering committee where many CSOs and women's groups have representation.

  - AWDF grants in the area of HIV/AIDS provide small, gap-filling grants as well as ad hoc grants to bigger organisations involved in the women's movement. Although there are application guidelines, there is no condition that grantees should demonstrate how they fit into larger locally or nationally embedded processes of social change, how they contribute to new thinking or how they feed into policy development or implementation. M&E of grantees is also minimised to basic accounting for use of funds. In two of the AWDF grantees sampled for

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120)   For example by ADRA and DRC.

site-visits in Kenya, the appropriateness of the selected approaches to implement activities were questionable and no clear results or impact on the wider communities where they operated could be observed.

- *Innovative activities vs. track record in the field.* In the field of women's economic empowerment project designs sometimes included activities that were new and untested for the project organisations. Instead of seeking support and cooperation from other organisations/partners with (stronger) comparative advantage, the grantees often opted for implementing whole project themselves, using their own associated members or staff to carry out related analysis and studies without the necessary skills to do so. This introduced a number of inefficiencies in the way projects organised and implemented.

- *Potential accountability gaps.* There is a risk of an 'accountability gap' for a number of the African network grantees with possible double-funding both through the regional network and through country frameworks for operations carried out at sub-regional and local levels. This is even more relevant since they fall outside of regular efforts at national level among donors and ministries to coordinate support, and of national NGO bodies to mobilise CSOs around different causes. Many regional networks also have lacking M&E systems in place, especially when it comes to follow-up on national and local activities carried out by their partners.

- *Cost inefficiency of yearly seminars outweighs programmatic benefits.* The yearly Danida seminars have as one objective to generate synergies and increased collaboration among Women in Africa grantees. However, this has only partially materialized to date, even in those cases where the organisations have their regional HQ office located in the same city.[121] For Danida it has been a tool for regular dialogue and monitoring of operations. The Evaluation would argue that improved monitoring frameworks within the organisations themselves, combined with periodic monitoring missions and site visits of sampled projects would be a better way to document and track outcomes on the ground.

5.4 Sustainability of results

The Evaluation has assessed the extent to which the results achieved are sustainable, in particular in relation to funding, ownership and capacity.

5.4.1 Financial sustainability
Supported African network organisations are highly dependent on Danida funding. For most of the African grantees, Danida is one of their main funding partners, and several are currently highly dependent on Danida's continued support. Danida's contribution ranges from 20% (FAWE) to close to 90% (AWEPON) of the total budget of the African networks. More than half of IAC's operating budget is also currently funded by Danida, while another large share comes from the centrally managed Dutch MDG3 fund. Both the Danish MFA and the Dutch MDG3 fund also support AWDF, whose funding has

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121) Examples of this are EASSI, AWEPON and PENHA, which all have their regional headquarter offices located in Kampala within a few minutes of distance from each other, but have practically no cooperation or coordination of activities between them at that level although there would clearly be scope for this. Even though they are located in the same city, they would typically meet only through the Danida-sponsored follow-up seminars in Denmark or in an African city.

drastically increased since 2006 when both Danida and the Dutch came onboard with their funding.

In the case of EASSI, Danida funding has gradually increased in importance, from around 25% of the overall budget to around 50% in 2010-13. Danida has been the main funder of EASSI's strategic plan along with CORDAID and HIVOS. Many of the networks have – apart from Danida and sometimes the Dutch MDG3 fund – mostly INGO networks and foundations as their core funders.

Danida is also currently a major funder of PENHA, whose organisational capacity to take on funding of this scope is limited. They will therefore have to be selective in what they go for in relation to what their national offices can deliver, and the Danida project was resource heavy for them given the complex coordination across three offices.

Therefore, a sudden decision by Danida to withdraw may have serious negative consequences for these organisations (and may even lead to closure of some of them). In particular, the capacity development processes within the organisations, including on M&E frameworks, that are supported as part of the projects are still rather premature and fragile and will most probably fall apart in most cases if Danida's funding is stopped. A particular challenge faced by most of the African regional grantees is that they are often not very visible at the national levels, where most opportunities for other bilateral donor funding exist. This would again support the suggestion of strengthened national links, and increased coordination with relevant Danida embassies (especially in Danida programming countries).

Two of the networks were exclusively created in order to qualify for funding under this envelope, although some of their members had been involved in regional activities beforehand,, namely the Micro-finance Consortium in Africa, channelled through Nairobi-based AFRACA and the African Training Centre which is the project of EBWA in collaboration with Sudanese and Ethiopian business training partners. The sustainability of these networks and collaborations are even more dependent on Danida's sustained support, even if the members on their own are strong and well-resourced at the national level.

Supported African network organisations have demonstrated limited ability to attract additional funding. There is some evidence that the Danida project support has been a catalyst to attract additional funding to the grantees, but the practice is rare. In the case of EASSI and AWEPON, Danida's funding has been filling voids when other donors left. Others are co-funded by Danida and the Dutch MDG3 fund, but through entirely separate processes of selection. Gender Links is in many ways an exception since they have managed to actually expand their funding base since Danida's support started. The same is true for AWDF, though it cannot necessarily be attributed to the Danida support, since their larger funders are Comic Relief, UK, and the Dutch MDG3 fund.

The long-term funding perspective is of key importance for the organisations. One of the main challenges for the grantees is to ensure funding that allows them to plan more than one year ahead. In most cases it has been difficult for the organisations to keep staff members for longer periods due to the continuous insecurity of funding. This has affected the sustainability of capacity development processes. Danida's project funding, which has typically had a 2-3 year horizon, has therefore been very important to the organisations and has worked as a "show case" to other potential funding partners.

INGOs and multilaterals have stronger ability to attract funding. Overall, and compared to the African networks, the INGOs have demonstrated stronger ability to attract co-funding as well as additional funding for consolidating gains and emerging results. For INGOs like WfWI, which just established their offices in Europe, it was important to get Danida's endorsement as one of the bilateral donors most active in the area of gender equality right now. This was equally (if not more) important than the actual funding, to start building up the European funding base and individual sponsorship programme. Most of their funding goes from woman to woman – i.e. from individual women who commits to personally sponsor another woman in a post-conflict country during one year while this woman completes her training. The Danida contribution was in this sense both timely and important even if it constitutes a relatively small proportion of overall programme costs. In the case of LEAP I (World Bank), the Danida funding has been a catalyst for attracting additional funding partners (Sweden, Norway, Canada) for LEAP II. Danish NGOs are more exclusively dependent on Danida, with all of their project costs being included for funding under this envelope.

Since most INGOs work through local partners and networks, issues of ad hoc support and financial instability of their partners have also been noted to affect them in their implementation. On the other hand, there were examples of cross-fertilisation of funding, with FAWE's local chapter in Burundi also being the local implementing partner for ActionAid in Burundi. ActionAid also benefitted from a Danida-funded grant from AWDF to carry out a regional seminar on HIV/AIDS in West Africa. AWEPON's national partner in Kenya has also received AWDF grants in support of their activities.

