In the previous two sections of the book, we have raised issues and highlighted some of the particular problems faced by women, especially poor women, because of their roles and responsibilities, and the constraints within which they operate. But we have also shown that, in many situations, women are finding ways to work to improve their circumstances and to challenge their position; and we have stressed the need for international agencies to be more responsive to women’s needs.

Aid agencies, who have until recently been unaware of the specific problems and possibilities facing women, have now accepted the crucial role women play and the many real needs they have. But in order to work with women effectively it is essential to have appropriate tools. It is not possible to simply take tools and methods which have been developed in the past for men and use them with women. Women’s lack of power, their often restricted ability to attend formal meetings, to act independently, or the fact that many women are not part of existing organisations mean that working with women is different and often more complicated. New methods and ways of working are required. So in this section we focus on ways in which agencies can develop their understanding of the needs of women. Staff need to be able to relate and talk to women, to learn from them and find ways to support them.
Appropriate methodologies for planning and evaluating projects and programmes for their impact on women must be developed. Only by understanding the effect projects and policies are having on women is it possible to know whether the quality of their lives is improving or worsening.

The issue of staffing is critical (and raised in the articles by Longwe, Munro, Mehta and Rubens), as is the need for an agency to have a commitment to working with women in every project and not just in 'women's projects'. It is essential to ensure that the staff employed are aware of the issues, that they do not work with imported gender concepts, and that time is taken to analyse and learn from experience. Working with women in this way is a relatively new, uncharted and at times difficult process, that inevitably involves questioning past development practices and challenging existing gender relations, within the agency, the project or the wider society. Mona Mehta explores how these issues were approached by one Oxfam office in India.

All the papers in this section stress the need to involve women at all stages of the planning and implementation of projects and programmes. This applies whether the project is deemed to be a 'women's project' or a community development, forestry, health or agricultural project. Sara Hlupekile Longwe's paper links the lack of attention that has been given to women's needs within the development process directly to a lack of awareness among those who plan and implement development projects. This has important implications for all development agencies.

Longwe, Moser, Munro and ZARD all propose different methods for finding out what women's situation is and how best to address it. They all emphasise the need to listen to women and respond to their articulated needs, and to involve them in planning and evaluation. Sara Hlupekile Longwe defines gender awareness as recognising that women have special needs, are disadvantaged as a group, and that ultimately their development requires equality with men. She provides a model for assessing how a project is affecting women. Using this five-point model, staff can judge how far they are meeting women's 'concerns', which Sara Hlupekile Longwe defines as the day to day needs for improving their existence within traditional gender roles; and how far they are addressing women's 'issues', which she defines as the need for more access to resources, and greater control over income; in fact, for equality between women and men.
Caroline Moser presents a different model, but one which also differentiates between women’s needs relating to their present workloads and responsibilities (which she calls practical needs), and those which relate to changing gender relations and giving women more control and more power (which she calls strategic needs). She uses the distinction between ‘practical’ and ‘strategic’ which was originally made by Maxine Molyneux. Maxine Molyneux defined practical interests as those which arise from women’s roles within the sexual division of labour and enable them to meet their basic needs. Strategic interests are those which challenge women’s subordinate position by, for example, legislating against discrimination. She stressed that all women’s interests — be they practical or strategic — are shaped by issues such as class and ethnicity, and can only be analysed and understood within each society.

Caroline Moser builds her model on this critical distinction between practical and strategic, but she moves away from the idea of interests to that of needs. Essentially her model focuses on the triple roles of women (reproductive, productive and community management), from which arise women’s needs, classified as practical or strategic. Using these tools she looks at the ways in which practical and strategic gender needs can be met in policy and practice, and how they have been addressed or neglected by development agencies over the past decades.

Miranda Munro takes as her starting point the fact that agencies must meet the needs of the people they work with in order to do effective development, but suggests that in practice this can be very difficult. She describes ways of approaching the community that can help to ensure that a proper partnership is established between the agency and the people concerned, and that this partnership includes the women. She follows the work of Molyneux, and Moser and Levy, and stresses that, while it is important to identify women’s practical and strategic interests, this must be done together with the women, and may in fact be a complex and sensitive process for the whole community. The agency must not impose their cultural ideas on the women or men involved, and defining interests may turn out to be a slow process of discussion. This initial process must also take into account which practical and strategic needs can actually be met within the political, social and economic conditions of the community.
To assist agencies in this difficult process, Miranda Munro emphasises the importance of improving awareness of gender relations among staff; of improving ways of consulting with women; and of improving the quality of information available for planning by using a range of different techniques, including rapid rural appraisal.

Another way of improving understanding of gender relations is to develop checklists on gender which are relevant to a particular society or country. There are many checklists available from international organisations such as USAID, ODA, Ford Foundation, and from academic sources. The one developed by the Zambia Association for Research and Development is presented in this section, as an example of a very wide ranging and helpful checklist. However, the real value of checklists is the actual process of drawing one up, in which people work out, in a participative way, the most critical factors affecting women in their particular country or situation.

Other models have been developed — and one developed by DAWN is presented by Peggy Antrobus at the end of this book — and in this section we have not attempted to provide a comprehensive overview, but simply to provide some ideas on staffing, project appraisal and planning from a gender perspective. This section closes with a short piece by Frances Rubin on evaluation and some of the problems experienced when undertaking project evaluation from a gender perspective. She highlights the need, if this process of evaluation is to be successful, to have clear and gender relevant terms of reference for the evaluation; to choose staff who understand the issues; and to ensure that women are consulted during the field visits. It is crucial to understand the gender implications in every project and throughout the programme, and to see gender issues as central to all development work.
ANALYSIS OF A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

MONA MEHTA

Background to the programme

In 1984, Oxfam West India office made the decision to recruit a Woman Project Officer for undertaking women's development work. The office representative was strongly convinced of the need for women's development and the decision was the result of lengthy discussions between some existing staff members (all male) and the head office.

The premises on which this decision was based were:

Women were not involved in the development programmes which the office supported, especially in the decision-making processes.

The male staff were unable to make any headway in changing this situation, because the social reality made any sustained and qualitative contact with women difficult. The male staff were also less interested or competent in addressing the issue.

A woman project officer, who had some development experience, would be better able to tackle gender issues.

Thus, in May 1984 I joined Oxfam as a woman project officer. At that time I had only a year's relevant work experience, and some formal training in development work, which had given me a rational basis of analysis, communication and learning skills.

The brief of encouraging and supporting women's development work was so vast and so vaguely defined that it was more a question of finding a new approach; an approach which would also fit in with Oxfam's priorities and structures. After six months of getting to know the various areas, the project partners and to some extent the 'invisible' women, the strategy adopted was to initiate and encourage women's development activities and organisation at the grassroots level in one of the poorest areas. The aim was to develop structures which enabled women to come together and,
over time, identify their own needs and priorities and consequent development activities.

