



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

Lund University Master of Science in
International Development and Management

May 2024

All Things Gender:

An analysis of IM's Gender Mainstreaming from policy to practice across regions

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Word Count: 13612

Abstract

Since its adoption into the global agenda, gender mainstreaming (GM) has been a pivotal strategy for promoting gender equality. This research explores the translation of GM policy from strategy documentation to practical application within a non-governmental organization (NGO), specifically Individuell Människohjälp (IM): Swedish Development Partner, which posits itself as a feminist organization. The study reviews current literature on the evolution of gender mainstreaming and the factors influencing its implementation. It analyzes these factors using cultural contingency theory and organizational cultural theory. Combining an extensive desk study of IM's policy documents with interviews of key gender experts from various IM regional offices across the global north and south, the research provides insights into implementing GM across diverse regional contexts. Through a comparative lens, the study aims to uncover adaptable strategies and learnings across IM regional offices and provide insights on creating more effective GM policies in practice. The findings are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on gender mainstreaming, offering practical recommendations for NGOs striving to enhance gender equality within their organizational frameworks and operations.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to my thesis supervisor for their continued guidance and support throughout this research. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to my friends and colleagues for their invaluable advice and input. I am particularly grateful to the participants from IM, whose contributions were essential to the development of this study. Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their ongoing support and understanding.

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List of Important Abbreviations

GM- Gender Mainstreaming

IM- Individuell Människohjälp: Swedish Development Partner

MBV- Management by Values

NGO- Non-Governmental Organization

SDG- Sustainable Development Goals

SOGIE- Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression

UN- United Nations

1. Introduction

Gender equality is not only a basic human right but a cornerstone of building peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable societies, as recognized by the United Nations (UN). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are pivotal in advancing gender equality by integrating gender considerations into their programs and projects (Lokot, 2021). Since its inclusion in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, gender equality has remained a central goal of the global agenda, evolving through initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Su and Yang, 2023). Goal 5 of the SDGs, set by the United Nations, aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

According to Novovic (2023), there were many hopeful sentiments toward Agenda 2030, as it was the first universal framework of global development goals. The agenda integrates gender equality targets across most of its 17 SDGs expressing a “leave no one behind” motto.

However, the UN warns that the world has fallen behind on meeting its gender equality goals by 2030 as none of the global indicators have been reported as “met or almost met.” Discriminatory laws persist and equitable representation in leadership positions remains elusive, with current projections suggesting it could take decades to achieve equality (UN, 2023). Additionally, global crises exacerbate gender inequalities.

Gender mainstreaming (GM) emerged as a strategy to integrate gender considerations into all aspects of policymaking and programming. The UN General Assembly and most governments have endorsed it as a central policy mandate (Lokot, 2021; True and Mintrom, 2001). However, its original conceptualization has faced challenges, with misunderstood applications, inertial organizational culture, and patriarchal power hierarchies hindering effective implementation (Valenius, 2007; Lokot, 2021). GM initiatives generally include gender budgets, gender auditing policies, and gender-disaggregated data statistics. Mainstreaming gender ultimately targets reshaping the existing social and political order to address gender inequalities, such as gender disparities in poverty, education, and political representation (True and Mintrom, 2001). Policy efficacy is the goal of policymakers, but the outcome of policy can be affected by factors throughout the policymaking process, including the design, implementation, and diffusion. Thus, the entire chain of policymaking must be studied in order to understand how and why the policy was effective or not. This study seeks to unravel the influence of cultural and national culture in

policy implementation to pave the way for more informed decision-making and enhanced policy outcomes.

This study aims at examining the factors that influence the effectiveness of policy diffusion, particularly within decentralized systems where program managers wield significant influence over regional policy implementation. The ability of these managers to successfully implement mainstreaming policies directly impacts the achievement of broader goals such as the SDGs. Furthermore, in an ever-evolving landscape of social issues, the adaptation and evolution of policies are crucial to address emerging concerns, especially in areas like LGBTQ+ rights that have gained prominence over time.

As He (2023) highlighted, culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the diffusion of policies across regions. While many researchers acknowledge this influence, there is a lack of studies that systematically examine how specific cultural values at the national level affect policy diffusion. According to political science scholars Nicholson-Crotty and Carley (2016), the effectiveness of policies is closely intertwined with the decisions made during implementation. Program managers and policymakers strive to align policy administration with their preferences and needs, some of which are informed by their culture. Thus, understanding cultural influences enhances understanding of policy diffusion.

When analyzing the link between organizational culture, sustainability, and NGOs, Lewis (2003) notes that though organizational culture has been discussed at length within organizational theory and management, it has garnered far less attention in the non-governmental sector. However, research shows mainstreaming effectiveness can be influenced by the cultural dynamics of humanitarian organizations (Gupta et al., 2023). Though cultural diversity within NGOs is often overlooked by policy-makers (Lewis, 2003), these factors have a significant impact on the work these humanitarian organizations do especially in terms of the decision-making processes of people within the organization

This research will take an in-depth look at the gender mainstreaming practices within the NGO Individuell Människohjälp (IM) to analyze how GM policies are implemented in real-world scenarios. By delving into internal and external factors that influence policy effectiveness, I aim to gain insights into the translation of GM policies from theory to practice. IM's diverse regional presence, spanning the global north and south, provides a rich case study environment to explore GM implementation across different contexts.

Notably, IM self-identifies as a feminist organization that imbues GM into every facet of its operations. Analyzing this approach sheds light on whether complete gender integration can serve as an effective strategy for GM and thus whether it could serve as a model for similar organizations. By examining the implementation of this strategy within IM, I seek to uncover valuable lessons and best practices that could inform the gender mainstreaming efforts of other NGOs and institutions.

The research questions explored are as follows:

- How do organizational cultures and structures within IM shape approaches to gender mainstreaming?
- How do cultural factors influence the practical application of gender mainstreaming policies in IM's regional offices?

2. Structure

The thesis begins with an overview of the NGO, focusing on IM's history as a feminist and anti-racist organization. Additionally, I provide background on the translation of GM policy into practice within IM. The literature review explores the evolution of GM over time, its strengths, limitations, successes, and areas for improvement in various organizations. I also discuss Gloria Novovic's (2023) work on Gender Mainstreaming 2.0, a strategy developed to overcome the limitations of traditional gender mainstreaming approaches. This strategy emphasizes the utilization of local gender expertise and the promotion of national ownership within new paradigms of global cooperation. Novovic's insights are particularly relevant for understanding IM's gender policy, given the organization's emphasis on partnerships and cross-sectoral collaboration. The theoretical framework centers around cultural contingency theory and organizational structural theory, providing a dual lens for analysis, uninhibited by either theory's individual limitations. My methodology is then discussed, including how I collected data from each region; I conducted qualitative interviews from representatives of four regions, and supplemented with internal documents from an additional region (the Middle East) unable to do interviews.

Then, I present my analysis. I organized my interviewee's responses around five themes, with subsections within each theme by region. IM's Middle Eastern regional office only appears in the

sections where the internal documents contained relevant information. The themes include Organizational Structures and Cultures in IM, Impact on Gender Mainstreaming, Cultural Factors Influencing Gender Mainstreaming in IM's Regional Offices, Monitoring and Evaluation, and finally Enhancing Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives. The first section provides background on each regional office's organizational culture as it pertains to Research Question 1. The second section, Impact on Gender Mainstreaming, uses the organizational structural theory to apply the results of the first section to their approaches on GM, thus answering Research Question 1. The third section uses the cultural contingency theory to apply national culture to the regional offices of IM, answering Research Question 2. Finally, the last section covers suggestions from the interviewees on possible improvements. In the following Discussion section, I provide my own feedback on all the aforementioned themes, ending with concluding thoughts.

3. Background

3.1 Organization Background

In 1938, Britta Holström founded Individuell Människohjälp: Swedish Development Partner to promote human rights and cooperation (IM, n.d). IM's core philosophy centers on collaborative partnerships, which empower people based on their unique conditions within local and global contexts. On a global scale, IM engages in long-term development cooperation to combat poverty and exclusion. IM is a feminist and anti-racist organization whose 14 offices operates in six regions: Central America, South Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Southern Africa, and Northern Europe.

IM works primarily through utilizing a partner ecosystem. This strategy contributes to a more decentralized bottom-up approach to development, rather than a traditional top-down policy implementation/diffusion method. The 14 offices in the organization's various regions work with and support local organizations. This effort allows each region to take ownership of creating sustainable change because they are best equipped to determine their own needs. This way, IM's work remains deeply rooted in local communities and can continue independently long-term, even without IM's direct involvement. IM's head office in Sweden operates through local chapters and partners across the country, supporting individuals interested in contributing to a more humane world. IM places itself as an equal part within this ecosystem, working alongside

its partners to achieve shared goals. In their partnerships, IM collaborates with diverse organizations that work for human rights overall, but may have a different order of specific priorities. This inclusive approach allows them to work across various cultural contexts and stakeholders (ibid.).

3.2 Policy Background

I traced the emergence of IM's gender mainstreaming objective through their Sida reports since 2015. The reports mainly outline the organization's theoretical approaches to GM, yet details about practice emerge within the self-evaluation sections; by revealing details about their ongoing policy implementation and ways in which they amended their GM approach, the evaluations provide evidence as to how practice affected theory.

As per IM 2015-2017 Sida report, IM adopted a strategic and process-oriented approach to mainstreaming with three perspectives of equal weight: gender equality, climate sustainability, and conflict sensitivity (IM: Swedish Development Partner. Annual Progress Report 2015 Sida Civsam 2015 - 2017, 2017). In order to fulfill the gender equality mainstreaming, IM staff and partners used GM guidelines to outline their actions. They prioritized developing capacities and ensuring systematic analysis to influence partners' planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Additionally, IM attempts to address the deeper roots of gender inequality by challenging traditional norms and power structures that perpetuate discrimination based on gender. Addressing these issues involves analyzing and confronting cultural practices and societal expectations that reinforce gender hierarchies.

