

**Lack of complexity:** It deals with generalities. This could be misleading as it then downplays the complexities in any given situation. It is not appropriate for organisational or institutional analysis.

**Gender relations:** It focuses on women only rather than on gender relations (although there is no reason why it cannot be applied to other disadvantaged groups just as effectively). This can encourage a view of women's issues as separate from men and without an understanding of either gender relations or men's needs and interests.

**Impact assessment:** The hierarchy of levels gives the impression that there is a linear progression up the levels, which is not the case. It is a fairly crude measurement which does not differentiate between degrees of impact.

### Further reading

Fiedrich, M. and A. Jellema (2003) *Literacy, Gender and Social Agency: Adventures in Empowerment*, London: DFID.

Longwe, S. (1998) 'Education for women's empowerment or schooling for women's subordination?', in *Gender and Development*, 6(2): 19–26.

Longwe, S. (1991) 'Gender awareness: the missing element in the Third World development project', in T. Wallace and C. March *Changing Perceptions: Writings on Gender and Development*. Oxford: Oxfam, pp. 149–57.

## 6 | Gender Analysis Matrix

### Introduction

This tool is different from the other frameworks in that it measures impact over time – it does more than take a snapshot of a situation at one particular point in time. Its author, Rani Parker, designed it to be used by development practitioners (originally in the Middle East) rather than by policy makers and planners, and intended it to be used in a participatory format. It can be relatively easily adapted to educational settings. The method is explained by the author, A. Rani Parker, in her training manual *Another Point of View: a Manual on Gender Analysis Training for Grassroots Workers* (1993).

### Basic principles

Rani Parker created the Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM) to serve two purposes:

- to provide a community-based technique for the identification and analysis of gender differences in order to assess the different impact of development interventions on men and women;
- to initiate a process of analysis that identifies and challenges in a constructive manner assumptions about gender roles within the community.

By separating out the different impact on women and men, the GAM helps development practitioners to accommodate different needs and interests. Unlike more traditional methods of analysis, it does not begin with an assessment of the current situation. Instead, it enables the community to articulate a full range of expectations concerning a particular project at the start, so that over time, the likelihood of changes favouring gender equity is increased. The author also identifies three basic principles underlying the Matrix:

- All requisite knowledge for gender analysis exists among the people whose lives are the subject of analysis.
- Gender analysis does not require the technical expertise of those outside the community being analysed, except as facilitators.
- Gender analysis cannot be transformative unless the analysis is done by the people being analysed.

Like participatory rural appraisal (PRA), the GAM is intended to serve as a participatory tool in which the participants carry out the information gathering and analysis themselves in a forum which allows both women and men to put forward their own perspective, to appreciate that of others, and to learn from the process. In this way, a programme can be developed which is gender-sensitive and responsive to particular circumstances, and is more likely to lead to genuine and sustainable change.

Both men and women (preferably in equal numbers) should be engaged in the task. If it is inappropriate that they work in mixed sex groups, they can meet first separately and then, if possible, together. This applies also to children: if one sex (usually girls) is lacking in self-confidence, they can first work separately and then share their perspectives once they have talked them through.

The GAM can be used at the planning, design, monitoring, or evaluation stages of a project or programme. At the planning stage it can help determine whether potential gender effects are desirable and consistent with project or programme aims. At the design stage, it may influence changes as a consequence of gender considerations. At the monitoring and evaluation stages, it can help assess broader project or programme impacts beyond that of the immediate stated objectives (Parker 1993: 24, 47). It is a dynamic tool and can be used periodically to verify expected impacts and identify unexpected results so that they can be addressed. The recommended strategy is that the analysis should be reviewed and revised once a month for the first three months, and once every three months thereafter. Unexpected results must be added to the Matrix. If it is part of a project or programme, it should be used in addition to other standard tools of analysis such as monitoring tools and needs assessments (*ibid.*: 27).