During the year that this strategy was attempted, it became increasingly evident that it was not working. The major reasons for this failure, apart from my obvious inexperience, were that, though this strategy had been in line with the West India office approach to the other programmes, it was not relevant in the context of women's development. Women's position in society was different from that of men and needed a new and different strategy. Also, I was unable to spend enough time in the area of concentrated grassroots organisational work, since this was not consistent with the priorities of Oxfam's work, which were basically that of a funding organisation.

The failure, however, enabled more reflection on the issue of women's development within the context of Oxfam's work. It was felt that women's development was not just about setting up a few separate women's groups while letting most of the development work remain male-dominated and male-oriented. It was important to make women's development central to all of Oxfam's work, and to initiate qualitative rather than mere quantitative changes in the programme.

Once accepted, the work strategy and my own role as woman project officer shifted enormously, from concentrating on the project level to working at three different levels:

- at Oxfam organisational level, providing inputs on the issue;
- at the office level, constantly questioning our work from a gender perspective and finding concrete ways in which qualitative changes could be initiated;
- at the programme level, working with the project leaders, mostly male, and with the still mostly 'invisible' women.

This strategy was evolved and attempted over three years. In the following section I will attempt to analyse the basic assumptions and resultant experiences. I would, however, like to make clear that this narration is from my own perspective, and I was only one of the many actors involved, many of whom made far greater contributions to the whole process. Also, although in the above background I describe the three levels of my role, they were actually a product of a continuing evolution and at no time were so clearly
defined. Here I will only analyse the levels of the organisation and its structures. This undoubtedly presents an incomplete picture as it omits the project work which is a vital aspect of Oxfam's work and priorities. This omission is not because the people are not important but because of the limited scope of this paper. It is also felt to be important to look at one's own house and try to put it in order before other societies or groups are analysed.

**Analysis**

The assumption that women's development could best be achieved through making gender central to the issue of development, and the subsequent need to initiate qualitative changes, was based on firstly, the negative experiences of the previous development attempts, which can now be analysed as attempts to apply the strategy of male-dominated development to women's development. This was, in its very basic premises, contradictory and self-defeating. Secondly, the belief that seeing women's development as just a separate and 'added' aspect to development in general was also self-defeating, as it perpetuated marginalisation and kept women's development work separate from what were considered to be the serious aspects of development.

The fundamental basis of the strategy was to make gender central to all the work of Oxfam, and this had far-reaching implications at the Oxfam organisational level. Even if it was attempted only within the West India office, many of the changes needed the involvement of structures beyond the individual office. To generate influence at this level a separate, informal structure developed within the overall framework of the organisation. This started in 1985, with a group of five women project officers who only had in common the facts that they were all women and had project-related jobs. The first meeting made apparent the different perceptions of women's development which came from the reality of differing backgrounds and different work roles; however, there was a commonality of interest in the issue and a commitment to it. Thus, accepting the differences, a common ground could be developed. In fact, in many ways exploring the differences gave the process of search a dynamism and strength.

The group as it developed decided to shift towards becoming an issue-based group. The decision was based on two assumptions: firstly, that it was possible that men could also be 'feminist', and
secondly, that it would be strategically erroneous to make gender a sex-based issue, as it was seen as an issue concerning both men and women, and the unequal men-women relationship. Members of the group recognised that there were men in the organisation who were sensitive and gender aware, and that it was strategically important to involve them because of the reality of the hierarchical structure. Also, within the organisation there was a tendency to make women's development work sex specific, seen to be of interest to women only. This was seen as unacceptable and contradictory to the aims of the group.

The group also had to face the issue of 'Western feminism', especially given Oxfam's international structure and the support that the group received from the newly established Gender and Development Unit at the head office in the UK. This problem continues to arise from time to time, as threatened individuals try to dismiss the issue by labelling it as Western, and therefore of no relevance to the local situation. It is seen also as anti-tradition and anti-culture. The deeper assumption here is that any new ideas that challenge or question culture or traditions are taboo. Challenging gender relations, especially as they are closely linked to the household and thus central to the whole structure of society, is thought to be particularly subversive and interfering. Even in Marxist ideology, the issue of gender relations is taboo as it is seen as an imperialist weapon for diverting attention from the basic issue of the class struggle. Thus, the gender issue has to deal with antagonism from two levels, culture and ideology. It seems to be easier for many people to dismiss the issue as 'Western', 'bourgeois' and the work of a few urban, non-traditional women.

The structure of the group, named Action for Gender Relations Asia (AGRA), was outside the management hierarchy, and it emphasised the involvement of all levels of staff; this in itself also had implications for the organisation and the work, because it gave an example of the possible alternative ways of working for change within the organisation; it opened up issues of hierarchy within the organisation; and it brought up the question of the implication of gender issues within the organisation itself, and in the personal lives of the staff (especially in relation to their families).

It is fairly clear that AGRA has been successful in making gender relations an issue which all staff are aware of, though this does not necessarily imply that all staff are positive about the issue. Gender
awareness-raising is a process of changing attitudes and, while it is possible to enable people to confront their own biases and attitudes, it is not possible to change these if the individuals do not wish to do so. This posed a number of problems. In the short term, any movement towards a more gender sensitive work strategy would continue to face obstacles put up by staff who do not believe in gender equality. This is very much a question that the present group has to face and work with. In the longer term, gender awareness and commitment to gender equality would be a necessary criteria for staff recruitment.

AGRA, though to an extent able to make gender an important issue in project work, was initially more involved with the organisation and its staff. An issue faced by many staff is the contradiction between their new gender awareness and the continuing reality of their own social surroundings. Many staff members find their attempts to practise gender equality a frustrating experience, especially where there is resistance from within their own families. Informal staff partners' forums have been initiated to spread awareness of gender and other development issues among the families; to foster an increased sharing between partners; and to create support structures among the staff. The experience of the forums has been extremely rewarding, though the process has not been easy. It is difficult to bring together people who come from very varied backgrounds and cultures and share only the fact that they are partners of staff. It is an experience, however, which is spreading among other offices and helping to overcome many other issues besides gender.

The impact of practical gender work strategies on development is still quite limited; this is partly due to the nature of the organisational structure and partly due to the difficulty of coming up with clear strategies or answers. Here it is very important to mention one of the major limitations of AGRA — only Oxfam staff are represented; there are no partners from among the people we work with. This gap automatically limits the contributions to practical change strategies at project level.

Several case studies of projects have been undertaken, with a view to understanding the processes experienced by project partners in addressing the issue. The studies involve both projects which have had a positive impact on women and those which have not. These studies are still continuing and so it is not possible to see
the end result. The experience to date shows that suitable criteria for such studies need to be developed and this requires staff time and involvement. The organisation has to create the time for staff to undertake such studies. This is not easy in an organisation like Oxfam which generally places a lot of emphasis on action.

This emphasis on action has long-term implications for the development of further awareness, and the resultant changes in work strategies on gender issues. The studies may point to the need for major changes in the criteria for supporting projects, and possibly a shift, for quite some time, away from funding action programmes towards more supportive work, such as providing training and other inputs. This would, of course, require major policy decisions in the organisation, but at some point it may become essential if our work is to have any major impact.