In accordance with their emphasis on local advocacy, IM implements gender mainstreaming in different ways depending on the country and context. For example, in South Asia, they introduced gender-focal positions and developed specific support materials, while in other regions, they engaged in initial discussions about gender during partner assessments to address this by enhancing the usage of monitoring tools and revising their GM guidelines. They also focus on strengthening partners' capacities through various means, including workshops, online training, and gender assessments of policies. Additionally, they employ long-term approaches such as partner-developed action plans and coaching, which have shown to be more effective than short-term training sessions. Partners utilize efficient methods like self help groups and creative arts to facilitate discussions on women's issues, leading to increased confidence and leadership roles for women.

In 2017, IM evaluated the efficacy of their ongoing efforts. They observed changed attitudes among men, demonstrating the impact of GM efforts (IM: Swedish Development Partner. Management response gender spot checks 2017, 2017). Despite progress, challenges remain, including the need to combat stereotypes and ensure proper gender analyses to address deep-rooted societal norms. In fact, they identified systematic follow-up on GM activities as a challenge. At the time, they aimed to address this by enhancing the usage of monitoring tools and revising their GM guidelines. IM's work underscores the importance of going beyond surface-level indicators of women's participation to achieve meaningful gender equality.

In 2018, IM conducted comprehensive context analyses on gender equality. Critical issues identified for the upcoming strategic period included challenging harmful gender stereotypes, reshaping masculinities, and amplifying the voices of young women (IM: Swedish Development Partner. Updated narrative report to Sida 2015-2018, 2019). IM also emphasized the importance of applying a "do-no-harm" approach to gender equality. To support partners' capacities in mainstreaming, IM introduced new assessment tools for agreement partners to facilitate systematic follow-up and coordination within IM.

As part of their reorganization, IM appointed a Thematic Advisor in January 2019 to document, evaluate, and develop their work in mainstreaming areas, collaborating closely with the Results Manager to identify effective strategies (IM: Swedish Development Partner. IM annual report to Sida 2019, 2020) Regarding gender equality, IM revised its guidelines for gender mainstreaming, incorporating aspects of intersectionality and addressing harmful gender stereotypes. IM also provided support to partners through coaching, dialogue, and training, enabling them to develop action plans and integrate gender perspectives into their operational plans.

In their 2019 evaluation, IM reported that integrating a gender perspective had led to better results for both IM and their partners by highlighting issues that require further attention. For example, women's rights interventions in Southern Africa involved male participants, empowering women to take leadership roles and challenge harmful practices. In India, prejudices about women as farmers persisted despite efforts to involve men in female farming projects. Similarly, in Moldova, biases in employment opportunities were observed, with men being favored over women despite targeted interventions. Additionally, IM recognized the growing

threat of social media in perpetuating violence against women and girls and started exploring ways to collaborate with organizations to counteract this trend.

In Sida's assessment of IM's application for the 2019-2023 period, IM launched an updated version of its GM guidelines in response to concerns about the organization's lack of gender competence and insufficient prioritization of gender equality issues, particularly in IM's regional office in India (IM: Swedish Development Partner. Global Progress Report Dec 2020, 2021). The new guidelines strengthened IM's in-house competencies by clarifying why gender is a mainstreaming area for IM, what the organization aims to achieve through gender mainstreaming, and how it can be effectively implemented. The revised guidelines, developed by a task force of staff from different regions and IM's Thematic Advisor, highlight the intersectional perspective and address the harmful impact of gender stereotypes on individuals of all genders. They also provide detailed guidance on integrating gender considerations throughout the project cycle. Pedagogical workshop materials were developed in the second half of 2019 to support the implementation of these guidelines. In response to Sida's comments on competencies at the India country office, new recruitments with extensive experience in gender equality issues were made to the regional team with additional in-house workshops on GM.

During the latter part of 2019, IM began developing a position paper on what it means for them to be a feminist organization. Staff from various departments, regions, and IM local chapters in Sweden acted in reference groups to develop this paper under the leadership of staff from Global Operations and colleagues working with engagement issues. In early 2020, IM published its position paper. This effectively anchored feminist principles within IM, which was especially lauded among its member base in Sweden (IM: Swedish Development Partner. Position Paper-IM is a feminist organization, 2020).

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded and reports of increased gender-based violence emerged worldwide due to lockdowns, IM responded urgently. In spring 2020, IM compiled informational materials applicable across its regions and countries, adapting content as needed (IM: Swedish Development Partner. Global Progress Report Dec 2020, 2021). They designated gender-based violence a global priority in August, forming a working group to address this issue. The report cited ongoing work to enhance IM's role as a facilitator by fostering internal spaces for increased understanding of gender-based violence and gender equality, strengthening connections among partners, and sharing innovative practices.

Across IM's regions, partner ecosystems actively incorporated agreement partners with robust feminist approaches, such as Colectiva Feminista in Central America and JASS in Southern Africa, to strengthen the entire partner network. For instance, in El Salvador, one partner organized a course on "New Masculinities" for regional partners, leading to leaders and communities challenging internalized sexist practices.

In early 2021, IM conducted a comprehensive process called IM Equal to address issues of equal treatment within the organization. Involving all employees, IM Equal resulted in discussions and actions to address gender disparities, complementing IM's action plan in its certification process to become an anti-racist organization. IM incorporated more female-focused agreement partners into its partner ecosystem, including renowned feminist organizations, women-led organizations, and groups addressing LGBTQIA+ issues (IM: Swedish Development Partner. IM's in-depth results report to Sida Connecting for Societal Change, 2019-2021, 2022). The working group on gender-based violence conducted a global survey assessing IM's and partners' work related to gender equality and gender-based violence. The results showed that while regional offices generally assessed their competencies as satisfactory, more efforts are still needed to combat harmful norms, stereotypes, and practices. As a concrete outcome, IM and its partners planned to explore Gender Sensitive budgeting as one method to address these issues.

During 2022, IM reaffirmed its commitment as a feminist and anti-racist organization, recognizing the need for ongoing improvement in these areas. A new strategy emphasizes the importance of understanding power dynamics in partnerships and adopting an intersectional approach to reduce oppression and achieve justice for all (IM: Swedish Development Partner. IM annual narrative report 2022 to Sida/CIVSAM Connecting for Societal Change, 2023). Internal learning within IM has been facilitated through initiatives such as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion forum, 'DEI talks,' and Feminist leadership workshops conducted in all regional teams and departments. Staff is expected to adhere to standards of language and behavior consistent with anti-racist and feminist principles, reflected in initiatives like DEI talks and One IM fikas. A global dialogue cohort on gender was formed to 'Redefine Feminist Narratives', inviting partners to contribute their perspectives. This initiative resulted in a joint 16 days of activism campaign against gender-based violence, encouraging reporting and awareness-raising.

IM focused on expanding the width and depth of their gender equality policies with their partners. They fostered a more diverse partner ecosystem that includes indigenous women,

LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people with disabilities. By promoting best practices, these partnerships accelerated joint analytical processes and actions targeting the root causes of gender discrimination. IM and its partners also engaged more individuals of all genders and positions of power in efforts toward gender equality, including initiatives like #GlobalGuyTalk, which encourages discussions on masculinity norms and expectations among adolescent boys and men. They also encouraged local social and religious leaders, who are becoming increasingly engaged in combating harmful beliefs in communities, particularly child marriage and gender-based violence.

The first strategic plan for GM policy ran from 2015 until 2023; a new strategic plan commenced in 2024 and will run until 2028. Depending on the organizational priority, GM approaches in the new plan may differ from the previous. The 2023 gender spot check details some of the expected changes in the upcoming GM plan.

4. Literature Review

The literature review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of GM as it is conceptualized and discussed in scholarly literature. This includes defining the concept of GM, tracing its evolution, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, exploring its limitations, and examining how various organizations have perceived and implemented it. Additionally, the review will highlight both successful implementations and areas needing improvement.

The review will also dive into the spread of GM, considering its macro perspective and drivers of policy diffusion. This analysis will focus on how gender mainstreaming emerged as a prominent issue on the development agenda and spread across different nations, regions, and organizations. Understanding the factors influencing policy diffusion is crucial, as effective gender policies rely on proper adoption and diffusion.

Furthermore, the literature review aims to paint a picture of how implementation impacts diffusion and, subsequently, the efficacy of gender policies. It will explore how implementation choices influence the diffusion process and, ultimately, the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives. By synthesizing insights from the literature, the review will provide a comprehensive understanding of gender mainstreaming, its implementation challenges, diffusion dynamics, and overall impact on gender policy efficacy.

4.1 Definition of Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Mainstreaming (GM), as a concept and practice, has undergone substantial evolution and critique in recent years, especially in the context of global development goals such as the SDGs. The concept was introduced at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 as a strategy to promote gender equality and has continued to evolve (He, 2023). GM is defined as "the process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, in all areas and at all levels" and is understood as a dual strategy comprising initiatives directly targeting gender equality objectives and integrating gender equality agendas across all other areas of policy and practice (He, 2023 pp.1; Novovic, 2023). Since its introduction on the global stage, GM has diffused at an unprecedented pace and has been seen as a significant policy innovation adopted by most national governments. The rapid diffusion of gender policy is attributed to the creation of these gender bureaucracies or machineries aimed to integrate a gender equality perspective across government policy, promoting economic and social development (True and Mintrom, 2001; Novovic, 2023). Novovic (2023) introduces the concept of "Gender Mainstreaming 2.0," which is an emerging strategy within gender equality. This approach emphasizes cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement in nationally led development planning, empowering gender equality advocates as legitimate actors in policy arenas. It aims to integrate gender equality objectives across all areas of policy and practice, moving beyond technocratic and compliance-based strategies to embrace more politically engaged and transformative approaches (ibid).