The original GAM as shown in Figure 2 has four levels of analysis appearing vertically on the Matrix, and four categories of analysis appearing horizontally on the Matrix, to be applied at each level of analysis.

### Levels of analysis

**Women:** this refers to women of all ages who are in the target group (if the target group includes women) or to all women in the community.

**Men:** this refers to men of all ages who are in the target group (if the target group includes men) or to all men in the community.

Figure 2: Gender Analysis Matrix

	Labour	Time	Resources	Culture
Women				
Men				
Household				
Community				
			1 Are the effects listed above desirable? Are they consistent with programme goals?	
			2 How will this activity affect those who do not participate?	
			3 Unexpected results – to be identified during implementation	

Source: Parker 1993: 38

**Household:** this refers to all women, men, and children residing together, even if they are not part of one nuclear family. Although the types of household may vary even within the same community, people always know what constitutes their 'household' or 'family'.

**Community:** this refers to everyone within the project area as a whole. The purpose of this level is to extend the analysis beyond the family to society at large. Communities are complex, however, and usually comprise a number of different groups of people with different interests. So, if a clearly defined 'community' is not meaningful in the context of the project, this level of analysis may be eliminated.

### Categories of analysis

**Labour:** this refers to changes in tasks, level of skills (skilled, unskilled, formal education, training), and labour capacity (how many people and how much they can do).

**Time:** this refers to changes in the amount of time (in hours, days, etc.) it takes to carry out the tasks associated with the activity.

**Resources:** this refers to changes in access to capital, resources, etc.

**Cultural factors:** this refers to changes in social aspects of the participants' lives (changes in gender role or status, for example) as a result of the project.

The recommended method of completing the GAM is for the target group to work first in small groups, and then for the groups to come together to share their analyses. If the GAM is used at the design or planning stage, they should address questions about the potential impact of the project or programme on labour, time, resources, and cultural factors and status, in each case for women and girls, and men and boys separately. This process will allow participants the opportunity to raise further questions, obtain more information, suggest modifications to the design, and to accept or decline to participate. If the GAM is used at the implementation or monitoring phase, the questions should be directed at changes experienced according to each of these levels and categories, with unexpected results noted and addressed. This also allows for the opportunity to re-orient the project or programme to accommodate unexpected changes in circumstances.

### Asking questions

When the Matrix has been filled in, the group discusses a number of questions:

- 1 Are the effects listed above desirable? Are they consistent with project or programme goals?
- 2 How will this activity affect those who do not participate?
- 3 Unexpected results – to be identified during implementation.

The group then marks with a plus sign (+) if the outcomes are consistent with the project or programme goals, or a minus sign (-) if they are not consistent with the goals. They place a question mark (?) against any outcome that they are not sure about. These are *not* intended to be added up, but merely to give an overview of the different effects of the project or programme. The Matrix should record the *changes*, not the situation itself.

Rani Parker suggests that the categories of the Matrix can be modified to suit particular circumstances, either by sub-dividing or leaving out a category. So, for example, labour can be sub-divided into domestic labour, wage labour, own business, and unpaid (social) labour. If a category is not relevant or measurable, for example impact on the community, it can be omitted. She also suggests that additional levels or categories of analysis can be added, such as age, class, or ethnic group, but warns that no more than two should be added as it will make the Matrix too unwieldy. So, race and gender, or class and gender, would be suitable dimensions of a GAM in certain settings; all three might be possible in some contexts. Community could also be subdivided into high income and low income, or into various ethnic groups.

### Application to educational settings

In an educational context, there are a number of possible uses for the Matrix if it is modified. Some examples might be designing, or assessing the impact of

- a management structure in a school or college;
- an equal opportunity policy, or staff-development policy;
- a student council or a parent-teacher association;
- a training or literacy programme
- a programme to change attitudes towards sex and gender among female and male students.

In such cases, the Matrix could be modified so that the vertical column reads:

Female students
Male students

and/or:

Female staff
Male staff

These categories might be subdivided into teaching and non-teaching staff.