5.4.2 Capacity development

African network organisations

In cases where projects are based on the organisations' own strategic plans (e.g. EASSI, IAC and partially AWDF and Gender Links) buy-in for the funded activities is generally high, at least among those members that have been involved in the strategic planning process (often board members, management and senior staff from the regional HQ offices). This is likely to have a positive effect on the sustainability of operations since the organisation is likely to pursue additional fundraising towards the same objectives at the end of the Danida funding cycle.

For organisations where the funded project is not directly based on their strategic plan, the Evaluation found that involvement of implementing partners and end-beneficiaries in the proposal development process was very limited.[122] This could affect sustainability negatively, as was evidenced during interviews with national and sub-national partners to some of the African networks. Due to very limited consultations with implementing organisations and end-beneficiaries in the sampled projects, some big assumptions related to beneficiary needs, interests and circumstances could also affect the sustainability of outcomes[123].

Although project activities implemented at local levels were often relevant and had a good potential, the amount of funding that actually was made available at this level often did not allow for much more than a few demonstration cases and training events.

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122) Some of the national and local implementing organisations are selected only after approval of the project and did not have access to the full project proposal or budget.

123) For instance the assumption that increased access to micro-finance for rural women will automatically be beneficial without providing additional support or capacity building on technical know-how.

These were typically not effectively considered and analysed in terms of sustainability and potential for replication and scale-up. With very small and ad hoc investments in end-beneficiaries, it is also unlikely that this will be sufficient to substantially and sustainably impact on their lives.[124] An example of cost tracking from central to lower levels in one of the organisations that suffered from internal challenges can be found in Annex 3.

INGOs and Multilaterals
In terms of the INGOs and the multilateral grantee, the Evaluation finds examples of strengthened institutional capacities with regards to gender approaches and/or in applying new (innovative) working methods for their own operations as a direct consequence of implementing the Women in Africa regional projects.

One example of this is ADRA, which did not have a pronounced gender focus in their programming previous to undertaking this project. ADRA were able to use their involvement in Women in Africa to gain experience on the challenges and opportunities in moving away from service delivery to focus on capacity building and advocacy. Likewise, the experience from working with media (radio) as a way to raise women's concerns is now being integrated into other ADRA projects. Another example is the Danish Refugee Council, where the Women in Africa project has contributed to strengthening their network for influencing gender issues in the region. A third example is the LEAP programme, where the gender equality focus has influenced the way the World Bank integrates a gender component into its new programmes.

Evidence, though limited, suggests that in those cases where the INGOs/multilaterals have made extensive use of their own (international) staff for project implementation, the sustainability of activities being implemented at the local (beneficiary) levels has been weaker than in those projects where local stakeholders have been involved and capacitated more directly. One example of this is ADRA, where an independent review found that ADRA could have strengthened the options for increased sustainability by downplaying the role of ADRA staff in the implementation of activities, and instead building up the capacities of the Listening Committees members to take over. For International Alert's peace-building programme, the independent evaluation – though largely positive regarding benefits at end-beneficiary level – also pointed out that short-term and ad hoc agreements with the involved CSOs limited opportunities for sustained capacity development.

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124) For instance, in an AWDF project sampled in the slum areas of Nairobi, barmaids attended information sessions on HIV/AIDS in order to get access to micro-credit. But very few managed to repay their loans or leave their existing professions as a result of the intervention. Neither were they able to act on the recommended behaviour change (decreased risk behaviour) for as long as they remained in their profession where they earned less than one dollar-a-day.

6 Conclusions

The conclusions follow the main scope of the assignment as outlined in the TOR.

(i) The extent to which the portfolio of activities financed through the Women in Africa support initiative have been relevant for the promotion of gender equality in light of Danish policy priorities, regional priorities, needs and possibilities and other ongoing activities supporting gender equality.

Overall, the Women in Africa regional support initiative is in line with Danish policy priorities and has the potential to provide lessons around best practice on how to promote gender equality in Danish development cooperation. The way it was set up as a separate (and institutionally somewhat isolated) support initiative, designed, managed and executed – from the preselection of grantees to the types of project activities that were supported – have however limited its potential relevance both as a stand-alone support initiative and for institutionalising and building lessons more widely into other areas of Danish development support.

The portfolio of funded projects suffers from the lack of a clear strategic orientation, including targets and criteria to guide the selection and monitoring of organisations and projects in light of Danish, regional and national priorities. All organisations were considered relevant given their thematic focus and their operating environments. There were several innovations in terms of approaches applied that served as a basis for organisational learning and expansion into new working methods by INGOs. Most of the funded projects and activities tended to be opportunity-led in terms of expanding their own funding base or internal learning, rather than properly embedded in already ongoing change processes at national or regional levels.

Instead, many supported initiatives tended to be driven by upwards accountability to Danida, the INGO headquarters, or by the desire to expand the grantee's own expertise, rather than by downwards accountability to regional, national or local actors and processes.

Moreover, during the Evaluation period, there has been no regular analysis of regional or policy-making needs in the pan-African context once grantees had been selected and the regional support initiative had been operationalised. Subsequently, the composition of grantees and the overall focus of the funding portfolio have not reflected the overall shift in needs from getting regional and AU gender provisions in place towards their implementation and operationalisation at sub-regional and national levels.

It reflects the weak monitoring mechanisms in place due to the central administration of the fund. Organisations' own progress reports tend to be broadly uncritical in nature, and often fail to take the wider context into consideration. Instead they are fairly 'inwards looking' to report primarily on their own activities and outputs. Although INGOs generally are better equipped to carry out internal monitoring, progress reports are overall very uncritical and not learning-oriented for refocusing the strategy and/or approaches applied.

An institutionalised quality control, including regular reviews of the portfolio as a whole would be needed to stay relevant at an overall portfolio level and select relevant grantees and programmes.

(ii) The extent to which the portfolio of activities has promoted African ownership of gender equality initiatives by working with relevant regional networks and NGOs promoting gender equality in Africa.

The concept of African ownership needs to be further unpacked and benchmarked in terms of the exact aims of the support initiative. While on the one hand particularly African network grantees tend to have a high sense of ownership of the initiative itself (as exclusively selected grantees), this strong sense of ownership is not necessarily shared at lower levels of staff within the same organisation or among other network members, and only rarely is it effectively transferred to beneficiaries and stakeholders involved in actual activities.

INGOs, though generally more effective at creating a strong sense of ownership at the lowest grassroots levels, often bypassed national stakeholders or failed to transfer ownership to policy- and decision makers in-country. Capacity building of national CSOs and CBOs was also very *ad hoc* without longer term or predictable engagement throughout the full duration of the project.

Although the Women in Africa regional support initiative was set up in a very flexible manner, without many organisational preconditions to qualify for support, the lack of having a more defined strategy led to a number of conditions or preferences in relation to the types and focus of activities – some which ended up being confining. This may also have affected ownership, and the ability to transfer ownership effectively to relevant stakeholders.

It included:

- The decision by Danida to gradually shift emphasis more towards women's economic empowerment did not match with the way organisations had been identified and preselected since most held strengths in fields more closely related to women's rights issues and activism in the African women's movement.