**Partners, group leaders and women**

The West India office worked mainly with groups of poor and exploited people and more or less directly. The shift in strategy required that, instead of forming similar and separate groups of women as attempted earlier, the focus should be on working with already existing partner groups in order to influence them to undertake gender issues. This was easier said than done. Some of the contradictions of the strategy and subsequent experience are presented.

Many of the leaders personally found the issue extremely threatening and against their beliefs. However, since they saw the issue as a pressure coming from a funding agency, they made some token efforts, such as including a couple of women on the committee, etc. Some others were more open but, being essentially paternalistic leaders, they took this as an opportunity to extend their power. They came up with proposals for very traditional development activities for women, which would lead to women working, but under the control of male leaders. A few progressive young leaders took up the challenge of making gender inequality an issue in their work. They, however, still had to face the patriarchal structures in their own communities and groups. A majority of them thus followed the strategy of appointing women as community organisers to undertake women's development, while they provided support through their work with the men.

This strategy, though possibly the most feasible in the existing
circumstances, had inherent problems. It assumed that the women workers, simply by virtue of being women, were interested and competent to organise women. In reality a number of the women were not interested in development issues at all and many were too young to have adequate experiences to enable commitment. The few who were interested started off with lesser awareness than their male colleagues, since very few women have any experience of development. This created a hierarchy in the group, with the male workers developing a paternalistic attitude towards the women and reinforcing the traditional roles in the community. Only a handful of women and men were able to challenge this set-up. If this strategy is followed the risk of paternalistic structures developing is very high. Conscious realisation of the danger of paternalism, careful selection of women workers, and adequate emphasis on training for both the women and the men would minimise this risk.

Another problem of the strategy was that most of the existing activities undertaken by the groups were in some ways related to economic goals, and this emphasis was further aggravated by the drought and consequent relief activities. In contrast, the approach to the organisation of women was very different, as various experiences had highlighted the problems of income generating projects for women; the emphasis was thus on conscientisation and organisation, so that women could then independently determine their priorities and consequent activities. The two approaches obviously did not match, and group leaders who were interested only in the first approach found it difficult to accept the second. Some of the Oxfam staff, too, found it difficult to accept this approach as it immediately showed up the contradictions in other programmes and implied the need to question all of our work in a new light. The contradictions still remain and will remain until Oxfam honestly undertakes major rethinking on its approach and priorities and the consequent implications for change in the nature of programmes supported. In the few situations where groups accepted the strategy, albeit limitedly, there have been positive developments and women's groups have evolved fairly independently.

The experience of organising women is also of high value. An issue that has repeatedly come up as being crucial in determining the success or failure of an organisation has been the class and ethnic differences between women. In many cases a group did not
really form because poorer women had differing interests but could not articulate them, and so withdrew from the group. This culture of silence has also had an impact on the organisational process. It is not easy for women to put aside the views of men and develop their own views, based on their own experiences. They find themselves having to face the issues of class, race, and gender oppression; and their interests have to be articulated in the concrete reality of the constant struggle for survival.

**Conclusion**

The project analysed above has been a constantly evolving one, and more of a search for answers than an answer in itself. It has had some positive effects in terms of the impact on Oxfam’s own organisational structure and work. It has also started a process of change and a search for ways in which women can be equally involved in the development process, and this with a number of women who until now have been treated as mere objects to be developed.

In conclusion, I would like to say that all of us who have been involved in this project started out with little more than goodwill and a commitment to gender equality. It is hoped that our experiences have in some way contributed to the understanding of gender issues and that it will help the work undertaken to combat injustice, inequality and oppression.

* Mona Mehta is a development activist and was until recently a member of the Oxfam staff in India. She was a founder member and coordinator of AGRA. She has studied at the Institute of Social Studies in Le Hague, and has an interest in the problems of tribal people in Gujerat. *
GENDER AWARENESS: THE MISSING ELEMENT IN THE THIRD WORLD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

SARA HLUPEKILE LONGWE

Although development agencies and Third World governments are presently in the process of trying to formulate and implement new policies on women’s development, success with these policies depends on increased gender awareness amongst development personnel. This paper looks at what gender awareness means in looking at women’s development in the Third World, and defines this awareness in terms of an ability to recognise women’s issues at every stage of the development project cycle.

The need for gender awareness

The general lack of attention to women’s needs within the development process stems from a general lack of gender awareness amongst those who plan and implement development projects. The project target group is often treated as an undifferentiated group of ‘people’ without recognising the special needs of women; more likely, and worse, a male biased vocabulary is used to describe the target group which becomes ‘men’ rather than ‘people’: in this way the women of the target group actually disappear from sight — and from thought. Typically a project document describes the Third World farmer as ‘he’; but in actuality, the Third World farmer is usually a woman.

Development in the Third World is not merely about increased productivity and welfare, although these things are important. Development is also about meeting the needs of those that are most in need, and about increased participation and equality. Development is therefore also concerned with enabling people to take charge of their own lives, and escape from the poverty which arises not from lack of productivity but rather from oppression and exploitation. The typical rural woman in the Third World is a hardworking producer of food who remains, with her children, short of food and malnourished: the food is consumed by the
husband rather than the wife; by men rather than women and children; by landlords rather than tenants; by townspeople rather than rural people; by rich consumers rather than poor producers.

In this situation, the problem in women's development is not primarily concerned with enabling women to be more productive, more efficient, or to use their labour more effectively. These things may be important, especially in special situations. But the central issue of women's development is women's empowerment, to enable women to take an equal place with men, and to participate equally in the development process in order to achieve control over the factors of production on an equal basis with men.

There are three essential elements in gender awareness: first the recognition that women have different and special needs; second that they are a disadvantaged group, relative to men, in terms of their level of welfare and access to and control over the factors of production; third that women's development entails working towards increased equality and empowerment for women, relative to men.

Adherence to a policy on women's development may be assisted by referring to a standard checklist of questions to be asked at every stage of the project cycle. But a sympathetic and imaginative interpretation of policy for all situations will depend on a good understanding of women's development, a commitment to it, and the ability to raise questions of one's own.

Criteria for recognising women's issues

Gender awareness means being able to recognise women's issues. This section of the paper introduces five criteria which I have found useful as a basis for identifying women's issues, and therefore as an analytical framework for understanding women's development.

If the central issue in women's development is equality with men, then there is a need to spell out the different forms and levels of equality that constitute development. Much of the development literature on this subject is concerned with defining equality according to the conventional sectors of the economy and society: equality in education, employment, under the law, and so on. The difficulty with this system of analytical division is that it provides a focus on areas of social life, rather than the role of increased equality in the development process. I shall therefore introduce five different levels of equality as the basis for criteria to assess the level of women's development in any area of social or economic life.
WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

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It is suggested that these levels of equality are in hierarchical relationship, so that equality of control is more important for women's development than equality of welfare. It is also suggested that the higher levels of equality are automatically higher levels of development and empowerment.