The horizontal column could be modified to read:

Activities	Time	Skills	Resources	Outputs	Social/educational impact
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### Case study 1: women's silk-reeling project<sup>9</sup>

A modified Matrix was used effectively in a research study to measure the impact of training provided by NGOs in four countries on women's small businesses. It was therefore being used as an evaluation tool by the researcher and did not follow the participatory mode advocated by Rani Parker. However, as it involved the researcher in extensive interviewing and conversation with the women as they went about their work, it did try to present their views and perspectives in the same way as a participatory workshop might. If the Matrix had been used in a project framework (planning, implementation, or evaluation) rather than as part of a research study, a participatory mode could have been used effectively.

The training provided by the projects was either in business skills, such as basic book keeping, or in technical skills, such as food processing, combined with some gender-awareness raising. The Matrix was modified so as to encapsulate the key measurements (indicators), that is, that the newly

acquired or enhanced skills would lead to changes in types of activity; that the allocation of time to these activities, the resources required, and the outputs (income), would lead ultimately to changes in the women's status. The Matrix used was as follows:

	Activities	Time	Skills	Resources	Economic Outputs	Social Impact
Women						
Men						
Household						

This case study reports the findings of only one of the four projects. This was a project run by an Indian NGO in the late 1990s working with scheduled-caste women engaged in silk reeling. Its overall aim was to empower some of the poorest and most disadvantaged women in Indian society by transforming them from poorly paid labourers engaged in reeling silk into successful independent entrepreneurs. These women's families were heavily indebted, many of their men-folk did not have regular employment since they believed that it was beneath their dignity to work for anyone else in the village, and the women's reeling work was also seasonal and uncertain. For most families, if the women did not work, they did not eat. The project would provide an existing women's savings and thrift group with assistance to set up their own small silk-reeling businesses and to carry out all the business aspects themselves such as buying the raw material (cocoon) and selling the spun silk. It was hoped that the women would earn three or four times their current income. This was a particularly ambitious project in an industry dominated by male entrepreneurs.

The project inputs consisted of intensive training over five weeks, small loans to each woman for the purchase of a reeling unit and subsequent working capital, and follow-up support. The training aimed at developing their skills and confidence in managing all aspects of silk reeling, teaching them basic book keeping, and encouraging group solidarity. Given male domination in all aspects of Indian society, with women's limited involvement in decision making, restricted interaction with men outside the family, and lack of mobility, the NGO running the project wisely consulted the women's men-folk about their involvement and explained the project's aims. All the men expressed their support and gave permission for their wives to be involved. Ten women were selected for training. They were to act as role models to other women in the community, who would participate at a later stage.

The NGO provided a male escort who accompanied the women to the local cocoon market and to the silk exchange. This was intended to help them gain confidence in their ability to become independent entrepreneurs, to control

and manage their business, and to participate effectively in buying and selling. The system initiated was a five-day cycle, during which two women would take it in turns to buy cocoons for the whole group in the local market. These would then be distributed to the group, the women would reel the silk individually over three days, then pool it, and another two women would take it to the regional Silk Exchange to sell. The income would be used to pay off the loan to the NGO, just keeping enough to buy a new batch of cocoons, and to pay for the necessary labour and fuel. The project was ambitious and sought to empower the women in a very real sense. The NGO insisted that the reeling licence be in the woman's name (and hence the unit belonged to her), that the purchase of cocoons as well as the sale of silk be carried out by the women, and that the loans were made available only to them. Male involvement was limited to helping out in the reeling unit or engaging in marginal tasks such as buying husk for fuel. In effect, the project was proposing a daring role reversal, the women becoming the owners of the business, the husbands in some cases the employees.

In order to measure the impact that the training had on the women, it was necessary to separate out the training input from the other inputs (loan and support). The researcher conducted a baseline survey of each woman just before the first training started, and then visited each woman in turn every two months over a ten-month period. She then returned three years later to see what impact the project had had on their lives over the longer term. After each visit, she completed a Matrix for each woman, and then consolidated these. Table 6.1 outlines what the first of the consolidated Matrices showed.