- The decision that the initiatives supported through the Women in Africa initiative should cover at least three countries to facilitate exchange of information and lessons and cooperation across borders.

Some of the INGOs and the multilateral LEAP programme advanced its own internal understanding of how to incorporate a gender dimension in its programming thanks to the Women in Africa support. Likewise, some of the African networks used the funding to try new approaches or expand into areas where they had previously not been present (such as FAWE in vocational training).

(iii) The extent to which the expected outputs and outcomes have been delivered, and the degree to which capacities, networks and practices of inter-organisational learning for enhancing gender equality has been strengthened.

The overall effectiveness from the projects supported through the Women in Africa regional support initiative is hard to determine at the outcome level, and to some extent also at the output level, due to considerable lack of realistic and verifiable indicators in the project documents and operational systems and procedures for M&E within the organisations. This is more of an issue for the African network organisations than for the

internationally-based NGOs. At the same time, since most INGO projects are being implemented in fragile states and within areas of conflict, it has often been necessary for organisations to suspend or postpone project activities within one or more project countries due to political circumstances.

Through the Women in Africa initiative a number of innovative project approaches have been supported with mixed results. The innovative approaches have been most successful in those cases where the implemented activities have formed an integrated part of the grantees' core activities, and where the organisations have the realistic potential to further roll out the introduced concept and use it in cross-country operations. This also includes combining different funding sources. In those cases where the innovative approaches fail, it is mainly because these activities are introduced as stand-alone project activities and where the organisations do not have the required (technical) capacity available.

The main effects from the capacity development activities supported through the Women in Africa initiative have been improvements in the financial and administrative capacities for project management within the supported African network organisations. Whether these improvements will be sustainable can however be questioned since the training provided has only benefitted a few persons at the organisations headquarter office level and the organisations are characterised by high staff turn-over due to unstable funding. In addition, the organisations are still characterised by weak internal mechanisms for sharing of new learning and practices between different levels of the organisations. In particular, the mechanisms for transferring learning from the regional headquarter office to the local levels are not well developed. As a consequence of this, the learning process from the projects tends to be one-dimensional, focusing at the centre.

There are only few examples of enhanced networking, newly established partnerships and implementation of joint activities among organisations supported through the Women in Africa support initiative. The few examples are found nearly entirely among more resource strong African network organisations at headquarter level. The lack of collaboration can partially be explained by these organisations' internal competition for project funding.

(iv) The extent to which the funds allocated have been efficiently spent, both in relation to the individual activities selected, and in relation to the portfolio of activities (e.g. by considering an appropriate division of labour, realisation of possible synergies, strategic collaboration etc.).

Most of the African network organisations supported through the Women in Africa initiative are weak institutions in terms of managerial, financial, administrative and technical capacities, something that the funded projects have not been able to change. The organisations' capability for efficient and effective managing and implementing of the Danida-funded projects is limited, including for those activities directly related to development of capacities and inter-organisational learning.

The regional dimension, the way it was applied, also led to a number of inefficiencies in programme implementation. Even though the supported network organisations are defined as "regional network organisations", they are not, in most cases set up or used to do project work across several countries simultaneously. As a consequence of this, most projects have been implemented by the grantees without having efficient mechanisms for communication, reporting and sharing of learning's across country offices and beneficiary

groups within the region in place. This led to slow start-up, delays in coordination, and the inclusion of costly coordination, Board and steering committee meeting mechanisms being put in place.

The regional added value in order to promote and implement AU-level and regional gender provisions in national policy and implementation processes was also poorly explored by grantees, and few had the skills or capacities to do so.

(v) The extent to which the results achieved are sustainable, with emphasis on the issues of ownership and capacity.

Most of the supported African network organisations are financially very fragile and unstable institutions receiving (often small) funds from different, uncoordinated funding sources. Very few donors are providing funding for organisations that operate with mainly a regional perspective and these donors are often funding a number of the same organisations without any kind of coordination efforts taking place. In a few cases, the Women in Africa grants to networks and INGOs has been a catalyst for attraction of additional funding to the organisations. However, a number of the African network organisations have become heavily financial dependent of Danida, as their most important funding partner, and this dependency seems to increase rather than decrease over the years.

While most of the projects have included a strategic (policy advocacy, research, analysis) as well as a practical approach (implementation at local end-beneficiary level) only few organisations have been able to balance and manage such multidimensional interventions in an efficient and effective way. In particular, the project implementation at local levels, often done through partner and/or local implementing organisations, has provided poor results and the sustainability of these activities seem to be low.

7 Lessons learned

Without clearly defined strategic objectives and a carefully identified overarching results framework, this type of loosely focused central fund runs the risk of *being too sensitive to political and policy shifts and priorities*, which can delay projects and bypass gender dimensions that are important. In some cases, the shift in Danish policy interest steered the identified grantees towards a stronger focus on areas beyond their expertise due to shifts in Danish policy interests. Likewise, the political pressure to get a special fund operational quickly led, in fact, to a number of inefficiencies in the way it was set up and managed in isolation to other on-going efforts to support gender equality.

A big advantage of supplementary funds to promote a specific issue or policy area is usually the fact that they are *flexible in nature* to enhance other on-going initiatives, to add a new dimension to stalled processes, or to intervene with short notice in response to opportunities that emerge. None of these features have been fully explored in the Women in Africa regional initiative, where the identification and administration process remained fairly inflexible, limiting support to a number of pre-identified grantees even though some of these grantees lacked the necessary technical skills, experience or capacities to deliver effectively on the policy agenda[125]. A couple of grantees joined at a later stage, but through a non-transparent process. The administration of the funding was also far removed from areas of operations with little opportunities to follow up on or attend key events in the field. Additionally, Women in Africa grants seem to have created an increased (rather than decreased) dependency of African network grantees on the Danida funding, which could put the organisations in a vulnerable situation at the end of the support period.

Supplementary funds can also provide an opportunity to *encourage innovation in approaches and methods* that can later be mainstreamed into regular programming. The Women of Africa portfolio has more successfully been used in this field. Yet institutional mechanisms are often lacking to mainstream lessons into other areas of programming, given that its administration and funding cycles are run in parallel to other activities financed as part of the bilateral country funding in Danida programming countries, or in relation to other Danida-funded civil society support.[126]

In terms of programmatic effectiveness and impact there are also several lessons in relation to the use of a regional (as opposed to national) approach. For instance, unless women's advocacy networks who operate at higher levels (regional, international) link into processes and organisations that are well embedded at national and sub-national levels, there will always be *a gap between ownership of certain agendas by a fairly small and elitist group of advocates, and a broader base of national policy-makers and citizens.* These links from higher to lower levels are currently weak. I.e. even when women's organisations are successful in advocating for policies and protocols at regional and international levels, the effects are rarely trickling down as funds are not linked and matched to their implementation. These weaknesses, which are common in many development settings, are reflected in the way many of the African regional networks work in terms of information sharing and funding to lower levels.