Any social situation becomes a women's issue when one of the above five levels of equality is called into question; it becomes a more serious issue when it is concerned with the higher levels, and a more basic issue when it is concerned with the lower levels.

Let us now look at each of these five levels in a little more detail to see what is entailed at each level:

i. Welfare:
The level of material welfare of women, relative to men, in such matters as food supply, income and medical care. This level of equality is not concerned with whether women are themselves the active creators and producers of their material needs: such involvement would suggest a higher degree of empowerment and development.

ii. Access:
Women's access to the factors of production on an equal basis with men: equal access to land, labour, credit, training, marketing facilities and all publicly available services and benefits. Here equality of access is obtained by ensuring the principle of equality of opportunity, which typically entails the reform of the law and administrative practice to remove all forms of discrimination against women.

iii. Conscientisation:
The understanding of the difference between sex roles and gender roles, and that the latter are cultural and can be changed;
conscientisation also involves a belief that the sexual division of labour should be fair and agreeable to both sides, and not involve the economic or political domination of one sex by the other. Belief in sexual equality lies at the basis of gender awareness, and provides the basis for collective participation in the process of women’s development.

iv. Participation:
Women’s equal participation in the decision making process, policy making, planning and administration. It is a particularly important aspect of development projects, where participation means involvement in needs assessment, project formulation, implementation and evaluation. Equality of participation means involving the women of the community affected by the decisions taken, and involving them in the same proportion in decision making as their proportion in the community at large.

v. Control:
A utilisation of the participation of women in the decision-making process through conscientisation and mobilisation, to achieve equality of control over the factors of production, and the distribution of benefits. Equality of control means a balance of control between men and women, so that neither side is put into a position of dominance.

A development project addresses women’s development when it addresses a women’s issue. The term ‘women’s issue’ is here defined differently from a ‘women’s concern’. ‘Women’s concern’ is here used to describe matters relating to women’s sex roles, or their traditional and subordinate sex-stereotyped gender roles. By contrast, a ‘women’s issue’ is one which relates to equality with men in any social or economic role, and involves any of the above five levels of equality. A main purpose, therefore, of the five criteria is to show whether one is dealing with ‘women’s issues’ or ‘women’s concerns’.

In terms of the above criteria, poverty relates to basic welfare, where family income falls below the level necessary to meet basic needs and subsistence. There is nothing in this definition of poverty which necessarily means that poverty is a ‘women’s issue’. Poverty is, first and foremost, a ‘general concern’ which affects both men
Gender awareness: the missing element

and women. It becomes more of a ‘women’s concern’ where women have the main responsibility of producing the food crop, and where women have the responsibility of ensuring the welfare of children. Poverty becomes a ‘women’s issue’ where food and income is not fairly distributed between men and women, and where women do not receive a fair share of the fruits of their labour.

The failure of development projects in the Third World to address women’s development may be understood in terms of the above five criteria. From the 1970s there was the criticism that women were treated as invisible, and women’s needs were not addressed at all. With the increasing attempt to address women’s development, the common criticism is that the so-called women’s development projects are addressing ‘women’s concerns’, rather than the issues of inequality, and therefore the project intervention leaves the overall structure of inequality untouched. However, a small number of current projects are now trying to address real women’s development; but usually such projects work only at the lower levels of welfare and access to the factors of production, and are not facing up to women’s need for more control over their social and economic lives.

Assessing women’s needs

Project formulation ought to begin with an investigation into the needs of the target group, both by considering the needs which are implicit in their situation, and by asking them about their felt needs and priorities. The first and perhaps most important reason why ‘women’s issues’ are overlooked is that usually no needs assessment is carried out.

Typically a project is formulated by a consultant or programme officer who has no detailed or specific information on the situation or particular needs of the target group or affected community, but who identifies project objectives on the basis of knowledge of the overall national situation and development priorities and objectives. Typically, this background knowledge includes little or no information on the general situation of women in the country, or the main issues which need to be addressed in women’s development.

The stage therefore is set for the formulation of a project which overlooks the position of women entirely. In so doing, a project is likely to have a negative effect on women’s development, especially by increasing the burden of labour upon women, whilst allowing
project benefits to be controlled by men. Such a project may well be set for failure, since many women will quietly opt out of project activities as they see the extra burdens put upon them, and the lack of benefit to themselves and their children.

My argument is that the needs of women in a target group and affected community must be assessed from the start of a project at all five levels: welfare, access, conscientisation, participation and control, with a view to suggesting how the project can make a meaningful contribution to women's development at each of these levels. It is also necessary to identify priority target groups, such as female heads of household or landless widows, who are more in need of development assistance, and who are more at risk if the project intervention does not take account of their special position and needs.

Women's issues in project identification
The usual situation is that women are completely overlooked when identifying the project objectives. If the agency responsible for formulating the project is asked why there is nothing about women's development in the project document, a typical answer is that 'This project is not concerned with women, it is a forestry project', or simply 'This is not a women's project'.

There is still a common perception amongst development personnel that women's development is confined to separate and special women's projects, and that these separate projects should be concerned with income generating activities, especially in women's clubs and in the sex-stereotyped activities of knitting, sewing and cooking. However, in terms of the five criteria introduced in this paper these 'women's club projects' cannot be seen as a contribution to women's development, but rather as a subtraction from it.

Women's issues in project design
Since the women's development component is typically missing at the stages of needs assessment and project identification, it follows that there is usually little to be found at the final stage of project formulation — project design.

Women's issues in project implementation
For the few projects whose design is seriously concerned with making a contribution to women's development, it is sad to see this
concern evaporate at the stage of implementation. One reason for this is that the members of the implementing team are themselves not gender aware, and not committed to the process of women's development, and fall easy prey to the various forms of bureaucratic resistance which I have described elsewhere (Longwe, 1989). It is common to hear the excuse that 'we are trying to do things which are against the local custom, and nobody seems interested, so why should we bother?' At the stage of project implementation the most important level of the criteria is conscientisation — amongst the implementing team!

It is important to note that the five criteria see women's development as a process of women's increased access, participation and control, and not merely as the outcome of increased welfare, income, production and skills. The development project is part of this process, and must remain true to it. Therefore the strategies and methods of implementation must exemplify the process of women's empowerment in such matters as the proportion of women in the team concerned with implementation, the level of gender awareness within the team, the proportion of female members of the target group who are members of the project management committee, equal conditions of employment for men and women, and so on. Conversely, a male dominated and patriarchal style of project administration contains implicit lessons and messages which negate project objectives concerned with women's development.

**Women's issues in project evaluation**

It follows from the newness of policy formulation on women's development, as well as the general shortage of professional experience in this area, that there is a general lack of know-how on how to evaluate a project's contribution towards women's development. The lack of activity in this area is compounded by the confusion of different methodologies in project evaluation, as well as the domination of the field by cost benefit analysis — a method which has little relevance to the field of women's development. Cost benefit analysis is concerned with measuring project outputs, whereas the evaluation of a women's development project must be concerned with assessing whether the social and political processes of empowerment are taking place. The evaluation of women's development must take place at each stage of the project cycle.
Women's issues in a development programme

In some ways the individual development project provides too narrow a focus on women's development. I will therefore look briefly at some of the programme level concerns which need to be considered.