### Questions

*Are the effects listed above desirable? Are they consistent with project goals?*

Yes, very positive effects for women in terms of much increased status, motivation, confidence, etc. and a small increase in income.

*How does this activity affect those who do not participate?*

Other women will join the scheme later; some changes to husband's lives (see below); greater share of domestic work falls on children and other female relatives.

*Are there any unexpected results?*

There has been no change in decision making in the household, a very small profit only, and conflict is starting to emerge among the women over sharing out the cocoons. They are resentful at the time spent in meetings and some try to excuse themselves when it is their turn to go to the Silk Exchange. Their husbands complain about having to accompany them to the bus stop in the next village in the middle of the night when it is their turn to go to sell the silk, and then meet them when they return the following evening.

By the time of the next visit two months later, the situation was much less positive. The completed Matrix showed that on the positive side

- the women continued to improve their skills in doing business: in bidding in the market, assessing the quality of cocoons, oral calculations, etc.
- They were still confident that their activities would become profitable.
- They felt their status in the community had increased.

However, on the negative side

- the expected increase in income had not materialised.
- The price of silk had dropped, and they were reluctant to sell at a loss. Until they sold more, they could not get more loans from the NGO.
- Resentment was growing among the women towards the NGO, which had persuaded them to join the scheme.
- Their husbands also felt resentful at being excluded from the project; they saw no benefits from the scheme and tried to cause trouble between the women by interfering.
- Several husbands used violence against their wives.
- Some women became fatalistic.
- They could no longer find work as agricultural labourers as nobody wanted to employ them (for fear that they would leave as soon as their business picked up again).
- They could no longer borrow money; the entrepreneurs who engaged them before used to give them loans; they now had to beg relatives for help.

A further visit recorded deepening depression and despair, as it was the lean season for cocoons, and the women made very little silk. Their debts mounted and their men-folk became furious at what they now saw as the women's folly in thinking that they could be successful in business. A compromise was finally reached after about eight months, with the NGO allowing the men to become involved in the project and the women to operate on an individual basis. This meant that the men took over the traditional male functions of buying the cocoons and selling the silk. The women were still required to collect the loans from the NGO; otherwise they had reverted more or less to their original role as silk reeler and turners. The women confessed to being relieved, as they had never enjoyed going to the marketplace and mixing with strange men. For a short while, their incomes improved, tension in the household decreased, and the women felt proud of their achievements. But three years on, in 2001, the researcher visited the village and found that the project had died away completely. There was almost no change to the women's lives; indeed, their level of debt as a result of this 'experiment' was higher than before. The only gains appeared to be that they remained somewhat bolder in talking to strangers and moving around on their own.