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125) Such as on the policy area of regional promotion of women's economic empowerment. Some of the Danish NGOs were also previously relatively inexperienced when it came to gender issues.
126) This is administered by another department in the MFA.

Innovative and complementary approaches, in particular in areas related to economic empowerment with social, cultural, legal as well as financial aspects at play, will not be effective and sustainable *if they are not based on a solid analytical preparatory work and if the project organisations are not providing the necessary expertise and skills to support and facilitate implementation of such activities*. In addition, particular attention needs to ensure that implementation of these type of activities will not be too project-driven (by the project staff), but will ensure that end-beneficiaries will have both the desire as well as realistic possibilities and opportunities to continue with the activities after project closure.

Providing *financial support to implementation of organisations own strategic plans* is a good way to ensure ownership at the higher organisational level. However, there is a big risk that ownership and involvement in project planning and implementation processes at lower organisational levels and among end-beneficiaries will be very limited if no additional efforts are done. Enough decentralisation in the networks' structures is needed to firmly place the locus of information and ownership at this level (not remaining at regional level).

High transaction costs has proven to be inevitable when weak organisational structures are required to organise and administer their work much differently from what they are used to do (e.g. by running several projects simultaneously in a minimum of three countries), or take on grants that are of bigger size than they usually handle[127].

Effectiveness can vary considerably when projects are implemented within organisations with limited resources and capacities and within fragile states. It is important that the ambitions and flexibilities of the project designs reflect these realities. Moreover, it becomes very difficult to monitor and evaluate what changes may occur due to a particular project intervention when project reports are too narrowly focusing on measurable outputs and results (number of participants in trainings, number of handbooks and manuals produced etc.) instead of reporting on a limited number of outcomes in the targeted change processes.

It has shown to be a good approach to provide capacity development within weak and fragile organisational structures on project administration and financial management, since these are core capacities that can be used by the organisations in the future, with or without Danida support. However, personal learning does not automatically translate into changed work processes or approaches within an organisation.

When no *systematic and transparent monitoring* of the activities implemented by grantees is taking place, the risk for double-funding and overlaps and duplication of efforts is a serious concern, in particular at the country and local levels.

The INGOs and the African network organisations do *not automatically have an incentive to cooperate and coordinate activities* between them as they are also competitors of scarce funding resources. Inter-organisational learning and networking intended to take place between grantees at annual seminars gathering all grantees (INGOs and African networks) has therefore been slow to take off in practice.

With few potential funding sources available for regional project activities, there is a risk that the sustainability and further development of a regional network organisation will suddenly *depend to a large extent on one funding partner's continued commitment*, as long

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127)   See references to AWEPON.

as no other funding mechanisms and/or main funding sources are identified for these organisations.

It is essential that *sufficient funding and volume will be allocated to lower levels of operations (end-beneficiary activities)* if local and national level lessons are to be generated for learning internally within the supported organisations/networks, as well as in relation to the organisations' ability to influence the regional policy agenda.

When funding is provided through INGOs, the participation and involvement of country offices and the local end-beneficiaries are often higher and more transparent than when funding is channelled through African network organisations. However, accountability for social change must still be firmly embedded in national processes, and not be 'captured' by the international organisation and used for upwards rather than downwards accountability.

If funding provided to the grantee only has a short-term perspective, it may provide more value-added when funding is channelled through the internationally based organisations (UN bodies, INGOs) compared to the African network organisations, due to the solid existing systems, capacities and structures of the international organisations. On the other hand, when funding is provided with a medium to long term perspective, the African network organisations are a more appropriate option for placing policy pressure within national or regional institution. Preference should be given to those organisations that *transfers ownership, and broadens the basis for buy-in into the gender equality agenda among key stakeholder groups*, above those that capture the agenda to ring-fence funding or promote the interests of a small elitist group of civil society leaders. I.e. the mobilisation of popular support and civic pressure should go hand in hand with high-end advocacy to promote and broaden ownership of the issues at stake.

8   Recommendations

In the new Strategy for Danish Development Cooperation (2010), gender is one of five focus areas. Stability and fragile states is another priority area. The strategy emphasises the Danish wish to strengthen regional cooperation and to continue support to "relevant regional organisations". At the same time, the strategy also points out that Denmark want to ensure better results through a more "focused and effective development cooperation" based on long-term partnerships, where the Danish engagement shall be robust, flexible and dynamic. Furthermore, the strategy stresses that development results must be documented, evaluated and communicated.

In view of this, the Evaluation finds that the Women in Africa regional support initiative could have the potential to contribute to the implementation of the Danish strategic orientation. However, the Evaluation cannot recommend that the Women in Africa support continues in its current form. The recommendations thus outline considerations on how best to address challenges around regional support to gender equality, including some major adjustments to its strategic focus, grant portfolio composition, and the way it is set up and administered as outlined below:

Portfolio focus & composition

- ***A clearer distinction and more adapted approaches are needed for the different categories of grantees.*** For continued support to a regional approach to promote gender equality, funding and technical support should be shifted to focus clearly on implementation of regional gender equality policy provisions and mechanisms in place, in order for them to be effective across regional and sub-regional bodies, as well as at different levels of implementation. In relation to operations in post-conflict countries this should ideally include regional mechanisms for peace-keeping and security, which can be complementary to in-country and cross-border interventions. For other activities in post-conflict countries, the necessity for a regional approach should be assessed on a case-by-case basis and focus on more immediate added value in e.g. cross-border or sub-regional conflicts.

  Although continued lobbying pressure is needed particularly on African states that lag behind in the ratification of international or regional instruments that promote gender equality, a general shift towards implementation is needed to highlight and publicise best practice. With a sharpened focus on implementation, the links between regional and national initiatives will be even more important in the future. The Evaluation therefore recommends a revision both in the way the Women in Africa fund is managed (with much clearer links to national level support), and its criteria for selecting grantees that are able to collaborate with others to deliver on this agenda.

  Considering that currently only relatively few donors are providing funding for regional organisations or initiatives that promote gender equality, the Evaluation finds a need for continued but targeted support to this area, clearly linked to processes and outcomes that go beyond just strengthening regional secretariats of African network organisations. Support should ideally provide sufficient funding to all different levels of implementation (regional/international, national, and sub-

regional/local), but each grantee should not be required to cover all these different levels by itself. Rather, cost-efficient partnerships based on comparative advantage should be encouraged.

For organisations operating in post-conflict countries the regional dimension should not be imposed, but be assessed on a case-by-case basis in terms of added value.

- ***It is recommended that Danida will carefully consider the value-added for different types/themes of interventions to be implemented regionally through African network organisations and INGOs.*** Linked to the above recommendation is the observation that different types of projects are more or less well suited to a regional approach. To have operations in a minimum of three countries simultaneously has allowed for a number of inefficiencies. Rather, existing structures and mechanisms should be used where possible to avoid creating parallel systems.

  Particularly in the field of economic empowerment, it would be good to allow for more flexibility, and to encourage interdisciplinary coalitions to identify best practice, combining gender equality and financial expertise.