Typically the individual development project is part of an overall programme of projects being implemented by a government agency. Similarly a development agency has a programme of many projects which are supported in any one country — the so-called Country Programme. Such a programme is guided by overall policies, and has its own priorities and themes. The question here, therefore, is whether women's development is a strong element within the overall theme, or is seen as a side issue.

The Women's Development Criteria provide the potential basis for evaluating a whole programme of projects in terms of their contribution towards women's development. For instance, an appraisal of the women's development component within a programme may be done by using the five criteria to look at the level of equality addressed in the objectives of each individual project within the programme. The Country Programme of any development agency in any Third World country is likely to be very underdeveloped in that there are many projects which reveal no attempt to deal with women's development, and those that do mostly address the lower levels of welfare and access.

It is important for the programme as a whole to take account of the overall situation of women in the Third World country, to take account of the policies on women's development of the Third World country, and to work out feasible starting points for introducing into the programme more projects which address women's development.

Such considerations might suggest quite different sorts of projects from anything which arises from attempting to bolster the women's development component in general development projects. For instance, if the low level of gender awareness amongst development planners and implementers is an obstacle to progress, then a women's development project might take the form of providing training workshops for development personnel within the government implementing agencies. Similarly, a contribution towards women's development may be made by assisting with the improvement of the institutional capacity of the government.
bureaucracy to plan, implement and evaluate projects addressing women’s development. Some governments have set up Women in Development (WID) units within the government bureaucracy; whereas these units may remain ineffectual and sidelined if they are starved of equipment and trained personnel, they do have the potential to become effective and influential if they become the focus for development aid and technical assistance.

However, it may be difficult for the individual multilateral or bilateral agencies to tailor a Country Programme around particular development priorities, and a Country Programme is always in danger of being a mere collection of projects without much in the way of inter-connections or common theme. The building of a balanced and purposeful theme concerned with women’s development suggests close collaboration with other development personnel working in this area, not only within different government ministries and implementing agencies, but also within the different development agencies which are operating in the particular Third World country. It is this sort of close collaboration which will enable the local office of the development agency to achieve a better Third World perspective on women’s development, and make a more appropriate and meaningful contribution to this area of great need, but small progress.

References


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While the important role that women play in Third World development processes is now widely recognised, awareness of the issue of 'gender and development' has not necessarily resulted in its translation into planning practice. Indeed for many practitioners involved in different aspects of social and economic development planning, the lack of adequate operational frameworks has been particularly problematic. The purpose of this article is to contribute toward the resolution of this problem. It describes the development of a planning approach which, in taking account of the fact that women and men play different roles in Third World societies and therefore often have different needs, provides both the conceptual framework and the methodology for incorporating gender into planning.

Gender planning

Gender planning is based on the understanding that because men and women play different roles in society, they often have different needs. Therefore when identifying and implementing planning needs it is important to disaggregate households and families within communities on the basis of gender, identifying men and women, boys and girls.

The triple role of women

In most low-income households, 'women's work' includes not only reproductive work (the childbearing and rearing responsibilities) required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force but also productive work, often as secondary income earners. In addition, women are involved in community managing work undertaken at a local community level in both urban and rural contexts.

Because the triple role of women is not recognised, the fact that
women, unlike men, are severely constrained by the burden of simultaneously balancing these roles of reproductive, productive, and community managing work is ignored. In addition, only productive work is recognised as work. Reproductive and community managing work are both seen as 'natural' and so are not valued. This has serious consequences for women. It means that most, if not all, of the work that they do is made invisible and fails to be rewarded. In contrast, most of men's work is valued, either directly through paid remuneration, or indirectly through status and political power.

**Identifying practical and strategic gender needs**

When planners are blind to the triple role of women, and to the fact that women's needs are not always the same as men's, they fail to see the necessity of relating planning to women's specific requirements. But if planning is to succeed it has to be gender aware. It has to develop the capacity to differentiate not only on the basis of income, now commonly accepted, but also on the basis of gender. It is important to emphasise that the rationale for gender planning does not ignore other important issues such as race, ethnicity and class, but focuses specifically on gender precisely because this tends to be subsumed within class in so much policy and planning.

**Gender needs**

Planning for low-income women in the Third World must be based on their interests, in other words their prioritised concerns. In the process of identification of interests it is useful to differentiate between 'women's interests', strategic gender interests, and practical gender interests, following the model developed by Maxine Molyneux (1985).

By identifying the different interests women have it is possible then to translate them into planning needs, in other words the means by which their concerns may be satisfied.

Within the planning context, women's needs vary widely, determined not only by the specific socio-economic context, but also by the particular class, ethnic and religious structures of individual societies. The distinction between strategic and practical gender interests is of critical importance, as is the distinction between strategic and practical gender needs.
Strategic gender needs

Strategic gender needs are those needs which arise from the analysis of women’s subordination to men. The strategic gender needs identified to overcome women’s subordination will vary depending on the particular cultural and socio-political context. Strategic gender needs may include all or some of the following: ‘the abolition of the sexual division of labour; the alleviation of the burden of domestic labour and child care; the removal of institutionalised forms of discrimination such as rights to own land or property, or access to credit; the establishment of political equality; freedom of choice over childbearing; and the adoption of adequate measures against male violence and control over women’ (Molyneux, 1985, p.233).

Practical gender needs

In contrast, practical gender needs are those drawn from the concrete conditions women experience, in their position within the gender division of labour, and come out of their practical gender interests for human survival. Practical gender needs therefore are usually a response to an immediate perceived necessity which is identified by women within a specific context. As Molyneux has written, ‘they do not generally entail a strategic goal such as women’s emancipation or gender equality ... nor do they challenge the prevailing forms of subordination even though they arise directly out of them’ (Molyneux, 1985, p.233).

Policy approaches to low-income Third World women and gender planning

Throughout the Third World, particularly in the past decade, there has been a proliferation of policies, programmes and projects designed to assist low-income women. Identification of the extent to which such planned interventions have been appropriate to the gender needs of women requires an examination of the conceptual rationale underlying different policy approaches from a gender planning perspective. Each approach can be evaluated in terms of which of women’s triple roles it recognises, and which practical or strategic gender needs it meets. Such analysis illustrates the utility of the methodological tools of gender planning evaluation.

Until recently there has been little systematic classification or categorisation of the various policy initiatives to help low-income
women. Concern for their needs coincided historically with a recognition of their important role in development. Since the 1950s a diversity of interventions has been formulated, not in isolation, but reflecting changes in macro-level economic and social policy approaches to Third World development. Thus the shift in policy approach towards women, from ‘welfare’, to ‘equity’ to ‘anti-poverty’, as categorised by Buvinic (1983), to the two other approaches categorised here as ‘efficiency’ and ‘empowerment’, has mirrored general shifts in Third World development policies, from modernisation policies of accelerated growth, through basic needs strategies associated with redistribution, to the more recent compensatory measures associated with structural adjustment policies.