4.2 Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming

According to Kanji (2003), GM strategies used in development organizations are divided into institutional and operational strategies. Institutional strategies refer to interventions aimed at structural change within organizations, including coordination, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as personnel. Operational strategies cover mainstreaming gender in-country programs, macro policies, training, research, and analytical tools, to name a few examples (Kanji, 2003). However, there is confusion about what mainstreaming policy means in practice as much work has been done on the operational side, especially regarding training, analytical, and planning tools and guidelines (ibid).

During the 1980s, efforts to integrate gender into development failed because of institutional gender biases. This led to a focus in the 1990s on restructuring institutions to better reflect women's interests. Gender planning and training in the 1990s emphasized the importance of practical strategies in policies and programs (Kanji, 2003). Kanji (2003) refers to Menon-Sen's study on GM in UNDP India, which examines implementation at the organizational level. This study highlights large organizations as complex ecosystems where concepts of gender equality can be rooted in various subsystems. Carol Miller's research (1998) on mainstreaming gender in UNDP, ILO, and the World Bank is also referenced. This study emphasizes the political strategies employed by internal advocates to form alliances and overcome resistance (ibid).

One example of GM is evident in India, as discussed by Mahapatro (2014). This study notes that the Indian government has adopted a mainstreaming strategy as a holistic approach to introducing gender equality policies and programs. Over the last two decades, though feminist movements have raised public awareness regarding violence against women and other aspects of women's empowerment, there is still a significant gap between stated goals and women's actual status. Mahapatro (2014) highlights that implementation challenges are multifaceted due to varying social and economic circumstances, policy cultures, and approaches to gender equality.

Another example comes from Ireland, where GM was integrated into all policies and programs funded through the National Development Plan 2000-2006, which Rittenhofer and Gatrell (2012) outlined. Despite this integration, challenges arose in implementation within the Irish public sector as identified by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Weak coordination and networking between public sector bodies, inadequate accountability structures, and a focus on inputs rather than outcomes posed obstacles to effective policy implementation. Though progress was made in establishing structures for GM, such as advisory units, the transformation of policy focus and funding allocation were limited (Rittenhofer and Gatrell, 2012). This outcome suggests that in Ireland, there is a greater emphasis placed on integration rather than transformative approaches to GM, underscoring the need for organizational processes that support transformative change.

4.3 Successes and Limitations of Gender Mainstreaming

Kanji (2003) references Jahan's work when highlighting the achievements of GM. The literature highlights four key achievements, the first and most significant of which is a raised level of

awareness. Women's economic contributions as waged and non-waged workers were recognized, women's rights and abilities to make choices were increasingly accepted, their knowledge and perspectives regarding sustainable development began to gain recognition, and discriminatory practices that were once regarded as natural, such as sexual harassment and domestic violence, gained public policy attention (Kanji, 2003). The second achievement involves the development of different methodologies for research, data collection, procedures and tools for planning, and training methodologies informed by gender issues expertise (ibid). Thirdly, though men still dominate most formal public and private sector institutions, affirmative action policies have improved women's participation in decision-making (Kanji, 2003). The last achievement highlighted is the progress made in legal reforms to remove discrimination against women; laws have been put in place to combat violence against women, and women have been given access to institutions and jobs previously unavailable to them (ibid).

Despite the global commitment to GM, finding viable ways to mainstream gender effectively has been challenging (True and Mintrom, 2001; Novovic, 2023). As Khalil (2017) highlighted, the project's politics and impact are inadvertently diluted in creating a blanket policy that addresses every level of policies and programs. This leads to claims that GM policy as a whole has become a tick-the-box exercise that does not lead to any substantial results. GM policy has also been hindered by unclear guidance, a lack of sector-specific expertise, and insufficient monitoring and evaluation focused on outcomes achieved (Gupta et al., 2023). In terms of implementation challenges, many scholars discuss the conflation of "gender" and "women." Gupta et al. (2023) highlight the challenges of implementing GM, noting resistance and fatigue within development organizations, where gender is sometimes equated solely with women. Similarly, Parpart and McFee (2017) argue that GM efforts have often focused on mainstreaming women into existing structures without addressing broader power dynamics and gender norms.

In response to these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the need for a more inclusive and transformative approach to GM. This involves moving beyond a narrow focus on women's inclusion to address broader power dynamics and gendered assumptions that shape social and economic structures. Parpart and McFee (2017) emphasize the importance of engaging men in discussions about masculinities and violence to challenge traditional notions of gender and promote social justice.

4.4 Drivers of Policy Diffusion

The diffusion of policy innovations across nation-states is a dynamic process shaped by various factors, including transnational networks and cultural dynamics. Understanding the interconnected nature between policy diffusion and national culture provides essential insights into how policies spread and adapt to various social and cultural contexts.

4.4.1 Transnational Networks and Policy Diffusion

Transnational networks arise as key actors in the diffusion of policy innovations, particularly in the realm of GM. True and Mintrom (2001) highlight the instrumental role played by these networks, which connect domestic institutional changes with international norms. The researchers build the argument that actors embedded within these networks play a significant role in influencing domestic politics and uses GM to illustrate this point. By mobilizing women's organizations, governments, and international organizations such as the UN across diverse settings, these networks pressure national governments to address gender inequities and adopt GM mechanisms. The interaction between domestic and international actors within these networks facilitates the transference of global gender norms, which act as a catalyst for meaningful institutional change at the domestic level (ibid).

Furthermore, the role of transnational networks extends beyond GM to encompass a wide range of policy areas. When trying to explain adoption patterns of policy innovations, the focus is often on the analysis of individual nation-states, examining factors that influence the timing and extent of policy adoption. Literature highlights two broad sets of explanatory variables that are typically considered: internal features of the jurisdiction and various forms of social communication that link individual jurisdictions to a broader community (True and Mintrom, 2001). Scholars argue that despite differences in military and economic disparities, states typically subscribe to similar purposes and have similar legal standing, which works to facilitate the rapid diffusion of public policies and institutional structures (ibid).

However, it's suggested that these arguments may overlook the agency of local actors and the mediation of global norms by domestic state processes. GM efforts have been influenced by a desire to resist pressure faced by nation-states to accept economic reforms inspired by the neoliberal global governance agenda (True and Mintrom, 2001). When studying individual state-level policy adoptions contributing to global diffusion, scholars face various approaches,

including tracing the processes of adoption in critical cases to verify the importance of transnational linkages.

4.4.2 Cultural Dynamics and Policy Diffusion

In addition to transnational networks, cultural dynamics play a significant role in shaping policy diffusion patterns. National culture influences policy innovation reception, interpretation, and adaptation within different socio-cultural contexts. He (2023) emphasizes the inseparable link between policy diffusion and culture, highlighting the complexity of this relationship. While acknowledging the importance of culture in shaping diffusion processes, scholars often grapple with rigorously assessing the specific cultural values that influence policy diffusion.

Culture, from local to global, exists at different levels and encompasses diverse dimensions, including beliefs, norms, and practices (Windzio et al., 2022). Policy diffusion from one region to another is inseparable from the influence of culture, with global trade, colonial history, and spatial proximity linking countries (Windzio et al., 2022). In the literature, the researchers build the argument to further link the effect of historical interdependencies inherent in colonial legacies which further complicate the dynamics of policy diffusion, shaping the mechanisms through which policies spread across regions and influence contemporary diffusion patterns. Though not a direct theme within the context of this study, colonial legacies and historical interdependencies are highly relevant when looking at the work of development in global north and south contexts.

4.4.3 Culture and Implementation

National culture has a significant influence in not only the diffusion of policy but the implementation of this policy, especially when addressing complex issues such as gender equality. As Lahuerta-Otero and González-Bravo (2018) assert, culture is an important determinant of innovation, impacting individuals, communities, and institutions' responses to changes and opportunities. This cultural influence operates at various decision-making levels (Jansen & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023), shaping the way policies are conceived and executed.

In the realm of gender equality, the level of progress varies widely across countries and cultures due to distinct historical, social, and conceptual frameworks (Mahapatro, 2014). Decisions regarding gender equality programs and management responsibilities are deeply entwined with

cultural norms and values unique to each nation (Jansen & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023). Therefore, political interventions for gender equality must be contextually specific, accounting for cultural nuances and organizational dynamics (Merma-Molina et al., 2023).

However, implementing GM strategies remains challenging due to diverse social and economic circumstances, policy cultures, and gender equality approaches across states and countries (Mahapatro, 2014). Despite efforts by feminist researchers and policymakers, the gap between policy objectives and situational reality persists, reflecting the complex interplay of cultural factors (True, 2003).

Policymakers must adopt strategies accommodating diverse cultural perspectives and organizational realities to bridge this gap (Lahuerta-Otero & González-Bravo, 2018). This entails fostering inclusive decision-making processes, promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity, and tailoring implementation strategies to local contexts. By embracing the influence of national culture on policy implementation, policymakers can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of gender equality initiatives, ultimately advancing toward meaningful social change.

4.4.4 Policy Efficacy and Implementation

The realization of policy efficacy depends on successful implementation. In the realm of public policy and administration, scholars have long recognized the intricate relationship between policy effectiveness and how policies are put into practice. Drawing upon insights from studies by Nicholson-Crotty and Carley (2016) and Siciliano et al. (2017) this summary of existing literature aims to highlight the link between policy efficacy and implementation.

Nicholson-Crotty and Carley (2016) posits that policy effectiveness is intricately intertwined with implementation choices. Policymakers, aware of this connection, endeavor to ensure that policies are administered in a manner congruent with their preferences. Their empirical findings suggest that shared implementation environments among jurisdictions significantly influence the impact of information about policy effectiveness on adoption decisions. This underscores the imperative of considering implementation concerns as integral components of the policy learning process. Thus, the effective translation of policy intentions into tangible outcomes relies heavily on the manner in which policies are implemented on the ground.

Similarly, Siciliano et al. (2017) outline the pivotal role of social networks in shaping policy implementation. Building upon previous research, they highlight that successful implementation is contingent upon various factors, including the valuation of policy change by implementers and the availability of adequate resources. Furthermore, individual policy beliefs are crucial in shaping implementation decisions and behaviors, as they are socially constructed and legitimized within organizational contexts. These findings demonstrate the complex interplay between individual perceptions, organizational dynamics, and policy implementation outcomes.