- ***It is recommended that Danish embassies where applicable, and other relevant departments in MFA, have a stronger influence and role in defining the overall strategy of the Women in Africa support initiative, which may affect the overall composition of grantees.*** In order to create stronger linkages with other ongoing initiatives both in bilateral programme countries and with other Danida support channelled through INGOs or multilateral bodies, it is recommended that relevant departments and embassies are more closely involved in the definition of the overall aims of the funding envelope, and in coming up with recommendations for its use, with emphasis on its innovative and complementary nature and fairly large degree of flexibility. A more elaborate referral system should be developed for the identification and selection of grantees, coupled with a more decentralised monitoring system in line with a broad results framework.

Organisational levels

- ***It is recommended that the organisations will strengthen efforts to move from focusing on activities and outputs, towards a more explicit operational focus on result-orientation in clearly identified change processes. In doing so, positive as well as negative outcomes should be recorded in order to adjust strategies accordingly.*** The Evaluation found that although relatively well-designed programme documents with targets, indicators etc. had been developed for a number of the organisations, the working "culture" within the organisations were generally not adapted or aligned to report against this. Indicators presented were rarely monitored or tracked and were rarely connected to the organisational planning process. Reporting was instead largely undertaken to fulfil Danida requirements. Although this may be a common dilemma in civil society organisations with limited resources or monitoring and evaluation skills in-house, it means that gender outcomes and potential backlashes from interventions targeting only women (not men or male attitudes) were not regularly recorded and fed into the planning processes.

  Moreover, organisations had no way of assessing whether their 'pressure point' for change was bearing fruit, or whether they should refocus efforts e.g. by channel-

ling a larger proportion of funds downstream to national and local partners. Many grantees, both among African network organisations and INGOs carried out work based on huge assumptions that remained untested. Progress reports were also largely uncritical to their own performance.

- *It is recommended that grantees – and INGOs in particular – clearly identify at what level(s) they want to act as an additional leverage to on-going regional, national or local change processes, and how they will ensure that the agenda is broadened and transferred to relevant national/local stakeholders throughout the implementation process.* The findings from the Evaluation points towards instances where the INGOs 'take on' and mobilise around a specific agenda (like UNSCR 1325), thereby raising expectations among local groups and stakeholders, without necessarily transferring back the driving force and momentum of the agenda to its proper stakeholders. More explicit intervention strategies including role division with other partners, and when/ how to exit is therefore of essence without capturing and 'externalising' the agenda of women's rights and empowerment in a given context.

Portfolio management by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- *It is recommended that Danida's support to regional organisations and initiatives (African-led and INGOs) within the Women in Africa context in the future will be based on a strategic framework with some clear targets and priority areas. It should explicitly be defined what will be expected from support provided to this type of regional interventions and through which channels the interventions are likely to work most effectively.* During the evaluation period, the pressure to quickly identify potential grantees seems to have overridden a strategic analysis of issues and targets, locking Danida into funding arrangements with individual grantees before it was clear what specific objectives this support was expected to fulfil. The strategic framework should also include more explicit consideration on how partnership models and synergies may be generated among and between the organisations and projects supported as well as with other on-going national or regional processes supported by Danida (see also recommendation above under 'portfolio composition').

- *It is recommended that Danida strengthen the existing procedures and set-up for monitoring and quality control of the Women in Africa regional support initiative. An internal revision of the way the Women in Africa fund is managed (with clearer links to bilateral level support or other departments in the MFA where relevant), and of the criteria for selecting grantees should be undertaken with the aim of partly decentralising or locating administration at embassies and/or the relevant departments of MFA.* The Evaluation recommends a revision both in the way the Women in Africa fund is managed, and its criteria for selecting grantees. The Africa Department in the MFA has regularly consulted with relevant embassies and the departments in charge of civil society and humanitarian support during the evaluation period. Such cooperation should be encouraged and intensified, to explore and enhance synergies with other ongoing initiatives. Likewise support that involves Danida programme countries should ideally include embassies more actively.

A challenge is the fact that embassies may not play a substantial role in the regional context. However, monitoring closer to the regional headquarters would be more cost-efficient and could also more regularly incorporate issues related to regional

relevance in terms of implementing regional provisions at national levels. Embassies in the countries where African networks are implementing activities could also be more actively drawn in, since there may be synergies or overlaps with other Danida supported programmes at national level.[128] Another practical suggestion, if the Women in Africa Seminars were to continue in its current format, would be to schedule it in connection to the Gender Focal Point seminar, held every second year for gender focal points across all Danish embassies.

With a more decentralised monitoring framework in place, the frequency of such joint seminars could be reduced to every second or third year, compared to holding them annually as is currently the case. They could then be used much more for thematic lessons learning, and less for monitoring purposes as is the case at present. Instead, they could be a way of institutionalising and sharing lessons across different departments of the MFA that administer special allocations for gender equality, and not be shouldered by the Africa Department alone.

Recommendations for Development Partners (including Danida)

• *It is recommended that Development Partners will take the initiative to coordinate and pool funding (e.g. basket funding) for supplementary and issue-specific funds to avoid potential double funding and funding overlaps and provide a more solid and predictable funding base for regional organisations and initiatives through a transparent and open selection processes.* Dialogue and cooperation between e.g. the Danish MFA and the Dutch MDG3 fund would have been beneficial, at least related to regional support initiatives and provision of funding to the same grantees (like AWDF). In this way it may be possible to establish longer-term partnerships with selected regional network organisations, which would be a big advantage in terms of strengthening the relatively weak capacities within regional organisations.

Moreover, the Evaluation recommends opening up such supplementary thematic funds to a wider number of grantees through transparent application and selection processes where organisations are allowed to submit parts of their strategic plans for funding (moving away from short term 'project mode'). This could also help to make funding issues- rather than organisation-driven against clearly identified strategic objectives.

• *It is recommended that future support to regional African organisations and initiatives (including for NGOs/multilaterally funded programmes) will focus more explicitly on how to deal with capacity constraints.* The Evaluation found that most of the regional African network organisations visited during the field mission were very weak and fragile organisations with large dependency on few funding sources and little ability to further capacitate members operating at grassroots levels. The Evaluation suggests addressing this issue from this outset, with clear capacity building and exit plans in place, preferably co-funded with other donors. If this aspect is not being addressed more strategically, it is doubtful how sustainable the supported activities will be. Given the funding constraints, a stepwise approach to capacity development interventions would be desirable, based on more realistic expectations as to what may be possible to obtain within the resource and time-frame, given the annual funding provisions.

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128) For instance, the Kenya Women's Finance Trust, the national grantee of AFRACA, is a relevant actor in relation to the Danish private sector development programme in Kenya.

Few of the INGOs had good systems in place for building the necessary capacities among their local partners and implementing organisations. A future requirement for INGO support should therefore be to more explicitly improve information flows to and from local partners by involving them in all aspects of programme design and implementation.

- *It is recommended that Development Partners will support regional/sub-regional studies and analyses that could provide a better common guidance and best practice for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the region and sub-region, in particular within the thematic field of women's economic empowerment where few of the more experienced women's organisations in the African women's movement has any substantial experience.* The rationale and strategic advantage for applying a regional approach particularly to women's economic empowerment needs to be clarified to ensure that interventions are based on – or are clearly contributing to – the accumulation of best practice.