Table 6.1 Modified GAM to monitor impact of silk reeling project

	Social Impact	Economic outputs	Resources	Skills	Time	Activities	Men	Household
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Change in status from wage earner to entrepreneur</li> <li>+ Income</li> <li>+ Increased savings</li> <li>- Debt to NGO</li> <li>+ Manual labour and marketing skill</li> <li>+ Licence in woman's name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Slight increase in income</li> <li>+ Increased savings</li> <li>- Debt to NGO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Manual labour and marketing skill</li> <li>+ Money to buy fuel and cocoons</li> <li>+ Can hire labour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Bidding for cocoons</li> <li>+ Selling the silk</li> <li>+ Awareness of business aspects</li> <li>+ Assessing quality of cocoons and silk</li> <li>+ Oral calculations</li> <li>+ Handling large amounts of money</li> <li>+ Group decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Increase in working days</li> <li>+ Coping with domestic &amp; productive work</li> <li>- Unit closes on days when they go to the market</li> <li>- Takes time to divide up cocoons in the group</li> <li>- Tired, not enough time to do domestic work or eat properly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Productive activity as own business</li> <li>+ Livestock rearing as before</li> <li>+ Increased group activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Now work in family unit when idle before</li> <li>- Escort women to bus stop at night</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Girls' domestic work increases</li> <li>- and child labour increases, but in the home rather than do more domestic work</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Change in status from wage earner to entrepreneur</li> <li>+ Income</li> <li>+ Increased savings</li> <li>- Debt to NGO</li> <li>+ Manual labour and marketing skill</li> <li>+ Licence in woman's name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Slight increase in income</li> <li>+ Increased savings</li> <li>- Debt to NGO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Manual labour and marketing skill</li> <li>+ Money to buy fuel and cocoons</li> <li>+ Can hire labour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Bidding for cocoons</li> <li>+ Selling the silk</li> <li>+ Awareness of business aspects</li> <li>+ Assessing quality of cocoons and silk</li> <li>+ Oral calculations</li> <li>+ Handling large amounts of money</li> <li>+ Group decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Increase in working days</li> <li>+ Coping with domestic &amp; productive work</li> <li>- Unit closes on days when they go to the market</li> <li>- Takes time to divide up cocoons in the group</li> <li>- Tired, not enough time to do domestic work or eat properly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Productive activity as own business</li> <li>+ Livestock rearing as before</li> <li>+ Increased group activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Now work in family unit when idle before</li> <li>- Escort women to bus stop at night</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Girls' domestic work increases</li> <li>- and child labour increases, but in the home rather than do more domestic work</li> </ul>

They were also very keen to see their children educated so that they would not face the world as illiterates, as they themselves had done.

It can be seen that several factors recorded in the first Matrix had become very serious problems by the time the second one was completed: the women were making a loss, conflict was growing in the group, and their male relatives were becoming hostile. If the Matrix exercise had been done by the project team in collaboration with the women and men, these problems might have been tackled as they emerged, rather than being allowed to fester. It would have shown that the men were beginning to sabotage the project, that the women had a poor understanding of costs and profit despite their training in business skills, that conflict was emerging within the group, and that male dealers were colluding against the women so that they did not get the best prices for their silk.

In educational and training terms, the project did not give sufficient importance to raising awareness about gender relations, among the men as well as the women. It concentrated on developing business skills among the women, using trainers who were experts in the silk industry but not in gender relations. The women themselves acknowledged with hindsight that the men also needed gender training. Moreover, the assumption that the women could operate effectively in a market dominated by men was extremely naive. A step-by-step approach would have been better, involving women gradually in different aspects of silk marketing, working alongside men if appropriate, and combining this with ongoing training in gender awareness, assertiveness, and confidence building. A long-term supportive approach was required, with staging posts to review progress and needs.

With hindsight, it could be seen that the project was too ambitious in its expectation of turning the women into successful entrepreneurs in a notoriously volatile and male-dominated industry. It set the women in positions of unnecessary confrontation with their male relatives by not allowing the men a role in the project, nor a vested interest in its success. There was no attempt by the project managers to develop the men's understanding of what was being attempted, nor to sustain positive relations or regular contact with them. Above all, as problems arose there was no opportunity for raising awareness around gender issues or for examining gender relations among either the men or the women.

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### Case study 2: the Reflect programme in Malawi

As has been suggested above, the GAM is a very suitable tool for monitoring projects and programmes for their impact on gender relations. This second case study is taken from ActionAid's *Reflect* programme in Malawi.

The information for this case study is taken from the *Reflect* Pilot Project End Evaluation (2007).<sup>10</sup> This reports on the general differences that *Reflect* has made to the literacy circles: action points taken up, changes in

participants' lives, and benefits experienced. The numbers of female and male participants is not given, but it is stated that overall there was a predominance of women. Box 2 shows the reported findings.