In essence, policy efficacy and successful implementation are not separate concepts but are intertwined. Policies may demonstrate efficacy on paper, but their actual impact is contingent upon how they are operationalized in practice. Thus, effective policymaking necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence implementation outcomes, including the role of social networks, the alignment of policy beliefs, and the availability of resources.

The intersection between policy efficacy and implementation is complex, shaped by various contextual factors and individual perceptions. By shedding light on this relationship, scholars and policymakers can gain valuable insights into the mechanisms that enhance the likelihood of achieving desired policy outcomes. Bridging the gap between policy intentions and implementation realities is essential for realizing the full potential of public policies in addressing societal challenges as well as promoting the public good.

5. Theoretical Grounding

5.1 Cultural Contingency Theory

Cultural contingency theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding how cultural factors shape leadership practices, policy decision-making, and policy diffusion processes across different contexts. This theory posits that cultural values, beliefs, and norms act as contextual moderators that influence individual and collective behaviors, attitudes, and responses to organizational practices and policies. By recognizing the significance of culture in shaping human behavior and organizational dynamics, researchers and practitioners can better understand and navigate the complexities of leadership, policy decision-making, and policy diffusion in diverse cultural contexts.

5.1.1 Cultural Influence on Leadership Practices

Gibson & Marcoulides (1995) introduced the concept of cultural contingency theory to extend the traditional notion of transformational leadership by emphasizing the role of followers' values and beliefs, often rooted in national culture. According to this perspective, leadership practices vary across cultures due to differences in cultural orientations, societal norms, and historical traditions. For example, in collectivist cultures that value group harmony and consensus-building, leaders may adopt a participative and relationship-oriented leadership style to foster cooperation and collaboration among team members. In contrast, in individualistic cultures prioritizing personal autonomy and achievement, leaders may exhibit a more directive and task-oriented approach to goal attainment.

The culturalist view of leadership emphasizes the uniqueness of leadership practices in each country, suggesting that leadership behaviors act as an extension of a nation's traditions and cultural heritage. This view highlights the importance of respecting cultural differences when leading diverse teams or operating in global contexts. Conversely, the rationalistic view argues that leadership practices are rational responses to environmental factors such as industrial development, technological advancements, and competitive pressures. According to this perspective, situational demands shape leadership behaviors rather than cultural influences.

5.1.2 Cultural Moderation of Policy Implementation and Decision-Making

Similar to its application in leadership, cultural contingency theory also holds relevance in policy implementation and decision-making. Cultural factors influence individuals' attitudes, perceptions, and choices regarding the enactment and execution of policies. As Mitchell et al. (2000) posited in the entrepreneurial context, cultural values and norms mold the interplay between policy-making frameworks and policy implementation decisions.

For instance, in societies characterized by high uncertainty avoidance, policymakers and implementers may hesitate to pursue innovative policy solutions due to risk aversion and a fear of failure. Conversely, cultures that celebrate innovation and risk-taking may foster an environment where policymakers are more inclined to experiment with novel policy approaches, potentially leading to more dynamic and adaptive governance.

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) emphasize the need to move beyond simplistic country-level categorizations of culture when analyzing its impact on policy implementation. Instead, they advocate directly assessing individuals' cultural values to better understand how cultural nuances guide policy decision-making processes. For instance, in collectivist cultures, policymakers may prioritize adherence to social norms and communal obligations over individual preferences when crafting and implementing policies. In contrast, policymakers in individualistic cultures may emphasize personal autonomy and individual aspirations in their decision-making processes. By acknowledging and accounting for these cultural subtleties, researchers and practitioners can develop more comprehensive insights into how cultural factors modify policy implementation and decision-making across diverse socio-cultural contexts. This nuanced understanding is essential for designing effective policy interventions that resonate with the values of the communities they aim to serve.

5.1.3 Cultural Factors in Policy Diffusion

In addition to leadership and entrepreneurship, cultural contingency theory has implications for the diffusion of policies across different regions and countries. He (2023) explores the influence of national culture on the diffusion of GM policies, highlighting how cultural factors such as religion, autonomy, and collectivism affect countries' willingness to embrace gender equality initiatives. For example, policymakers in Muslim-majority countries may restrain from adopting GM policies due to cultural norms and religious beliefs that prioritize traditional gender hierarchies.

Hofstede's dimensions of national culture provide a helpful framework for understanding cultural variations in policy diffusion and societal attitudes toward gender equality initiatives. For example, societies high in individualism may react positively to policies that promote gender equality, as individuals prioritize personal autonomy over traditional gender norms. In contrast, societies high in collectivism may resist GM policies, as social norms and obligations take precedence over individual freedoms.

5.1.4 Implications and Applications

Cultural contingency theory has several implications for research and practice in leadership and policy diffusion. First, by recognizing the influence of culture on individual and organizational

behavior, researchers can develop more nuanced theories and models that account for cultural variations in leadership styles, policy decision-making, and policy adoption processes. Second, practitioners can leverage cultural insights to design effective leadership development programs and policy interventions that resonate with local values.

5.2 Organizational Culture Theory

Organizational culture theory offers a multifaceted framework for understanding the dynamics of organizational values, beliefs, and behaviors. It encompasses basic definitions and complex analyses, providing insights into the fundamental essence of organizational identity and operational practices. This theoretical grounding serves as a foundation for comprehending organizational behavior, particularly within the context of NGOs and their pursuit of institutional sustainability and effectiveness.

Organizational culture is often described as "the way things are done around here," encapsulating the shared values and norms that guide behavior and decision-making within an organization at its core (Lewis, 2003). This definition highlights the pervasive influence of work culture on organizational practices and underscores the importance of managing cultural dynamics in achieving organizational objectives. However, a more nuanced understanding emerges from scholars such as Edgar Schein (1985), who emphasize the construction and negotiation of values and meanings within organizations. According to Schein (1985), organizational culture manifests through artifacts, motivations, and behaviors, reflecting a complex interplay of social processes and power dynamics.

As Schein(1985) suggests, cultural incompatibilities can underlie organizational challenges such as organizational priority or expansion into new markets, illustrating the profound impact of culture on organizational strategy and performance. Charles Handy's typology of organizational cultures delineates four general types: club culture, role culture, task culture, and person culture (Lewis, 2003). Each type reflects a distinct organizational structure and set of values, influencing how work is organized, decisions are made, and relationships are formed within the organization. For example, club culture, commonly found in NGOs, centers around a charismatic leader and a group of like-minded individuals working towards a common purpose, emphasizing the importance of leadership and shared vision.

Organizational culture theory spans three levels: visible representations, group behavior, and underlying beliefs (Lewis, 2003). Visible representations include tangible aspects of culture, such as symbols, rituals, and language. Group behavior encompasses how people interact with and respond to various organizational situations, and at the deepest level lie underlying beliefs that shape individuals' values and attitudes towards work, governance, and social responsibility.

Understanding these underlying beliefs is crucial for aligning organizational culture with strategic objectives and fostering a cohesive and resilient organizational identity. In the context of NGOs, organizational culture plays a central role in shaping institutional sustainability and effectiveness (Lewis, 2003). As value-based organizations, NGOs are guided by articulated values that inform their strategic priorities, operational practices, and stakeholder interactions (Mikołajczak, 2023).

Management by Values (MBV) emerges as a key framework for understanding how organizational values drive NGO success, emphasizing the alignment of individual and organizational values to achieve desired outcomes (Mikołajczak, 2023). A decentralized or bottom-up approach to organizational leadership further underscores the importance of empowering employees and fostering participatory decision-making processes (Huettermann et al., 2024). Organizations can tap into employees' motivational and cognitive resources by decentralizing decision-making structures, enhancing organizational performance and adaptability (Huettermann et al., 2024). This approach resonates with the grassroots strategies often employed by NGOs, prioritizing community participation, local knowledge, and indigenous expertise in project implementation and advocacy efforts (Biswambhar, 2007).

By recognizing the significance of culture in shaping organizational identity, strategy, and sustainability, researchers and practitioners can develop strategies for cultivating and managing organizational culture to achieve desired outcomes and foster positive social change. The intricate layers of organizational culture theory offer valuable insights into the underlying dynamics of NGOs and their pursuit of institutional sustainability, underscoring the importance of aligning values, behaviors, and strategic priorities to drive.

5.3 Critique of Theories

He (2023) references criticism that culture is a macro-level phenomenon and may not serve as the best unit for analysis. When analyzing the ways in which culture may impact policy, it is

important to take a more nuanced approach. Considering culture at the national or regional level may not consider various subcultures that may exist. Program managers or project implementers may have values or beliefs that contradict national cultural norms. Individual beliefs and values may supersede the influence of national and regional culture.

Lewis' (2003) paper uses the lens of organizational culture to understand the root of sustainability problems in a project in Bangladesh. The organization and its activities are linked to international markets with multiple involved actors. Thus, a level of shared meaning about values and purposes must be sustained to keep the project coherent (Lewis, 2003). Lewis (2003) then uses organizational culture as a focus to explore how meanings are constructed and contested in development projects. However, while this strengthens the organizational culture framework, it lacks the perspective of the potential impact of external factors. For example, national or regional cultural values may run counter to the organization's culture. In some cases, legislation opposing LGBTQIA+ or women's rights issues concerning the topic of abortion and sexual health and reproductive rights prevent organizational action. These challenges cannot always be explained or circumvented by Organizational Culture Theory. Thus, this study combines Organizational Culture Theory and Cultural Contingency Theory as each addresses some of the limitations of each other.

6. Methodology

6.1 Data Collection/Sampling

This study conducted an intensive desk study, utilizing a combination of document analysis of SIDA reports provided by IM's HR generalist and a combination of formal and informal interviews. Eight interviews were conducted and 15 documents were analyzed. The documents encompassed IM's strategic plan from 2015 to 2023, including thematic policies, GM tools, project assessments, progress reports, and evaluations.