While the different policy approaches are described chronologically, it is recognised that this presents an oversimplification of reality. In practice many of the policies have appeared more or less simultaneously. Agencies have not necessarily followed any ordered logic in changing their approach, most frequently jumping from welfare to efficiency without consideration of the other approaches. Different policies have particular appeal to different types of institutions.

The welfare approach

It was First World welfare programmes, specifically targeted at ‘vulnerable groups’, which were among the first to identify women as the main beneficiaries. As Buvinic has noted, these were the emergency relief programmes widely initiated in Europe after the end of World War II, accompanying the economic assistance measures intended to ensure reconstruction. Relief aid was provided directly to low-income women, who, in their roles as wives and mothers, were seen as those primarily concerned with their family’s welfare. This relief distribution was undertaken by international private relief agencies, and relied on the unpaid work of middle-class women volunteers for effective and cheap implementation (Buvinic, 1986).

The creation of two parallel approaches to development assistance — on the one hand financial aid for economic growth, on the other hand relief aid for socially ‘vulnerable’ groups — was then replicated in development policy for Third World countries.

The welfare approach assumes first, that women are passive
recipients of development, rather than participants in the development process. Second, that motherhood is the most important role for women. Third, that child rearing is the most effective role for women in all aspects of economic development. While this approach sees itself as 'family centred' in orientation, it focuses entirely on women in their reproductive role, and assumes men's role to be productive. The main method of implementation is through 'top-down' handouts of free goods and services. When training is included it is for those skills deemed appropriate for non-working housewives and mothers.

Although welfare programmes for women have widened their scope considerably over the past decades, the concern remains to meet women's practical gender needs in their reproductive role. They identify women themselves rather than lack of resources as the problem, and place the solution to family welfare in women's hands, without questioning their 'natural' role. Although the top-down nature of so many welfare programmes tends to create dependency rather than to assist women to become more independent, they remain very popular precisely because they are politically safe, not questioning the traditionally accepted role of women. Such assumptions tend to result in the exclusion of women from development programmes operated by the mainstream development agencies that provide a significant proportion of development funds (Germaine, 1977). The welfare approach is not concerned with meeting women’s strategic gender needs in reproduction, one of the most important of which is the right for women to have control over their own bodies.

By the 1970s dissatisfaction with the welfare approach was widespread, with criticism coming from groups representing three very different positions. First, in the United States, a group of mainly female professionals and researchers were concerned with the increasing evidence that Third World development projects were negatively affecting women. Second, development economists and planners were concerned with the failure of modernisation theory in the Third World. Third, the United Nations designated a Women's Decade, starting in 1976. This was a result of the 1975 International Women's Year Conference, which formally 'put women on the agenda' and provided legitimacy for the proliferation of a wide diversity of Third World women's organisations.

During the 1970s criticisms of such groups resulted in the
development of a number of alternative approaches to women, namely equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment.

The equity approach

By the 1970s studies showed that although women were often the predominant contributors to the basic productivity of their communities, particularly in agriculture, their economic contribution was not referred to in national statistics or in development projects (Boserup, 1970). At the same time new modernisation projects, with innovative agricultural methods and sophisticated technologies, were negatively affecting women, displacing them from their traditional productive functions, and diminishing the income, status and power that they had in traditional relations. Findings indicated that neocolonialism as much as colonialism was contributing to the decline in women's status in developing countries.

On the basis of evidence such as this, the Women in Development (WID) group in the United States challenged the prevailing assumption that modernisation was equated with increasing gender equality. They asserted that capitalist development models imposed on much of the Third World had exacerbated inequalities between men and women. They recognised that women are active participants in the development process, who provide a critical, if often unacknowledged, contribution to economic growth. They started from the basic assumption that economic strategies have frequently had a negative impact on women, and acknowledged that they must be 'brought into' the development process through access to employment and the market place; they therefore recognised women's practical gender need to earn a livelihood. However, this WID approach was also concerned with fundamental issues of equality in both public and private spheres of life and across socio-economic groups. It identified the origins of women's subordination not only in the context of the family, but also in relationships between men and women in the market place, and hence it placed considerable emphasis on economic independence as being synonymous with equity.

In focusing particularly on reducing inequality between men and women, especially in the gender division of labour, the equity approach meets an important strategic gender need. Equity programmes are identified as uniting notions of development and
equality. The underlying logic is that women beneficiaries have lost ground to men in the development process. Therefore, in a process of redistribution, men have to share in a manner that entails women from all socio-economic classes gaining and men from all socio-economic classes losing, through positive discrimination policies if necessary.

Equity programmes encountered problems from the outset. Methodologically, the lack of a single indicator of social status or progress of women and of baseline information about women's economic, social, and political status meant that there were no standards against which 'success' could be measured (USAID, 1978). Politically, the majority of development agencies were hostile to equity programmes precisely because of their intention to meet strategic gender needs, whose very success depended on an implicit redistribution of power. From the perspective of the aid agency this was identified as unacceptable interference with the country's traditions.

Similar antipathy was felt by many Third World governments who believed in the irrelevance of Western-exported feminism to Third World women. Many Third World activists felt that to take 'feminism to a woman who has no water, no food and no home is to talk nonsense' (Bunch, 1980, p.27) and labelled Third World socialists and feminists as bourgeois imperialist sympathisers.

In a climate of widespread antagonism to many of its underlying principles from development agencies and Third World governments alike, the equity approach has been effectively dropped by the majority of implementing agencies. However, the official endorsement of equity as one of the themes of the Women's Decade has ensured that it continues to provide an important framework for those working within governments to improve the status of women through top-down legislation, which has tended to meet potential strategic gender needs rather than actual needs.

The anti-poverty approach
The anti-poverty approach to women can be identified as the second WID approach, in which economic inequality between women and men is linked not to subordination, but to poverty, with the emphasis thus shifting from reducing inequality between men and women, to reducing income inequality. Here women's issues are separated from equity issues and linked with the particular
concern for the majority of Third World women as the ‘poorest of the poor’. Buvinic (1983) has argued that this is a toned-down version of the equity approach, arising out of the reluctance of development agencies to interfere with the manner in which gender relations are constructed in a given society.

The anti-poverty policy approach to women focuses mainly on their productive role on the basis that poverty alleviation and the promotion of balanced economic growth requires the increased productivity of women in low-income households. Underlying this approach is the assumption that the origins of women’s poverty and inequality with men are attributable to their lack of access to private ownership of land and capital, and to sexual discrimination in the labour market. Consequently, it aims to increase the employment and income generating options of low-income women through better access to productive resources. There is also an increasing recognition that education and employment programmes could simultaneously increase women’s economic contribution and reduce fertility.