Although information has been gathered and summarised on the participants' use of their newly acquired skills and knowledge, most of this is not recorded according to gender. Many of the activities seem to be traditional female tasks. In particular, the language contained in a list of 'other changes that have occurred in their lives' suggests that it is only women who have experienced changes. These are:

- They can participate in development activities and can solve community problems.
- They have taken up leading positions in various local structures, e.g. Committee member of the VMC, chairlady of the irrigation committee and treasurer for the irrigation scheme, Vice-chair and secretary of the circle committee.
- They can read letters and know the difference between different days of the week.
- They can run small businesses.
- They are no longer shy and can mix with others.

Yet, the evaluation does report male views from some groups. Important questions that could be raised are:

- If men were also participants, which of the above activities were they engaged in, what new skills did they acquire, and did this change their lives?
- If they shared more of the tasks, did the family benefit and, if so, in what way?

If the GAM was used at the design stage in a participatory mode, it would be possible to set up a monitoring mechanism to record activities, time, skills, resources, economic outputs, and impact on status as a result of the literacy classes. This could be done separately for women, men, their children, and the community (or whichever categories of analysis were considered appropriate). It would then be able to assess the extent to which the *Reflect* programme really had met female and male needs and interests, which women and men had benefited most, and how their lives had changed for the better. Sara Longwe's Women's Empowerment Framework could also have been used in this setting. This would have allowed an indication of whether it was women or men who used these newly acquired skills, and the level of empowerment. This could then have led to a discussion of the gender-specific nature of some of these activities, for example: Who takes the children to hospital? Whose responsibility is family hygiene? Who cleans the area round the borehole? Who attends meetings, and who contributes to the discussion? Do women argue with traders about change, or only men? Why are some tasks

## Box 2 Findings from Reflect literacy circles, Malawi

**Clinic / Hospital:** They can read the names of their children and also the weight of the children on the clinic cards. They are able to detect whether the weight increases or decreases. They know how to take care of their children and how to give the correct dosage of medicine. If the medicine does not help they are able to take the child to hospital and would know if the doctor gives them the same medicine again and they are able to question him about it. They can read notices and signs at the hospital that tell them to which room they should go. They have learnt about various health topics in the circle: hygiene and sanitation, environmental cleanliness, etc. They take care of their children in a hygienic way.

**Gardens:** They know how to apply fertiliser and are able to read the names and types of maize seeds and fertiliser. More people are growing vegetables and use good agricultural practices. They use manure and their harvest has improved. They know how to space when growing crops and to weed early. They make ridges and plant vertical grass so that soil is preserved. They practice crop rotation.

**Church:** They are able to read from the Bible and sing from the hymnbook, they can also find the right place in these books. Participants have also taken up positions in church: Sunday-school teacher, chairperson and treasurer of women's groups, song leader, etc.

**Grinding Mill:** They are able to work out the costs of the amount they want to grind and also how much change they should get.

**Well / borehole:** They clean the surrounding area at the well / borehole and have learnt healthy sanitation practices. When they use risky water they boil it first.

**Forest:** They have stopped cutting down trees carelessly and they also grow fruit trees. They know which trees add nutrients to the soil and preserve those trees.

**Meetings:** They prepare before they go to meetings and they can learn from other people in the meetings, but they are also able to participate because of the exposure they had in the circles. They can vote by writing instead of using their thumbs. They can take minutes and write down action plans.

**Wedding ceremonies:** Can read the invitations.

**Funerals:** Can write the names of people that come with condolences.

**Market:** They can work with money and change. They can recognise the different shops and can buy the right quantity of a product, e.g. 2 kg. They are able to question the seller if they receive less. They have learnt to look for quality products and not only quantity. They can read prices of different items.

**Home:** They clean utensils well when preparing food. They practice family planning. When they want to sell a domestic animal they know to charge the right price. Women are able to confront their husbands about household finances. They can read letters when they receive it. When constructing houses they know the right amount of bricks to use.

**School:** They are able to check the progress of their children at school and can know when a child is failing. They realise the importance of sending their children to school.