The method of sampling utilized in this study is purposeful sampling. As defined by Palinkas et al. (2015), purposeful sampling involves selecting individuals who are highly knowledgeable about or experienced with the topic of interest.

6.2 Interviews

The interviews employed an open-ended approach to facilitate qualitative inquiry, fostering interactive and interpersonal dialogue. Following Patton's (2015) recommendation, in-depth

interviewing was utilized to prioritize respondents' ideas and opinions, stated in their own terms, as the primary data source for evaluation. In addition to formal interviews, information was gathered from informal conversations throughout the research period. The participation breakdown included three respondents from Central America, two from Southern Africa, two from Sweden, and one from South Asia.

6.3 Process

Once the interviews were conducted, Nvivo was used to organize the responses by themes. These themes were expressed through a series of codes: background, challenges, cross-sectoral collaboration, evaluation and monitoring, future directions, organizational goals, implementation, inclusivity, organization priority, perceptions, success, and suggested improvement. The researcher then identified five key factors of analysis and grouped codes, organized by region accordingly.

6.4 People

IM operates in six international regions with offices in 14 countries. Four of the regions are represented from interviews conducted in Central America, South Asia, Southern Africa, and Northern Europe. These regions include the regional offices of El Salvador, Guatemala, Nepal, India, Malawi, Zambia, Eswatini (Swaziland), and Sweden. Representatives from Eastern Europe and the Middle East, with offices in Ukraine, Moldova, Jordan, and Palestine, could not participate due to conflict and understaffing.¹ Considering the organizational structure, which typically includes three program managers per region, with one responsible for cross-cutting issues such as gender integration, open invitations were extended to various departments within the organization to secure diverse perspectives.

The researcher spoke to two key people initially: the human resources generalist and the advisor of regional offices. Once they approved the organization's participation in the study, they provided crucial contact information of experienced figures in each region. These regional directors then engaged the appropriate colleagues to participate in the study.

¹ Information about the Middle Eastern offices was collected via the Gender Spot Checks; see section 6.5. The Eastern Europe region is excluded in this study.

6.5 Data Sources

The documents analyzed included IM's strategic plan from 2015 to 2023, thematic policies, GM tools, project assessments, progress reports, and evaluations. Recent gender spot-check reports from regions, particularly from 2017 and 2023, were analyzed to supplement data gaps, such as information on the Middle Eastern region, acknowledging potential limitations in reflecting current policies.

6.5.1 Gender Spot Check 2017

In 2017, IM underwent a comprehensive gender spot-check conducted by the consulting company NIRAS Indevelop encompassing multiple IM offices, including the head office and offices in Malawi and India. The examination focused on initiatives like the "Mainstreaming of children with disability & marginalized girls through inclusive education" in India and the "Youth Economic and Social Action Project (YESA)" in Malawi. The spot-check aimed to identify organizational priorities, balancing decentralization with organizational objectives, and emphasized establishing quality assurance systems and addressing gaps in partner assessments.

The process involved recommendations from the consulting firm and discussions with participants about these recommendations, including agreement, required actions, necessary resources, responsible parties, and implementation timeframes. Follow-up updates were provided one year after the spot-check.

6.5.2 Gender Spot Check 2023

The 2023 Gender spot check, conducted by Sida CIVSAM and NCG between February and April 2023, noted that IM will shift focus in 2024 from the 2019-2023 strategy to becoming a mobilizer with an added focus on capacity bridging. Key changes for the 2024-2028 strategy include transitioning from a connector, enabler, and catalyst to a mobilizer, shifting power, and strengthening civil society to bolster democratic rights and justice. The strategy will prioritize partnerships through an intersectional feminist and anti-racist lens, focusing on women, youth, and those facing multiple layers of discrimination. It will integrate climate change as a social, political, and economic issue, emphasizing gender justice. The strategy will also emphasize mutual learning, capacity bridging, and fostering peer-to-peer and south-to-south partnerships.

The 2023 spot check assessed IM Sweden and IM's gender equality efforts in Palestine, targeting IM offices in Lund, the Middle East regional offices of Jordan and Palestine, and two agreement partners/programs in Palestine. Objectives included evaluating the systematic approach to gender equality, assessing gender policy quality and implementation, identifying progress in GM, and examining the application of a gender transformative approach. Additionally, the report aimed to review previous recommendations from the NIRAS spot-check, investigate practical effects on rightsholder groups, analyze achievements and challenges in GM, evaluate alignment with human rights principles, extract gained insights, offer recommendations for improvement, and contribute to learning within IM and their local partners for strengthening gender equality in projects and programs.

6.5.3 Takeaways from 2017 and 2023 Gender Spot Checks

Comparing the 2017 and 2023 gender spot checks shows improvement in gender integration within IM, with 2023 results being more favorable. Differences in how these spot checks were conducted may explain the variance in outcomes, offering insights into the evolution of GM policy at IM.

The 2017 spot check by NIRAS focused on IM-funded projects and local partners in India and Malawi and the head office in Lund. It highlighted challenges in GM, offered recommendations, and found that the integration of gender perspectives in programs was most effective. The 2023 spot check by Sida CIVSAM and NCG, conducted during the transition to a new strategic plan (2024-2028), focused on the Middle East region, including IM offices in Jordan and Palestine. This report emphasized broader integration of GM, including LGBTQIA+ issues, and addressing external challenges such as transformative masculinities and patriarchal norms.

The main differences between the reports are the focus on operational challenges in 2017 versus integration and systemic approaches in 2023. The 2023 report also expands on previous issues, acknowledging room for growth despite improvements. Analyzing both spot checks and recent strategy plans provides a solid foundation for insights from interviews and documents, highlighting the significant influence of external factors like culture and religion and the pivotal role of organizational culture in navigating these challenges.

6.6 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted using informed consent as defined by Klykken (2021), which entails voluntary and explicit, unambiguous information about what engagement in the research will entail. Additionally, all informants were given anonymity to protect their privacy. The researcher contacted the key figures in the organization in order to gain consent to conduct the study, and each participant provided written consent to participate in the research. The consent form template can be found in the appendix. Furthermore, the researcher primarily hand-typed interview notes, and explicit consent was given in instances of recorded material. The researcher also conducted interviews based on the work schedule and the availability of the participants. The interviews never exceeded one hour in order to respect the participant's time. The researcher allowed for additional thoughts and insights to be shared by the participants through written communication to ensure convenience for the participants.

This study uses the "dominant approach" regarding confidentiality, which is defined as collecting data anonymously without any identifying information. If data cannot be collected anonymously, researchers must collect, analyze, and report it without compromising the identities of their respondents (Kaiser, 2019).

6.7 Positionality

The researcher acknowledges their positionality as a woman doing work while examining the topic of gender equality and status as a former intern at the organization; there is a potential tendency to confirm unconscious bias. Nevertheless, unbiased research was conducted based solely on the data collected from the desk study and interviews. There is also an acknowledgment of potential bias when conceptualizing the effect of external factors on policy in regions different from the researcher's background, being from a Western, global north country and having more familiarity with that context. Flyvbjerg (2006) discusses this in their work, saying a researcher can inadvertently lean toward verification, which tends to affirm the researcher's initial notions, potentially compromising the scientific validity of the study.

6.8 Methodological Limitations

One significant limitation of the study is the absence of perspectives from Eastern Europe and the Middle East in the interviews conducted. The study includes a gender spot-check report from

the Middle East to address the absence of a regional representative; however, it did not cover the same focus areas as the interviews conducted in this study. Additionally, there is a complete lack of perspective from Eastern Europe due to the region's conflict and the absence of a spot-check report. I acknowledge that the study would benefit from more participants from all the regions to conduct a more comprehensive comparative analysis. Another limitation is the lack of knowledge about the new strategic plan beginning this year, as information from the partners' end to assess its results is not provided. Finally, there was a lack of access to any quantitative data on the results of projects or programs discussed in the interviews. Therefore, having a comprehensive view of these initiatives' effectiveness is challenging.

7. Findings

7.1 Organizational Structures and Cultures

2017 Gender Spot-Check South Asia and Southern Africa

IM Head Office Lund operates with a decentralized structure, where strategic decisions are made at the headquarters while local country offices handle operational functions. GM responsibility rests with the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the International department at the head office.

IM India appointed a gender focal point (GFP) in 2015, whose expertise in gender equality was initially limited. However, recent international gender training has strengthened the GFP's capacity, and plans are in place to train colleagues and develop GM modules. While basic gender knowledge is widespread, deeper understanding and operational application are lacking.

IM Malawi appointed a gender officer in October 2016, with plans for capacity-building through budgeted resources. Staff demonstrates good knowledge of gender equality, though the application is perceived as weaker.

2023 Gender Spot-Check Middle East

IM adopts a gender transformative approach deeply ingrained in its organizational culture and operations, extending to its partner organizations, including those in Palestine. This approach involves strategically selecting partners that align with IM's commitment to gender transformation, fostering a collaborative ecosystem aimed at long-term gender equality.

Northern Europe

In Northern Europe, GM efforts are localized and integrated into everyday operations, with emphasis on recognizing and addressing challenges faced by marginalized genders. IM's shift towards anti-racism initiatives reflects strategic decisions aligned with organizational priorities. Recruitment prioritizes individuals who align with IM's values, reducing the need for extensive training on feminism and anti-racism. Cultural fit is emphasized during recruitment to maintain organizational cohesion. IM increasingly considers LGBTQ+ issues in its policies and practices, promoting inclusivity in HR systems and insurance providers. P1 explains that “Gender mainstreaming is seen as more than just using tools for planning and reporting; it involves integrating gender perspectives into everyday operations. Emphasis is placed on recognizing and addressing challenges and inequalities faced by women and other marginalized genders.”