While income generating projects for low-income women have proliferated since the 1970s, they have tended to remain small in scale, to be developed by non-governmental organisations (most frequently all-women in composition), and to be assisted by grants, rather than loans, from international and bilateral agencies. Most frequently they aim to increase productivity in activities traditionally undertaken by women, rather than to introduce them to new areas of work.

In the design of projects, fundamental conditions to ensure viability are often ignored, including access to easily available raw materials, guaranteed markets and small-scale production capacity (Schmitz, 1979; Moser, 1984). Despite widespread recognition of the limitations of the informal sector’s ability to generate employment and growth in an independent or evolutionary manner, income generating projects for women continue to be designed as though small-scale enterprises have the capacity for autonomous growth (Moser, 1984; Schmitz, 1982).

Anti-poverty income generating projects may provide employment for women, and thereby meet practical gender needs to augment their income. But unless employment leads to greater autonomy, it does not meet strategic gender needs. In addition, the predominant focus on women’s productive role means that their
reproductive role is often ignored. Income generating projects which assume that women have free time often only succeed by extending their working day and increasing their triple burden. Unless an income generating project also alleviates the burden of women’s domestic labour and childcare, through, for instance, the provision of adequate, socialised childcare, it may fail even to meet the practical gender need to earn an income.

The efficiency approach
While the shift from equity to anti-poverty has been well documented, the identification of WID as efficiency has passed almost unnoticed. Yet the efficiency approach is now the pre-dominant approach for those working within a WID framework — indeed, for many it may always have been so. In the efficiency approach, the emphasis has shifted away from women and towards development, on the assumption that increased economic participation for Third World women is automatically linked with increased equity. This has allowed organisations such as USAID, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to propose that an increase in women’s economic participation in development links efficiency and equity together.

The assumption that economic participation increases women’s status and is associated with equity has been widely criticised. The identification of such problems as lack of education and under-productive technologies as the predominant constraints affecting women’s participation has also been criticised. While the so-called development industry has realised that women are essential to the success of the total development effort, it does not necessarily follow that development improves conditions for women.

This shift towards efficiency coincided with a marked deterioration in the world economy. This occurred from the mid-1970s onward and particularly in Latin America and Africa, where the problems of recession were compounded by falling export prices, protectionism and mounting debt. To alleviate the situation, economic stabilisation and adjustment policies designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have been implemented by an increasing number of national governments. These policies, through both demand management and supply expansion, lead to the re-allocation of resources to enable the restoration of a balance-of-payments equilibrium, an increase in
exports, and a restoration in growth rates.

With increased efficiency and productivity as two of the main objectives of structural adjustment policies, it is no coincidence that efficiency is the policy approach towards women which is currently gaining popularity among international aid agencies and national governments alike. In reality this approach often simply means a shifting of costs from the paid to the unpaid economy, particularly through the use of women’s unpaid time. Until recently, structural adjustment has been seen as an economic issue, and evaluated in economic terms (Jolly, 1987). Although documentation regarding its social costs is still unsystematic, it does reveal a serious deterioration in living conditions of low-income populations resulting from a decline in income levels. Within the household a decline in consumption often affects women more than men. The capacity of the household to shoulder the burden of adjustment can have detrimental effects in terms of human relationships, expressed in increased domestic violence, mental health disorders and increasing numbers of women-headed households resulting from the breakdown in nuclear family structures (UNICEF, nd).

The efficiency approach relies heavily on the elasticity of women’s labour in both their reproductive and community managing roles, and only meets practical gender needs at the cost of longer working hours and increased unpaid work. In most cases this approach not only fails to meet any strategic gender needs but also, because of the reductions in resource allocations, results in a serious reduction of the extent to which practical gender needs are met.

The empowerment approach

The fifth policy approach to women is the empowerment approach; not yet widely recognised as an ‘approach’, although its origins are by no means recent. The empowerment approach differs from the equity approach not only in its origins, but also in the causes, dynamics and structures of women’s oppression which it identifies, and in terms of the strategies it proposes to change the position of Third World women.

The origins of the empowerment approach are derived primarily from the emergent feminist writings and grassroots organisation experience of Third World women. It recognises that feminism is not simply a recent Western, urban, middle-class import. As Jayawardena (1986) has written, the women’s movement was not
imposed on women by the United Nations or Western feminists, but has an independent history. Since the late 19th century, Third World feminism has been an important force for change, but with women’s participation more often in nationalist and patriotic struggles, working-class agitation and peasant rebellions than in the formation of autonomous women’s organisations. Although the empowerment approach acknowledges inequalities between men and women, and the origins of women’s subordination in the family, it also emphasises the fact that women experience oppression differently according to their race, class, colonial history and current position in the international economic order. It maintains that women have to challenge oppressive structures and situations simultaneously at different levels.

The empowerment approach questions some of the fundamental assumptions concerning the inter-relationship between power and development that underlie previous approaches. While it acknowledges the importance for women of increasing their power, it seeks to identify power less in terms of domination over others (with its implicit assumption that a gain for women implies a loss for men), and more in terms of the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over crucial material and non-material resources. It places far less emphasis than the equity approach on increasing women’s status relative to men, but seeks to empower women through the redistribution of power within, as well as between, societies. It also questions two underlying assumptions in the equity approach; first, that development necessarily helps all men, and second, that women want to be integrated into the mainstream of Western-designed development, in which they have no choice in defining the kind of society they want (UNAPCWD, 1979).

A powerful articulation of the empowerment approach has been made by the Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). The new era envisaged by DAWN includes national liberation and also the transformation of the structures of subordination that have been so inimical to women. Changes in law, civil codes, systems of property rights, control over women’s bodies, labour codes and the social and legal institutions that underwrite male control and privilege are essential if women are to
attain justice in society. These strategic gender needs are similar to those identified by the equity approach. It is in the means of achieving such needs that the empowerment approach differs most fundamentally from previous approaches. Recognition of the limitations of top-down government legislation actually to meet strategic gender needs has led adherents of the empowerment approach to acknowledge that their strategies will not be implemented without the sustained and systematic efforts by women’s organisations and like-minded groups. They highlight the need for political mobilisation, consciousness raising and popular education to bring about change.

The very limited success of the equity approach to confront directly the nature of women’s subordination through legislative changes has led the empowerment approach to avoid direct confrontation, and to utilise practical gender needs as the basis on which to build a secure support base, and a means through which more strategic needs may be reached.

For example, in the Philippines, Gabriela (an alliance of local and national women’s organisations) ran a project combining women’s traditional task of sewing tapestry with the discussion of women’s legal rights and the constitution. A nationwide educational ‘tapestry-making drive’ enabled the discussion of rights in communities, factories and schools, with the end product, a ‘Tapestry of Women’s Rights’, seen to be a liberating instrument (Gomez, 1986).