Such research and analysis was not done at the stage of conceptualising the Women in Africa regional support initiative, with the result of having several African networks focusing on the same type of economic empowerment, encountering the same limitations along the way. Institutional links to regional trade arrangements could for instance be further explored in the future, instead of investing heavily in exchange visits between countries with limited applicability in the local context.

A recommendation is also to explore and encourage collaborations between financially oriented organisations (such as those providing micro-finance for women) and those in the African women's movement that traditionally has focused more on women's rights. This is based on the finding that women's rights organisations generally are ill equipped to link women's empowerment to economic sustainability on their own, whereas micro-finance institutions tend to have an insufficient understanding of gender equality issues.

- *It is recommended that Development Partners unpack and disentangle the issue of 'ownership' to make it clear whose ownership is essential for what change processes in order to most effectively promote gender equality.* It is evident from this Evaluation that the promotion and broadening of 'ownership' of gender equality issues have more to do with grantees' efficient use of their individual comparative advantage and methods applied, rather than the origin or nature of the organisation implementing the project (international or African-led). It would be simplistic to assume that a broadened and locally rooted ownership of the gender equality agenda will occur by channelling funding through African networks as opposed to networks that are global or international in nature, just as it would be equally simplistic to assume that INGOs are necessarily the best qualified to intervene in post-conflict areas. Earmarking of funds for African and international networks therefore seems artificial, and the quality and track-record of the organisation and its proposal should instead be guiding the selection. In other words, in the future, this basic premise for the Women in Africa support needs to be questioned and replaced with a more nuanced approach based on transparent management and selection criteria that are geared towards an outlined strategy and results framework.

Annex 1 Terms of Reference

Evaluation of activities funded under the 'Women in Africa'-grant and related activities

Danida File: 104.A.1.e.116, Evaluation Department, February 2010

1   Background

In recent years the Danish government working with partners has taken a number of initiatives to further promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The Danish policy on gender equality advocates a three-pronged approach to the promotion of gender equality:

* *'Equal rights (political, civil, economic, social including sexual and reproductive as well as cultural) for women and men*
* *Equal access to and control of resources for women and men*
* *Equal opportunities to achieve political and economic influence for women and men'*

In 2006 a five-step plan for women in Africa was launched aiming to support African organisations, think tanks and networks committed to promoting women's equal rights, equal access to resources and equal access to political influence are included among the above initiatives. This aims at promoting and enhancing African ownership as an essential foundation for the sustainability and the continued promotion of gender equality.

Danida has set aside funding for regional efforts to advance gender equality by promoting cooperation across boundaries. A variety of organisations, the majority of whom are based in Africa, have received grants under the "Women in Africa" appropriation. In the evaluation period, about 30 million DKK a year is channelled into these activities, managed by the Africa Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFA). Aside from providing direct funding to individual organisations, MFA has also aimed to facilitate collaboration *amongst* these various organisations to promote experience sharing and the planning of joint regional activities involving several organisations. In 2007-09 a total of four workshops were conducted and a fifth workshop is tentatively scheduled for September 2010.

Danida's evaluation department now wishes to carry out an evaluation of the support, focusing on the results achieved and the lessons learned.

2   Objective

The overall objective of the evaluation is to contribute to the continued improvement of the support to gender equality in Africa, by assessing results and identifying lessons learned from the overall approach and the specific experiences of the activities funded under the "Woman in Africa"- grant. In particular, the evaluation is expected to help enhance the foundation for future selection of activities and partners, by assessing the added value of the approach and the funded activities. The evaluation will focus on:

- The extent to which the portfolio of activities financed through the Women in Africa appropriation have been relevant for the promotion of gender equality in light of Danish policy priorities; regional priorities, needs and possibilities and other ongoing activities supporting gender equality.

- The extent to which the portfolio of activities has promoted African ownership of gender equality initiatives by working with relevant regional networks and NGOs promoting gender equality in Africa.

- The extent to which the expected outputs and outcomes have been delivered, and the degree to which capacities, networks and practices of inter-organisational learning for enhancing gender equality has been strengthened.

- The extent to which the funds allocated have been efficiently spent, both in relation to the individual activities selected, and in relation to the portfolio of activities (e.g. by considering an appropriate division of labour, realization of possible synergies, strategic collaboration etc.).

- The extent to which the results achieved are sustainable, with emphasis on the issues of ownership and capacity.

By investigating these questions, the evaluation is expected to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the portfolio of activities; both at the overall level and by looking more in depth at selected activities. The evaluation is not expected to include an assessment of impact, since it in many cases will be too early for longer-term effects of the support to have materialized. Thus, when assessing whether the support has been effective in achieving results, the focus is expected to be on outputs and outcomes, and the relative timeframes and scales of the activities must be considered. The assessment of efficiency is expected to focus on whether resources have been put to good use, both when considering the implementation of selected activities, and when considering the portfolio of activities. An in-depth cost-benefit analysis is not deemed feasible for this evaluation. In relation to sustainability, it should be noted that in some cases it may still be so early in the life span of the activities, that it is not realistic to establish whether full sustainability has been established. In such cases, it may be relevant to assess whether the activities are on track to achieving sustainability.

3   Outputs

The outputs will comprise:

- An inception report, outlining the specific methodology and the criteria for establishing the sample of activities to be evaluated more in-depth, as well as an outline of the content of the sample, based on an initial mapping and application of the selection criteria. A part hereof will be feed-back from the consultants on the proposed country selection. The inception report must also contain a detailed time line for the evaluation process and an outline of the foreseen structure of the evaluation report. A detailed evaluation matrix should be included.

- An evaluation report, that contains two specific outputs: a) an overall mapping of the activities supported, including an assessment of the selected partner institutions

and the overall portfolio, and b) a more in-depth assessment of a sample of Danish supported activities with a particular focus on regional dimensions in the projects and the extent to which these have promoted to gender equality. Special emphasis is expected to be on innovative and effective approaches found in the sample. The evaluation report must comply with international standards and follow Danida's Evaluation Guidelines (2006), and include i.a. executive summary, methodology, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations. The report is to be delivered in drafts and final version.

- Debriefing presentations at the embassies in countries where field visits are carried out and in Copenhagen/MFA.

- Possible presentation of the evaluation and its results during a seminar in Copenhagen scheduled for 19-24 of September 2010.

4   Scope of Work

The assignment will cover activities funded and managed from MFA's Africa Department under the "Women in Africa" grant in the 2006-09 period. Attention is drawn to the workshops that can themselves be seen as an activity aiming at enhancing regional networks, learning etc., and which should therefore be included in the assessment of activities.

The assignment will involve a combination of desk studies and field visits to selected organisations/countries. Supplementary data collection by means of an e-survey, telephone interviews or similar should be considered, in order to ensure sufficient coverage and depth of information. Interviews should be conducted with grant holders, both African organisation and organisations in the north (e.g. Copenhagen and London).