South Asia

IM applies a gender lens to all its departments and operations, advocating for gender equality and inclusion across all levels. As a Feminist and Rights-Based Organization, IM prioritizes addressing the needs of marginalized and excluded groups, ensuring their agendas are integrated into its work. This involves contacting these communities directly and designing programs and policies with a gender and rights-based perspective.

Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, fostering an inclusive culture that values diversity and gender equality is central to prioritizing GM efforts. Leaders at IM and partner organizations champion gender equality, creating environments where everyone feels respected and heard. This inclusive approach contributes to effective gender mainstreaming, which involves assessing the implications for all genders of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, at all levels. The goal is to ensure equal access to resources, decision-making, and opportunities for all individuals, ultimately leading to socially just and sustainable societies.

Within IM's work, GM is defined as integrating gender considerations into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs across all spheres. This involves challenging discriminatory practices and stereotypes, promoting inclusivity, and recognizing the intersectionality of gender with other identities, such as ethnicity, religion, disability, and sexual orientation.

Central America

In Central America, IM promotes a culture of inclusivity and gender equality within its organizational structure and partner ecosystem. This includes fostering transparent dialogues, promoting self-training among staff, and advocating against discrimination based on gender. IM champions gender equality internally and externally, declaring itself a feminist organization and actively challenging patriarchal systems. The organization integrates gender perspectives into all aspects of its work, striving to provide equal opportunities and conditions for all collaborators.

7.2 Impact on GM

2017 Gender Spot-Check South Asia and Southern Africa

The document has a gap in information concerning this section as I did not conduct the study myself.

2023 Gender Spot-Check Middle East

The report found that the organization's thorough understanding of gender equality, gender mainstreaming, and gender analysis permeates its entire structure, from top management to staff. This comprehensive knowledge underscores the significance of gender perspectives in all aspects of program management, highlighting a commitment to promoting gender equality within the organization's activities. Moreover, IM's operational framework is firmly rooted in intersectional feminist principles, with leadership practices reflecting feminist values and ideals. By integrating an intersectional lens into its anti-discriminatory practices, IM strives to address the diverse needs and experiences of marginalized individuals, including those with disabilities and indigenous backgrounds.

Northern Europe

There may be a gap between organizational emphasis on gender mainstreaming and direct implementation in projects and programs, particularly in the Global North. GM in the region mostly focuses on internal processes such as trainings and capacity building. Partnerships with organizations like Humanium Metal highlight the prioritization of gender perspective in advocacy work. Distinctions between the Global North and other regions, particularly regarding anti-racism over gender mainstreaming, suggest differing priorities within organizational settings.

Initiatives such as radio programs addressing gender-based gun violence and discussions on intersectional feminism and LGBTQ+ crimes demonstrate proactive efforts in GM and

engagement with diverse perspectives. These insights into the content and scope of initiatives reflect IM's commitment to promoting gender equality and inclusivity.

South Asia

In South Asia, organizational cultures and structures within IM and its partner organizations shape approaches to GM through various strategies. These include capacity-building programs, open discussions, and implementing policies to mainstream gender. IM's gender and inclusion policy guides all departments and colleagues, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing to integrate gender perspectives into all aspects of its work.

Southern Africa

Collaboration with other sectors or departments within IM to integrate gender considerations into programmatic activities is comprehensive and involves strategic planning, capacity building, operational integration, and partnerships. This collaborative approach ensures that gender justice and equality are mainstreamed throughout all activities. Guideline and policy development, integration into strategic planning, internal and partner capacity development, and leveraging partnerships and networks are key strategies employed to advance gender mainstreaming efforts effectively.

Central America

GM efforts in Central America are decentralized and responsive to local contexts, driven by feedback and ideas from partners. Collaboration with civil society organizations is crucial for amplifying impact, and IM conducts capacity-building sessions to enhance understanding and implementation of gender-sensitive approaches. Efforts also focus on engaging diverse communities, including LGBTQ+ groups and indigenous populations, to ensure inclusivity and equity in gender equality initiatives.

7.3 Cultural Factors Influencing Gender Mainstreaming in IM's Regional Offices

2017 Gender Spot-Check South Asia and Southern Africa

External factors are briefly mentioned in the report. Factors such as patriarchal cultures and resistance to gender-sensitive legislation further hinder GM efforts.

2023 Gender Spot-Check Middle East

The report highlights IM's active promotion of transformative masculinities, challenging traditional patriarchal norms and fostering an environment that encourages gender-equitable

behaviors among all individuals. Despite IM's commitment to intersectionality and inclusivity, the organization faces significant challenges in advancing LGBTQIA+ rights, particularly in regions where legislation criminalizes homosexuality or gender identity. In Palestine, where societal and legal barriers to LGBTQIA+ rights exist, advocating for inclusivity and equality requires careful navigation of cultural sensitivities and legal constraints. Moreover, conservative attitudes, especially among the youth, present additional hurdles in promoting LGBTQIA+ rights and challenging prevailing norms. IM ensures the integration of a human rights-based approach (HRBA) into all its programs and projects, focusing on inclusivity for boys, girls, women, and men, supported by sex/gender-disaggregated data. While IM's forms and templates currently do not explicitly mention SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression) or non-binary individuals, they emphasize the human rights and non-discrimination of all people, acknowledging the challenge of including SOGIE in regions where it could lead to government backlash.

Northern Europe

The perception in Northern Europe is that there is more work to be done regarding anti-racism as opposed to gender equality. The work, specifically done by the local chapters in Sweden, focuses on assimilation into Swedish society. There is an acknowledgment of the importance of recognizing the intersection of gender and race. However, because there is a lack of programs implemented in the Northern European region with a specific gender focus, it is difficult to assess the impact of external factors on these implementation practices. Gender mainstreaming is understood differently from the other regions included in the study. There is something to be said about the mindset that gender equality is not as much of a priority in Northern Europe regarding program implementation, as some perceive that most gender equality has already been achieved.

South Asia

In South Asia, deeply ingrained patriarchal beliefs persist despite efforts toward change, resulting in slow progress and resistance to gender equality. These beliefs permeate societal norms, influencing perceptions and behaviors even among those who may not personally endorse such attitudes. Discrimination based on gender and caste remains prevalent, hindering the inclusion of marginalized groups in development efforts. Factors like education, poverty, and social status exacerbate these inequalities, making it challenging for IM to implement its policies and initiatives effectively. Despite these obstacles, ongoing efforts are made to challenge

entrenched cultural norms and promote gender equality, though progress is gradual and incremental.

Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, deeply entrenched gender disparities are perpetuated by societal norms, stereotypes, and discriminatory practices. Traditional gender roles often hinder progress toward gender equality, with some religious teachings and practices reinforcing these norms. Despite efforts to implement gender-responsive policies, aligning with local laws and regulations remains challenging.

Cultural and contextual factors significantly influence development efforts, particularly in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Eswatini. The patriarchal system dominates, with men controlling economic resources and decision-making processes. Women's participation in leadership roles and economic decisions is limited, reflecting broader societal norms prioritizing men.

Limited access to education for women and girls exacerbates gender inequalities, impacting their empowerment and ability to engage with development programs. Despite improvements in legal frameworks, discriminatory laws and practices persist, affecting women's rights to land ownership, finance, and employment.

Cultural practices like early marriages and gender-based violence further marginalize women, limiting their autonomy and participation in society. The impact of HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects women, intensifying caregiving roles and economic vulnerability.

A rural-urban divide exacerbates inequalities, with rural areas having less access to resources and opportunities. Government efforts often focus on meeting household needs, placing additional burdens on women. Religious and traditional beliefs reinforce women's roles in domestic spheres, further restricting their time and agency. Despite these challenges, ongoing dialogue and awareness efforts are shaping decision-making and policy implementation, gradually addressing gender biases and promoting inclusivity.

Central America

In Central America, the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals remains challenging due to entrenched models of masculinity and femininity. The region's highly religious and conservative societies exacerbate inequalities faced by women, compounded by factors like class, age,

ethnicity, and disability. Government systems and legislation often limit women's autonomy, with authoritarian governments further hindering progress on the women's agenda.

Poverty is a key facilitator of gender inequalities and violence against women, affecting a majority of the population in Central America. However, organizations can promote change by self-designating as feminist entities and sensitizing staff to training and attitude changes.

Efforts to mainstream gender must be intersectional and inclusive, engaging diverse communities, including LGBTQ+ groups, indigenous populations, and people with disabilities. Challenges in implementation include navigating cultural norms, addressing institutional barriers, and securing funding for gender-focused programs. Religion also presents obstacles, particularly concerning support for sexual health issues like abortion.

Despite advancements, the patriarchal system persists, limiting women's potential and rights. Macho practices and attitudes influenced by patriarchy and religion prevail in society, yet efforts within organizations aim to challenge these norms and advance gender equality.

7.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

2017 Gender Spot-Check South Asia and Southern Africa

This report identified internal challenges in IM's India and Malawi regional offices, primarily around capacity, tools, prioritization, and monitoring and evaluation. Capacity issues stem from weak internal skills and limited influence of gender focal points, leading to misconceptions about gender equality. Staff saw complicated GM tools as overly detailed and time-consuming, hindering effective implementation. Additionally, inadequate time allocation and passive resistance at partner organizations contributed to challenges in prioritizing gender issues. Monitoring and evaluation pose difficulties in attributing results to specific gender actions and lack of regular follow-up.

2023 Gender Spot-Check Middle East

Gender is a result-based management and learning system consideration that analyzes qualitative and quantitative gender indicators. According to the report, most if not all of IM partners are reporting on gender indicators with sex-disaggregated data. The long-term impact of programs can be accessed through IM's SenseMaker program, where both IM and their partners, staff, and end beneficiaries share narrative stories of the impact of the programs of which they have taken part. SenseMaker utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data to present a comprehensive view

when analyzing their programs. Gender is also integrated into the assessment criteria of potential partners through a process called "strategic choice." IM's partners are carefully assessed to ensure that they share IM's core values and methods.