Table 6.2 A GAM to measure the impact of the Reflect literacy programme

Skills (literacy, numeracy, etc.)	Activities	Time	Outputs	Social impact
Can read basic text	Read child's weight at hospital, notices, invitations to weddings, hymns at church, instructions on medicine bottles, fertilizer, seed packets	Save time seeking literate neighbour to read for them		Greater self-esteem
Can write names	Record those who come with condolences			
Can do basic calculation on paper			Work out costs	Greater self-esteem, not so easily cheated
Can vote with name rather than thumb print			Attend public meetings	Greater self-esteem
Awareness	Of health and hygiene environment		Stop cutting trees down, clean borehole	Community collaboration

carried out only by women and others by men? What does 'They practise family planning' mean? Finding answers to these questions might facilitate real change.

The GAM could also be used effectively with the Oxfam Primary Education Project in Tanzania (chapter 5) at both the design and monitoring stages.

## Commentary

### Uses

The GAM is a participatory tool, which can be used at different stages of the project cycle to analyse and monitor changes in gender relations. In its original form it uses a participatory methodology, working closely with communities over a period of time. It can be transformative, in that it raises awareness of gender (and other) issues as it monitors. It therefore operates at both the practical and the strategic levels simultaneously. As has been seen in the Indian case above, it can also be used for research and impact assessment.

The Matrix, as described in Rani Parker's training manual, is easy and practical to follow. It is flexible, allowing for changes or additions to levels and categories of analysis. The Matrix is designed for those working at the grassroots with communities. The methodology is straightforward and does not require additional resources.

**Recording reality and complexity:** It allows for the collection of complex and in-depth data, and for the itemisation of tasks and inputs, and so allows less scope for generalised assertions about empowerment by distinguishing rhetoric from reality (as reported in chapter 1). The GAM facilitates the expression and recording of diversity, and discourages generalisation and simplification, which some other gender analysis frameworks might encourage. **A dynamic tool:** It monitors changes over time, including those that are unexpected, and is therefore a dynamic tool. It allows for the identification of problems or resistance during the course of the project, and therefore offers a troubleshooting function and the opportunity to address problems before it is too late.

**Integrated gender approach:** It examines the impact on men as well as women, and on the household and the community. It therefore examines gender issues both as they relate to the individual, to the couple, and to the family and community. It is an integrated approach, resisting the tendency to view women and men as separate groups. It does not focus exclusively on women. The GAM could be used with men or other social groups as the target of the project.

### Limitations

The GAM needs a good facilitator. A trained or experienced person may not be available within the community, and an outsider would have to be found. It is less suited to monitoring change in organisational settings because of the complexity of the Matrix.

It is repetitive. Filling in the matrix can be time-consuming, and it is necessary to repeat it several times. It is also a rather complicated process. Sometimes it is not easy to separate out and measure changes that have occurred since the previous visit, from changes since the start of the project.

**Addressing problems:** Once negative aspects of change have been identified, they must be addressed, so it is highly undesirable to stop completing the Matrix before the end of the project. It can produce misleading outcomes if certain problems are not addressed at an early stage. Some community members may be reluctant to discuss certain problems and negative impacts freely, perhaps for fear that funding will cease.

**Use with communities:** It assumes that all members of the community have a voice. As with the PRA approach generally, those who are marginalised or discriminated against may be silenced by the process. Some women too may find it difficult to express their sentiments and fears in front of others.

It assumes that communities are basically consensual and can agree on priorities, procedures, etc. As John Pryor points out in his study of understandings of education in a Ghanaian village (2002), much development work is based on a misplaced, over-romanticised view of community.

The GAM does not look beyond the community, it cannot foresee or influence outside forces, such as market changes or government policy. This exposes the community to the risk of failure because of unforeseen circumstances.

## Further reading

Parker, A. Rani (1993) *Another Point of View: a Manual on Gender Analysis Training for Grassroots Workers*, New York: UNIFEM.

This is a well-designed training manual with step-by-step instructions. It is also available from Women Ink, New York.