The evaluation is expected to include field visits to Uganda and Kenya. These countries are proposed based on an initial assessment of the portfolio, and with the aim of selecting countries for field visit, where a substantial amount of activities and/or partner organisations are located. While the desk study and the analysis of supplementary information should establish an overview over the whole portfolio of activities and make an analysis of the portfolio at the overall level, the field visits should be used to ensure a more in-depth assessment of a sample of selected activities. This work may include both discussions and collection of information at head quarter level as well as visits and collection of information amongst end beneficiaries. An important part of the methodological and analytical work will be to ensure a fruitful interplay between the different levels of analysis; including the transparent establishment of sample of activities that is sufficiently wide to render relevant and reliable information, and focused enough to be feasible for thorough analysis within the timeframe for the evaluation (see methodology below).

It should be born in mind that support has been extended to a variety of different organisations, working across a wide number of countries and involved with a diverse range of issues. Broadly speaking

- **Grant holders** are to a large degree NGOs and can be grouped into the following categories:

- Loose alliances of individual organisations set up with the purpose of managing the grant from the Women in Africa initiative.

- Wider regional networks covering 20+ countries across the continent working out of one regional office.

- Sub-regional networks (.e.g. Eastern Africa or Southern Africa) with a central office working in liaison with national partners.

In addition, funds have been channelled through other types of organisations, e.g. the World Bank.

- Activities supported by the Women in Africa budget line have addressed the following **themes**

  - Women's rights; health and safety (e.g. in relation to harmful traditional practices).

  - Economic empowerment.

  - Political Empowerment.

  - Post-conflict issues and interventions in post-conflict settings.

While the final categorization and decisions on sample and specific coverage will await the mapping, it is expected that the evaluation shall ensure sufficient of these thematic dimensions.

5   Main Issues and Methodology

5.1   Evaluation criteria and questions:
The evaluation will assess the quality of the projects supported from Denmark by using the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. When applying these criteria, the evaluation should include, but not necessarily be limited to, looking at the following aspects or questions:

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation questions
Relevance	Are the activities supported relevant for the promotion of gender equality as reflected in Danish policy priorities?
	Are the activities relevant in light or local and regional priorities, needs and possibilities?
	To what extent have DK funding supported piloting of innovative approaches?

Effectiveness	Have activities carried out with Danida financing led to the intended outputs and outcomes or are they on track to do so (considering time frames)?
	Have the activities led to regional or inter-organisational synergies and have they served to promote African ownership of the gender equality initiatives or are they on track to do so (considering time frames)?
	To what extent have grant holders engaged with other relevant institutions, e.g. African regional organisations, national authorities, research institutions etc.?
	How do activities undertaken with Danida support link to other on-going activities (complementarity, synergy, added value)?
Efficiency	Have the activities been implemented as planned (e.g. timeliness), and have allocated resources been put to good use?
	Have activities supported been based on a clear division of labour among the involved partners considering that the majority of initiatives are of a regional nature?
Sustainability	Have the organisations demonstrated the required capacity to design and implement activities in line with their mandate, prior experience and scope of the respective activities?
	What efforts have been undertaken to assess and address capacity gaps? How does this bode for sustainability?
	Has the support led to increased African regional or sub regional ownership of the gender equality initiatives, or is it track to do so (considering time frames)? How does this bode for sustainability?

It should be noted that the issues outlined in the evaluation questions; e.g. the issue of complementarily within the portfolio of activities and when considering other related initiatives, and on whether ownership has been secured, may be relevant for several evaluation criteria. How to best ensure an appropriate coverage of the various aspects should therefore be considered carefully when developing the evaluation matrix and outlining the structure for the evaluation report.

5.2   Methodology and design

The evaluation will be based on a combination of desk study of available documents and field visits to a sample of activities in selected countries. The possibilities of enhancing the data coverage and depth concerning the whole portfolio (or of a large sample hereof) through the application of an e-survey, telephone interviews or similar, should be explored.

The field visits are expected to include interviews with key stakeholders and informants, grant holders and other relevant organisations in the field as well as direct beneficiaries, where relevant. The field visit may also be used for collection of further documentation on the activities or the involved organisations, as well as to gather information from relevant third parties that can contribute to validation and triangulation in the analysis. Important parts of designing the evaluation will be to establish an appropriate sample of activities for in-depth analysis (selection criteria to consider, coverage, variety etc.), and to ensure a fruitful analytical interplay between the broader analysis of the portfolio the more in-depth investigation of the selected activities, and possibly the intermediate level analysis of supplementary information collected from the organisations involved. An aspect hereof will be to consider how to effectively ensure adequate information for valida-

tion and triangulation of findings. Experience from other evaluations indicate, that this can prove difficult e.g. when assessing capacity building efforts across a range of institutions. The specific strategy is to be established during the inception phase of the evaluation, in light of the mapping of the portfolio of activities.

Finally, it should be noted that the evaluation must be finalized within a relatively short time span. This, together with the diverse range of organisations and activities supported and the short time span available for the evaluation calls for careful planning, both in terms of design and analytical strategy and when considering the logistics of the field visits. In relation hereto, it should be noted that the consultants are responsible for planning, logistics etc. in relation to the field visits.

6   Composition of the Evaluation Team

The evaluation team must have experience with gender equality in Africa and the role of NGOs and other relevant organisations in this regard. Furthermore the team should demonstrate experience with regional interventions. The team must have knowledge of relevant Danish strategies and aid modalities, and at least one team member must be fluent in Danish, in order to access all relevant documentation. The team leader must have the analytical and organisational skills required to ensure a timely and solid evaluation of a diverse and complex set of interventions.

7   Organisation and management

The evaluation will be managed by Danida's Evaluation Department.

8   Timing and reporting

The assignment will commence in February 2010 with desk studies completed by end of March and field visits conducted in April-May. Various partner organisations will be in Denmark for a meeting around the 25th of March, and this is seen as an opportunity for early contacts and discussions between consultants and involved organisations that should not be missed. The inception report will be submitted by the end of March, considering the desk studies. A draft report will be presented by the 24th of June, a final draft is expected to be submitted by the 23rd of July, with the final report submitted and approved by August 13th. The final evaluation report should be maximum 45 pages (excluding annexes) and will be presented at the workshop for NGO's implementing activities by the Women in Africa budget, scheduled for September 19-24, 2010. All outputs should be in English. Quality assurance should be applied to ensure that the final report complies with Danida Evaluation Guidelines (2006) and follow Danida Evaluation Report Layout Guidelines (will be submitted to the team by the Evaluation Department).