Northern Europe

In Northern Europe, gender mainstreaming effectiveness is assessed through various methods, such as pulse checks and gender pay audits, to ensure organizational health and equity in compensation. IM benefits from gender spot checks conducted by SIDA consultants, which provide valuable insights into gender dynamics and inform their approach to GM.

However, challenges arise in monitoring and evaluating GM initiatives, particularly for projects like the Humanium Metal Project with diverse funding sources and project contexts. Variations in donor guidelines and project requirements necessitate flexibility in monitoring and evaluation approaches. For projects funded by different sources, monitoring and evaluation processes depend on specific guidelines each donor provides, making it essential to adapt reporting methods accordingly. As P2 describes, “[monitoring and evaluation] is a bit complicated for us because Humanium doesn't have one long-term framework in terms of traditional development work... if you're lucky, having SIDA backing your project up, you can move with the same template for decades. But Humanium Metal is a niche initiative, so we don't have one funder. We have project funding from here and there, and our board also supports us. We report based on the reporting guidelines of IM internally, and then we do our annual reporting to the board,”

South Asia

When asked about monitoring and evaluation processes, P3 responded: “We do assessments and evaluations (baseline/end line). We try to see the level of participation, participation in decision-making positions, in leadership, the level of knowledge, change in behavior, resource allocation, availability of policies and guidelines, etc. are some of the metrics used to measure progress.”

Monitoring and evaluation processes in South Asia have revealed several lessons and areas for improvement. One key takeaway is the importance of maintaining balance in gender equity approaches to ensure equal engagement of men, women, and other stakeholders, which is critical for achieving gender equality. This balance helps prevent the program from becoming overly tilted towards one gender, ensuring inclusivity and effectiveness. Furthermore, it has been

recognized that engaging policymakers, community leaders, and religious leaders is essential for the success of GM initiatives. These individuals often wield significant influence and can be crucial in driving positive change within communities.

Additionally, during monitoring visits, enhancing the capacity of frontline staff such as social mobilizers, facilitators, and supervisors has been identified as a priority. Strengthening their GM skills and knowledge can improve the quality and impact of program implementation. Lastly, it has been suggested that implementing mandatory provisions to ensure gender integration and mainstreaming can help systematically embed gender considerations into program activities. This can ensure that gender equality objectives are consistently prioritized and addressed throughout program implementation.

Southern Africa

In the Southern Africa regional office, monitoring and evaluation findings regarding GM efforts are systematically reported to stakeholders and organizational leadership. These reports encompass a comprehensive assessment of various quantitative and qualitative indicators. Quantitatively, the reports analyze representation in leadership positions, decision-making bodies, and staff, examining pay equity through salary gap assessments and tracking gender balance in recruitment, promotions, and retention rates. Additionally, the reports monitor work-life balance policies, including the uptake of flexible work arrangements and parental leave and participation rates in gender-related training programs and workshops. Qualitatively, the evaluation delves into the organizational culture's perception of gender equality, often conducted through surveys or focus groups, and assesses the effectiveness of gender-inclusive policies in shaping workplace dynamics. Furthermore, the regional office ensures transparency and accountability by collecting and publishing disaggregated data on personnel and learners, facilitating annual reporting based on relevant gender-related indicators. Through this structured reporting mechanism, the Southern Africa regional office provides a comprehensive overview of its gender mainstreaming efforts, highlighting achievements and areas for improvement to advance gender equality and inclusivity within the organization.

When asked about learnings gained from monitoring and evaluation, P4 responded: “Disaggregating data based on gender and other factors improves efficiency in addressing diverse vulnerabilities. Staff awareness and capacity building on gender and mainstreaming are essential. When women are fully informed, they become effective change-makers. It’s important

to encourage women's active participation in decision-making processes. It's also important to understand the relationship between gender equality and other human rights and ensure gender-responsive systems align with project design and organizational goals.”

When asked the same question, P5 reflected on learnings: “During monitoring and program follow-ups, we have learned that partners have strong systems and policies guiding gender mainstreaming. Most partners are proficient and independently track how rightsholders, disaggregated by gender, participate in the interventions.

We have also learned that governments are influenced by partners to create spaces for women in public offices. Organizations such as WOLREC, ZIMCODD, CSPR, and NGOCC have actively provided policy options for women's participation. They have also worked closely with duty bearers, chiefs, and local structures to ensure results. This approach works very well, and the results are sustained. Most partners now engage rightsholders during planning, budgeting, and implementation.”

Central America

In the Central America region, they use the system Progress Tracking to monitor and evaluate. It incorporates progress indicators at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels, quantitatively assessed on a scale of 1 to 7. Additionally, the office maintains open spaces for qualitative tracking of results, changes, and learning across key work areas, including social inclusion, economic inclusion, ensuring civic spaces, and strengthening civil society, all of which integrate a gender perspective.

When asked about monitoring and evaluation, P6 responded: “We utilize evaluation spaces throughout the year to critically examine gender inclusion and reflect on our progress. Aligned with Sustainable Development Goal Number Five, which focuses on gender equality, we emphasize the importance of having updated, concrete, and functional tools while enhancing the intersectional perspective within our office.”

7.5 Enhancing Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives

Northern Europe

A suggested improvement discussed during the interview would be to articulate more explicit future directions for GM efforts. While there is acknowledgment of the current focus and commitment internally, there is a lack of explicit plans or strategies mentioned for advancing

gender equality in the future. It would be beneficial for the organization to outline specific steps or initiatives it plans to undertake to integrate gender perspectives into its work further, especially considering the context of the Global North. When asked about future directions, P1 responded: “In the future, the organization seeks to continue to foster an environment where employees can be themselves and contribute to meaningful social change.”

Future directions for Humanium Metal involve conducting further research, building partnerships, or developing tailored initiatives to promote gender equality and inclusion. Humanium will also continue to engage in engagement work related to its work with toxic masculinity and gun violence, similar to work done in Sweden in its “Sweden Has a Wound” campaign.²

South Asia

In South Asia, staff and partners recognize the importance of building capacity and knowledge on gender beyond binaries. To enhance GM efforts, it is suggested that specific budgets be allocated for programs targeting communities beyond binaries.

P3 also shares thoughts on IM organizational culture and what it means for future directions, saying: “IM being a feminist organization has mainstreamed gender in all its work. To have an amplified effect, I think it has to collaborate more with other like-minded organizations and institutions at different levels. It has to be more visible and vocal. It can also have its own tool for gender mainstreaming. In the context of the changing global trends and priorities, IM will also have to see and analyze how they impact the already marginalized or deprived communities and groups and stand strong on their behalf.”

Regarding inclusivity for individuals beyond the gender binary, IM has actively sought to include and support these communities in its programs and initiatives. Some strategies include partnering with organizations focusing on these groups, explicitly targeting them in new projects, and participating in community events like Pride programs. This reflects a commitment to enhancing inclusivity and reaching out to the most excluded communities.

Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, the future of GM efforts within IM is envisioned to embrace intersectionality and inclusivity. This entails recognizing the multifaceted nature of gender-related challenges by considering factors such as race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic

² Translated from the Swedish: *Sverige har ett sår*

status. The integration of intersectional perspectives will be prioritized, with updated guidelines and educational resources to support implementation efforts.

Furthermore, IM is developing a feminist position paper to solidify its stance on gender issues, indicating a strategic move towards feminist positioning and leadership. Capacity building and empowerment will remain central, focusing on continuous development within IM and among its partners. Adapting to local contexts and global challenges will be essential, with efforts to address climate change and conflict sensitivity through a gender justice lens.

In terms of inclusivity for individuals beyond the gender binary, IM is committed to enhancing policies and practices. When reflecting on IM's future directions, P5 shared: “People and Culture are currently guiding us through a series of Neurodiversity sessions to consider our own differences stemming from functionality. Global operations have also contacted us to identify opportunities for enhancing inclusivity for individuals who do not identify within the gender binary in our programming. Future strategies will include the development and implementation of more inclusive policies that recognize and address the needs of non-binary and transgender individuals. This would involve expanding our understanding and application of SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression) principles and ensuring that our gender analysis frameworks and interventions are inclusive of all gender identities. Mental health has also been a priority for the region since last year, emphasizing openness, self-awareness, and psychological safety, as well as open feedback and interaction within the team, which are very key to the realization of inclusion.”

Central America

In Central America, the future of gender inclusion efforts within IM will require a continued commitment to promoting an intersectional perspective and empowering diverse movements. P6 shares thoughts on the need to address setbacks in advancing the agendas of several groups, saying this: “Future efforts should focus on continuing to empower and generate increasingly broad movements to not only advance the women's and youth agenda but also to curb setbacks in the face of the rise of fundamentalist and anti-rights groups and authoritarian governments.”

For LGBTQIA+ inclusion, it will be crucial to recognize this population as a subject of rights and to integrate LGBTQIA+ organizations into IM's partner ecosystem. Open dialogues involving internal and external stakeholders will be essential for positioning the demands and agendas of these populations for inclusion.

Another future direction highlighted by the Central America region concerns updating documents and tools on gender inclusion, which is crucial to ensuring that IM remains aligned with evolving global trends and priorities. P7 shares general thoughts on IM's direction moving forward: "Future directions may include expanding partnerships, scaling successful initiatives, advocating for policy change, and leveraging technology for greater impact." On a final note, P8 shares: "I believe we are on the right track."

8. Discussion

8.1 Similarities and Shared Commonalities

Program managers wield considerable autonomy over their work and projects in a decentralized organizational structure like IM. Organizational culture often supersedes external factors such as national culture, patriarchal structures, and religion in shaping policy implementation and diffusion processes. All of the individuals interviewed were well-versed in gender perspectives, with years of experience working with issues of gender and a deep passion for this work. This aligns with the 2023 spot check, which notes that all key program managers have an intensive understanding of gender perspectives.

