**Minutes for the FSN Network Gender Working Group Meeting**

**May 9, 2011**

The Gender Working Group met in Baltimore during the FSN Network Meeting on May 9, 2011. The minutes are organized by the key items in the agenda.

**Define/Agree on the role of FSN Network Gender Working Group vis-à-vis other existing working groups and task forces out there**

Questions arose about the extent to which other TOPS working groups (WGs) are talking about gender. The group felt it was important to interface with the other WGs and potentially designate members to attend other WG meetings. The statement was made that we should start efforts “in this room” with the larger FSN group and build internal and external capacity.

Discussion also focused on a key goal to have taskforce-approved tools. Suggestions included developing a tool for use of existing tools – systematically reviewing what exists, building on the gaps, and supporting others in how to use the existing tools.

There was a question on whether this WG would be focused on global policy or on-the-ground implementation.

**In order to help create a clear understanding within the FSN Network, define what the WG means by “Gender” and “Gender Integration” in the FFP context**

There was a lot of discussion about the wealth of information that already exists related to definitions. The group suggested compiling and synthesizing existing definitions for WG discussion/decision-making. After collating definitions, they suggested taking a first cut to extract key points related to definitions, alternatives, and what is universally accepted and then posing questions to the group related to what is needed for the FSN Network. Mara Russell volunteered to review definitions of gender once they are compiled in order to ensure that certain elements are included.

Initial discussion points:

* “Socially constructed” is an important phrase, but difficult to understand operationally; people therefore default to programming for women
* Power relations are important
* The definition is important, but we also need to know operational implications. What does gender mean for each taskforce – this would give a face to the definition
* We need to define the areas of importance to this group
* It is useful to have a list of questions that point to issues to think about
* We should address the known concerns with gender integration – we need to change mindset first
* We need to demystify gender analysis
* Staffing is an important issue related to gender
* We should highlight how to implement in existing programs – there is no specific formula

Sources for definitions included:

* FANTA
* FFP Gender Policy [Note: there will be a USAID gender policy coming soon, but the FFP policy will fit within this]
* Feed the Future
* Care (has a huge document; broke out where gender plays a role in various areas)
* CORE (just put out a definition)
* WHO
* CDC
* Interaction (new gender staff person)
* Women Thrive Worldwide (annotated bibliography)

**Next steps:**

1. Sylvia Cabus will send the Africa Bureau materials to the group
2. Key documents should be compiled, definitions extracted and key points compiled for group review, discussion and decision making.

**Select WG Chairs or Co-Chairs (for a set term, or rotating meeting-to-meeting)**

The group agreed to have chairs on a rotating basis. The goal is to hold one meeting per month. They requested more information on the responsibilities for a WG chair prior to making a commitment.

Jillian Jensen volunteered to serve as the first chair.

Discussion also revolved around integration with other WGs and the suggestion to designate Gender WG point persons to liaise with each of the other FSN Network WGs. Members interested in specific taskforces should contact Melissa Teuber. Melissa will also review the list of those who have attended previous Gender WG meetings to see if some of these participants are already active with other WGs. Mara Russell expressed interest in attending the Agriculture WG. Hadi Eltahir invited WG members to present at the CORE SMRH WG meeting on Wednesday.

**Next steps:**

1. Melissa will distribute a list of core responsibilities for a WG chair
2. Melissa will talk with other WGs about joint meetings or exchanges
3. Members are asked to let Melissa know if they are interested in a specific WG

**Create an expanded list of IMTs/Best Practices for the working group to review leading to possible FSN Network endorsement**

The group reviewed the list created at the last meeting and discussed:

* The Africa Bureau has a very comprehensive list that should provide a starting point for review. Women Thrive has an annotated list. These two lists can be reviewed together. Melissa will e-mail these to the TF.
* USAID’s GATE methodology takes time, but is a great tool; it is onerous to do rapidly
* There is a gender value chain training coming up in Nairobi – Sylvia will let everyone know if it’s useful
* Qualitative Analysis was identified as an important skill set for gender around which more skill building is needed.
  + It is important to demystify qualitative gender analysis
  + Some questions can be asked anywhere and yield good data
  + The key skill needed is conducting focus groups - developing questions and analyzeing results
  + The M&E WG may be able to help with this
  + There is a CORE curriculum on Qualitative Methods that focuses on skill building in focus groups and key informant interviews
* It would be useful to have success stories for how other organizations have integrated gender – challenge since most of the work is more recent to have a good evidence base
  + Many governments have good strategies that are unimplemented
  + We don’t know the pathway to change

**Next Steps:**

1. Melissa will e-mail the Africa Bureau and Women Thrive list of materials to the WG for review.

**Other Discussion/Suggestions:**

* Since FSN is focused on Title II countries, there is interest in inviting WG attendance of field staff. Participants were asked to let Melissa know if they have staff who would be interested. The group asked Melissa to send an e-mail outlining a request for involvement that could be forwarded to the field.
* Need short list of objectives and outputs for this group leading to a selection of roles
* Food for Peace wants to develop more specific guidance on gender. The WG was interested in contributing to this, if possible. Violet Dancheck will check to see if the WG can get involved.
* Sylvia Cabus suggested that following the recent proposal review of MYAPS in USAID it might be possible to compile best practices and pitfalls. The WG asked if USAID could hold a partners meeting to share this information.
* The small grants provided by TOPS could be used for gender. A question was asked about whether this WG could submit an application.
* There will be a presentation on Wednesday at the CORE Group meeting on GBV and MCH programs.
* Sylvia Cabus volunteered to conduct trainings on gender.
  + She stated that she can travel on her budget to do training if there is interest.
  + She did a one-day training in Bangladesh and can pass on the agenda to the WG.
  + The WG expressed interest in a TOT for WG members so that they could replicate the training.