9   Literature

*   Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, *'Strategy for Gender Equality in Danish Development Cooperation'* – 2004

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, *'Africa - Development and Security. The Government's priorities for Danish cooperation with Africa 2005-2009'*, 2005

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, *'Denmark in Africa – a continent on its way. The government's priorities for Denmark's cooperation with Africa'*. August 2007

- Africa Commission, *Realising the Potential of Africa's Youth. Report of the Africa Commission*. May 2009

Annex 2 Table of geographical spread of Women in Africa grantees

Coordination offices (C) and project activities (A) under the Women in Africa regional support

Country/ organi- sation	Ken- ya	Ugan- da	Tan- zania	Bur- undi	Rw- anda	Eri- trea	Ethi- opia	Som- alia/ S-land	Su- dan	CAR	DRC	Nig- eria	Gh- ana	BF	Came- roon	Côte d' Ivoire	Lib- eria	Gui- nea	SL	Egypt	Zam- bia	Les- otho	An- gola	South- ern Africa
ActionAid	C	A		A							A								A					
ADRA (DK)		A		A	A						A										A			
AFRACA	C+A		A																					
AWDF	A	A											C+A											
AWEPON	A	C+A	A								A				A									
Danish Ref. Council																A	A	A						
EASSI	A	C+A	A	A	A	A	A	A																
EBWA							A		A											C+A				
FAWE	C			A													A	A						
Gender Links																						A	A	C+A
IAC	A	A					C+A					A	A	A		A	A	A	A	A				
Internat. Alert										A	A													
LEAP (WB)		A		A	A					A	A												A	
PENHA		A						A	A															
Women for Women Int.					A				A		A													
Total No. Orgs. with Activities	5	7	3	5	4	1	3	2	3	2	5	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	3	2	1	1	1	1
Total No. of HQ/Reg. Coordin.	3	2					1						1											1

No. of organisations with HQ/coordination in Denmark: 2 (ADRA, Danish Refugee Council)
No. of organisation with HQ/coordination in the UK: 4 (ActionAid International, International Alert, PENHA, Women for Women Int'l London office)
No. of organisations with HQ/coordination in Washington D.C.: 2 (World Bank - LEAP, Women for Women International)

Annex 3 Example of cost analysis for central to lower levels of operations: AWEPON

The Evaluation tracked the flow of funds from central to lower levels in AWEPON, which faced serious challenges and delays in its implementation of activities.

The project objectives as specified in the programme document were to:

1)   Support women's income generating activities, by building the investment and productive capacities of 7,500 women in Cameroon, DRC, Kenya, Lesotho, Tanzania and Uganda and extract lessons for policy-making and best practice *(only country-level activities in Kenya had been initiated at the time of the Evaluation)*.

2)   Increase women's access to domestic and regional markets, as a way of enabling them to have control over their incomes.

3)   Monitoring implications of macro-economic policy on women and enhancing integration of gender and women's concerns in economic policy, sharpening the economic empowerment agenda for women continentally.

4)   Strengthen institutional capacity of AWEPON for sustained response to economic empowerment of women in the continent through project support.

Although AWEPON's experience is not typical for other grantees, the below table summarises the flow and use of funds from the central regional secretariat down to individual women beneficiaries during the Evaluation period. Although the first tranche of money was transferred to the regional Secretariat already in early 2008, country level operations were only initiated in 2009 in one of the intended beneficiary countries (Kenya), and implementation was not finalised at the time when site visits were undertaken for this Evaluation.

Table: Cost analysis as per March 2010, AWEPON

Overall commitment	**Financial commitment to AWEPON (Uganda secretariat) of DKK 7,221,638 (Budget: USD 1,339,822) approved in 2007 with agreement signed between AWEPON Secretariat and Danida.**
First disbursement	DKK 2,729,111 disbursed in 2008 to the Secretariat. Later in 2008, unclear accounting procedures led to internal allegations of corruption, negative emails circulating among partners and even life threats to Secretariat staff as well as police investigations. A planned sabotage of the launch of the Danida-funded WEEP programme was also averted by the intervention of the Uganda Police Force. A freezing of all funds took place while a special external audit was undertaken. The outcomes of this audit were contested by the organisation, and an internal management response was drawn up, including a complete turn-over of all former Secretariat staff. There were also changes to the Board structures.
Second disbursement	A second disbursement in 2009 was made of around DKK 40,000, totalling overall disbursements to AWEPON's regional Secretariat of DKK 2,769,077 by March 2010.

Secretariat / central level funding and activities	Of the first tranche of funding the following activities were carried out according to AWEPON progress report (covering activities in 2008): - Regional meeting on economic development and women (Kampala) - Attendance of one AWEPON Board member at UNCTAD Conference, Accra - Commissioned studies on new aid modalities and financing for women's rights - Development of M&E tool for the Danida-funded Women's Economic Empowerment Programme (WEEP) programme - Study tour in South Africa for Economic transformation (further details missing) - Development of economic training manual on social transformation - Development of business training manual - Publication of programme-specific newsletter - Internship for three young women (later interrupted due to troubles in the Secretariat) - Commissioned study on taxation and women entrepreneurship in Uganda (outcome and use unclear)
Country budget (Kenya case)	The annual budget for the Kenya programme that was to generate lessons for regional advocacy, implemented by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Kenya was USD 21,571 (DKK 124,100). The first tranche of money was released in October 2009, amounting to approx. USD 8,000 (DKK 46,000) for the first quarter of activities (3.5 months).
National level activities support activities	At the national level it was spent on: *(i) Mapping (USD 1000)*: YWCA HQ management meeting for selection of branch, and a Siaya Branch Executive Committee Meeting to select five of the existing women's groups attached to the branch. *(ii) Determination of income generating activities (USD 1000)*: Consultations with the five identified women's groups. *(iv) Community participatory monitoring (USD 1000)*: Visits by YWCA branch staff and young volunteers to the five project sites. *(vii) Administrative overhead costs and compilation of quarterly report (USD 500). Total budget: USD 3,500.*

Investments in end-beneficiaries in income-generating groups

(Five women's groups x approx. 20 participants = 100 end-beneficiaries)

Five groups were identified with around 15-20 women in each, totalling around 100 women in Kenya. Women were to receive business skills training (USD 2,000): This consisted of local staff and volunteers going through basics on how to keep a business (basic book keeping). There was no evidence of more formal trainings or use of centrally developed manual. Technical support consisted in basic materials being bought for the income-generating activities, such as a shed, jerry cans, wheelbarrow etc. for a brick-making group; solar cooking kits; a machine to do screen-printing for another group.

Another budget post was training women in appropriate technology and provide seed grants (USD 2,000): In two of the groups, solar cooking was identified as the main income-generating activity, and trainers from Solar International which produces solar cooking kits in Kisumu was brought in for a workshop. For the group involved in brick making, the husband of one of the women was the trainer at no cost. The budget post overlapped with the one on technical support; divisions and real costs unclear. This means that, since the agreement was signed in 2007 and up to the date of the site visits, there was an investment of approximately USD 1000 (DKK 5,800) per women's group including training costs, or DKK 1,150 per women's group excluding costs for trainings (representing 2.5% of the quarterly country tranche). This amounts to an approximate investment of DKK 290/women including the costs of trainings, or a total investment of approximately DKK 60/woman in terms of equipment and start-up costs.

Although this represents the total amount that has reached grassroots levels since the initiation of the funding support in 2007, it should be noted that implementation was exceptionally delayed due to internal financial mismanagement, and that implementation was not finalised by the time site visits were undertaken.

EVALUATION OF DANIDA'S
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