Across the board, IM works within a partner ecosystem that relies heavily on collaboration, aimed at long-term gender equality. The 2023 gender spot check introduced the gender transformative approach, which involves the concept of "strategic selection." This approach ensures that partner organizations align well with IM's values, a key feature of its organizational culture. Additionally, recruitment practices reflect this alignment, ensuring that individuals share the organization's values. Paweł Mikołajczak (2023) states that organizational values drive the success of NGOs by creating a value-oriented work environment. This management by values (MBV) approach is evident in IM's practices, where core values anchor the organization's development and daily operations.

8.2 Differences Across Regions

While external factors such as culture influence policy implementation and diffusion, the specific mechanisms through which culture exerts its influence vary significantly. For instance, Central America faces significant pushback from governmental and local authorities, particularly concerning legislation related to reproductive rights. In contrast, northern Europe experiences

less external pressure due to its internal focus on gender mainstreaming, although it engages less in targeted gender programs. Monitoring and evaluation practices also differ, with Southern Africa showcasing a comprehensive system that tracks progress using qualitative and quantitative data. In contrast, Central America lacks a robust mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, the definition of gender mainstreaming varies, with regions adopting different approaches, such as capacity building or direct collaboration with partners.

According to Gupta et al. (2023), humanitarian organizations' cultures are typically hierarchical and driven by a short-term crisis response with a macho style of functioning. This structure contradicts IM's core organizational culture and values, offering a unique perspective. The literature also suggests that decision-making within organizations is heavily influenced by the established patterns of social norms of that organization's culture, which seems to be the case for IM as the organization's stance as a feminist organization is made apparent through its policy documents, spot-checks, and program managers' insights.

8.3 Implications and Applications

Recruitment practices are pivotal in ensuring that key program managers and staff align with the organization's values, reducing susceptibility to external influences. Strategic partnerships are equally significant, as selecting partners whose values align with the organization ensures smoother collaboration and less vulnerability to external pressures. By positioning it as feminist, gender integration throughout the organization can mitigate external factors by establishing a culture that prioritizes gender equity. Monitoring and evaluation should be standardized across regions to provide more insights into the effectiveness of policies. For example, Southern Africa's comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system could serve as a model for Central America to provide a more thorough understanding of project outcomes.

Gupta et al. (2023) highlights the need to enhance planning and monitoring processes, improve management and accountability mechanisms, and increase access to resources to address the shortcomings in GM. These recommendations align with the observed needs within IM, emphasizing the importance of robust planning and resource allocation.

8.4 General Takeaways

Cross-sectional collaboration presents challenges in regions like Central America and South Asia but is more successful in Southern Africa, where concrete examples of successful collaboration are evident. The benefits of a comparative analysis approach include considering adaptable

practices across regional contexts. External challenges are region-specific, but learnings and best practices should be shared and adapted across regions. Gender spot checks are an important tool the organization utilizes to inform strategy, and a more comparative approach across regions could provide helpful insight into best practices. The regions must have better connections to share insights and successful strategies.

In Northern Europe, the shift towards anti-racism is an important regional focus. Still, work remains to be done regarding gender equality, especially considering the intersectionality of these identities. Hudson et al. (2023) discuss how projects aimed at integrating immigrants into Swedish society may inadvertently subjugate immigrant women as passive objects rather than active subjects. This highlights the need for ongoing scrutiny and adaptation of projects to ensure they truly promote equality and do not reinforce existing disparities.

9. Conclusion

IM's stance as a feminist organization, as reflected in its recruitment practices, strategic partnerships, and comprehensive gender integration, positions it uniquely to address diverse regional challenges effectively. By adopting a comparative analysis approach and standardizing monitoring and evaluation practices, IM can enhance its effectiveness and adaptability across different cultural contexts.

This study's implications are relevant globally as gender mainstreaming (GM) stands as the primary strategy in the global pursuit of gender equality despite its inherent limitations. Both the literature and the findings of this study underscore the necessity of adopting a transformative approach, characterized by cross-sectoral collaboration and the utilization of local gender expertise, to ensure more effective and sustainable policy outcomes. The study's insights echo existing literature, emphasizing the importance of clear policy definitions and guidance, as well as robust monitoring and evaluation methods incorporating both quantitative and qualitative indicators. By exploring internal and external factors influencing GM implementation, this research contributes to the broader understanding of how to influence policy outcomes and advance gender equality efforts positively. Moving forward, addressing these factors and adopting a more comprehensive approach to GM implementation will be crucial in realizing the goal of gender equality on a global scale.

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Appendix

Interview Sheet: Exploring Gender Mainstreaming in IM's Regional Offices

Interviewee Information:

Name:

Position:

Regional Office:

Date of Interview:

Background Information:

- Can you briefly describe your role and responsibilities within IM's regional office?
- How long have you been involved in gender mainstreaming initiatives within IM?

Perceptions of Gender Mainstreaming:

- How would you define gender mainstreaming within the context of IM's work?
- From your perspective, what are the primary goals or objectives of gender mainstreaming initiatives in IM's regional offices?

Implementation Challenges and Successes:

- What are the main challenges you encounter when implementing gender mainstreaming policies or programs within your office?
- Are there any specific cultural or contextual factors that influence the implementation of gender mainstreaming efforts in your region?
- (OR)
- How do cultural factors influence the practical application of gender mainstreaming policies in IM's regional offices?
- Can you provide examples of successful gender mainstreaming initiatives or practices that have been effective within your office?

Cross-Sectoral Collaboration:

- How does your office collaborate with other sectors or departments within IM to integrate gender considerations into programmatic activities?

- Have you encountered any obstacles or facilitators to cross-sectoral collaboration on gender mainstreaming initiatives?
- How do organizational cultures and structures within IM and its partner organizations shape approaches to gender mainstreaming?

Evaluation and Monitoring:

- How does your office monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives? What indicators or metrics do you use to assess progress towards gender equality goals?
- Can you describe any lessons learned or areas for improvement identified through monitoring and evaluation processes?

Future Directions:

- How do you envision the future of gender mainstreaming efforts within IM, considering evolving global trends and priorities?
- Future Strategies for Inclusivity:
- Looking ahead, what strategies or approaches do you think could further enhance inclusivity for individuals who do not identify within the gender binary in gender mainstreaming initiatives within IM's regional offices? Has this been a topic of discussion?

Closing Remarks:

- Is there anything else you would like to add or any other insights you would like to share?

Hoja de Entrevista: Explorando la Inclusión de Género en las Oficinas Regionales de IM

Información del Entrevistado:

Nombre:

Cargo:

Oficina Regional:

Fecha de la Entrevista:

Información de Antecedentes:

¿Puede describir brevemente su rol y responsabilidades dentro de la oficina regional de IM?

¿Desde cuándo ha estado involucrado en iniciativas de inclusión de género dentro de IM?

Percepciones de la Inclusión de Género:

¿Cómo definiría las actividades de inclusión de género dentro del contexto de IM?

Desde su perspectiva, ¿cuáles son los principales objetivos o metas de las iniciativas de inclusión de género en las oficinas regionales de IM?

Desafíos y Éxitos en la Implementación:

¿Cuáles son los principales desafíos que enfrenta al implementar políticas o programas de inclusión de género dentro de su oficina?

¿Existen factores culturales o contextuales específicos que influyan en la aplicación de la integración de la perspectiva de género en su región?

¿Puede proporcionar ejemplos de iniciativas o prácticas exitosas de inclusión de género que hayan sido efectivas dentro de su oficina?

Colaboración Intersectorial:

¿Cómo colabora su oficina con otros sectores o departamentos dentro de IM para integrar perspectiva de género en actividades programáticas?

¿Ha encontrado obstáculos o facilitadores para la colaboración intersectorial en iniciativas de inclusión de género?

¿Cómo influyen las culturas y estructuras organizativas dentro de IM y sus organizaciones asociadas en los enfoques de inclusión de género?

Evaluación y Monitoreo:

¿Cómo monitorea y evalúa su oficina la efectividad de las iniciativas de inclusión de género?

¿Qué indicadores o métricas utiliza para evaluar el progreso hacia las metas de igualdad de género?

¿Puede describir lecciones aprendidas o áreas de mejora identificadas a través de los procesos de monitoreo y evaluación?

Direcciones Futuras:

¿Cómo visualiza el futuro de los esfuerzos de inclusión de género dentro de IM, considerando las tendencias y prioridades globales en evolución?

Estrategias Futuras para la Inclusividad:

Mirando hacia adelante, ¿qué estrategias o enfoques cree que podrían mejorar aún más la inclusividad para las personas que no se identifican dentro del género binario / or como personas binarias en las iniciativas de inclusión de género dentro de las oficinas regionales de IM? ¿Se ha discutido este tema?

Observaciones Finales:

¿Hay algo más que le gustaría agregar o alguna otra perspectiva que le gustaría compartir?

Consent to participate in a Thesis at the Faculty of Social Sciences

I agree to participate in

"From Policy to Practice: An analysis of IM's Gender Mainstreaming policy across various regional offices," a student project conducted by Jartu Wreh.

I am reaching out to gather insights and perspectives from colleagues like you who have experience in different regional offices. I am particularly interested in understanding how gender mainstreaming policies are implemented in practice and exploring any variations or challenges across regions or between the Global North and Global South.

Information on the processing of personal data

Name, Position, Regional Office, Date of Interview, Feedback

The following sensitive personal data will be processed:

None

Personal data will be processed in the following ways:

Hand written notes and voice recordings will be deleted promptly after the conclusion of the study.

We do not share your personal data with third parties.

Lund University, Box 117, 221 00 Lund, Sweden, with organization number 202100-3211 is the controller. You can find Lund University's privacy policy at www.lu.se/integritet

You have the right to receive information about the personal data we process about you. You also have the right to have inaccurate personal data about you corrected. If you have a complaint about our processing of your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer at dataskyddsbud@lu.se. You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority (the Data Protection Authority, IMY) if you believe that we are processing your personal data incorrectly.

I agree to participate in "From Policy to Practice: An analysis of IM's Gender Mainstreaming policy across various regional offices,"

Location	Signature
Date	Name clarification