A feminist group in Bombay, India, the ‘Forum Against Oppression of Women’, first started campaigning in 1979 on such issues as rape and bride burning. However, with 55 per cent of the low-income population living in squatter settlements, the Forum soon realised that housing was a much greater priority for local women, and, consequently, soon shifted its focus to this issue. In a context where women by tradition had no access to housing in their own right, homelessness, through breakdown of marriage or domestic violence, was an acute problem, and the provision of women’s hostels a critical practical gender need. Mobilisation around homelessness, however, also raised consciousness of patriarchal bias in inheritance legislation as well as in the interpretation of housing rights. In seeking to broaden the problem from a ‘women’s concern’ and raise men’s awareness, the Forum has become part of a nationwide alliance of non-governmental organisations, lobbying for a National Housing Charter. Through
this alliance, the Forum has ensured that women's strategic gender needs relating to housing rights have been placed on the mainstream political agenda, and not remained simply the concern of women. As highlighted by DAWN, 'empowering ourselves through organisation' has been a slow global process, accelerating during and since the Women's Decade, in which diverse women's organisations, movements, networks and alliances have developed. These cover a multitude of issues and purposes, with common interests ranging from disarmament at the international level, to mobilisation around specific laws and codes at the national level. All share a similar commitment to empower women. Experience has shown that the most effective organisations have been those which started around concrete practical gender needs relating to health, employment and basic service provision, but which have been able to use these as a means to reach specific strategic gender needs identified by women in particular socio-political contexts.

The potentially challenging nature of the empowerment approach has meant that it remains largely unsupported either by national governments or bilateral aid agencies. Despite the widespread growth of Third World groups and organisations whose approach to women is essentially one of empowerment, they remain under-funded, reliant on the use of voluntary and unpaid women's time, and dependent on the resources of those few international non-governmental agencies and First World governments prepared to support this approach to women and development.

Conclusion
The development of gender planning is intended to provide the conceptual framework and the methodological tools, relating to roles, needs and policy approaches, not only to assist in the appraisal and evaluation of current interventions, but also in the future formulation of more 'gendered' policies, programmes and projects.

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ENSURING GENDER AWARENESS IN THE PLANNING OF PROJECTS

MIRANDA MUNRO

Planning for rural development is too often shaped by a primary focus on the output of the plan at the expense of the process through which the plan is prepared and designed. This process involves people; their perceptions of how they fit into plans can take radically different directions. This fit between beneficiaries' needs, project performance and the role of the NGO (non-governmental organisation) begins with the learning capacity of the agency: how well it copes with mistakes and contingencies, how it uses its experience to strengthen institutional capacity and to what extent it shares the knowledge gained with the community.

This article identifies a number of useful factors that can improve the chances that a project will meet the needs of the people and lead to effective development. The way an NGO approaches and works with the community at the planning — and subsequent — stages is crucial; the importance of the entry strategy cannot be overestimated. This strategy must be based on adequate knowledge, understanding and communication with the community, and women are vital to this process.

The importance of the entry strategy

A productive relationship between a rural development agency and a community will depend on the agreement reached between them at the planning stage, about the process of change. This will determine the entry strategy to be adopted. Three stages are important in deciding what this entry strategy should be (Fowler, 1988):

agreeing with the population on the values and goals which will guide the intervention (Roling),

negotiating an agreement on what the population and the agency have to offer each other; that is, how participation is to be
organised and the role each will play in achieving the outcomes which are jointly planned (Oakley),

arriving at a common analysis of the situation so that not just the problems and needs are identified but the reasons for them are jointly understood. (Chambers)

What must be avoided is the imposition of values important to the agency alone. For example, a Western feminist policy may not be easily or desirably transferable; but a commitment to security of livelihood for the poorest groups may stimulate development for both men and women which may bring about a desired shift in the balance of power between the genders, in favour of women.

Implicit in this approach is the establishment of a partnership in which the agency listens, learns and consults. This is important not just because the poorest groups in a community — particularly women — are easily overlooked, but because every community exists within a wider context. Developing an informed perspective on the links women have to wider environmental, political and socio-economic systems implies the agency’s willingness, and ability, to appraise both women’s practical and strategic interests.

Women’s strategic interests have been defined by Molyneux as those which will facilitate a more equal and satisfactory organisation of society in terms of the structure of relationships between men and women. This could involve, for example, abolishing the sexual division of labour, removing institutionalised discrimination, and creating freedom of choice over childbearing. Women’s practical interests have been defined as those which relate to women’s daily concrete conditions and are often the ones most easily formulated by women themselves. They tend to be conceived through a focus on the welfare of the family and the women’s importance to family subsistence, without questioning whether this constitutes equality of development for women. (Molyneux, 1985.)

However, identifying both women’s practical and strategic interests must be a process which is sensitive to the community, and to the capacity of that community to work with the agency’s different cultural perspective on relations between men and women, and vice versa.

Any jointly negotiated and agreed plan of action which details what it is possible to achieve for the benefit of women, should
Gender aware project planning and evaluation

contain the ingredients for policy, project design and implementation. Moser and Levy (1986) identify two factors which are very important for a gender conscious entry strategy: the first is an informed judgement about which practical and strategic needs can be met in the socio-economic and political conditions of a particular place and time. The second is an assessment of the extent to which women have access to local institutions and whether these institutions can be used to meet some or all of the particular practical and strategic needs.

There are three approaches which an agency might consider in order to develop this informed judgement and accurate assessment. These are to improve its understanding of how gender relations work within the community; to improve the ways of consulting women and to improve the quality of information they use for planning purposes.

**Improving awareness of gender relations**

Understanding the relative access to and control over resources and benefits has to include an awareness of the differential access to power which is integral to the division of labour by gender. In conventional project appraisal the unit of analysis is the household, represented for purposes of estimating costs and benefits by assumptions about the behaviour of a male head of household. But it is a major misconception in project planning to see the household as a homogenous decision-making unit; this is clearly not the case in many rural societies where different members have separate productive and entrepreneurial roles and there are competing, unequal and often conflicting claims on resources and outputs for the satisfaction of basic needs.

There is an argument, therefore, for an increased understanding of gender relations within a household structure, whatever form the unit may take, in order to prevent a distortion of the entry strategy. There is a danger, of course, of being swamped by diversity and of looking at increasingly complex social relations without testing their impact on what happens outside the household. For example, women may have to get men’s permission to work co-operatively with other women in an all-female organisation or they may want to receive men’s sanction on their separate activities; this will not necessarily mean that the decision making is male dominated. At the same time, male control of financial gains from a women’s
group may be detrimental to the group’s autonomy and growth and may also undermine individual women’s decision-making power in the household.

How is it possible to arrive at an understanding of gender relations within a rural household? A key principle is to consult both men and women, most simply by documenting their different activities, resources and responsibilities which can then be compared. Indicators of how, for example, women and men experience changes to the environment, seasonality, access to preferred technologies, large family size, increasing costs of inputs for production, and an agency’s style of intervention, can contribute to a body of qualitative information about women’s activities, the resources they command and the responsibilities they manage. What has to be avoided is placing an exclusion zone around a target group of women, both during and after the planning phase, simply in order to reinforce their target-group status.

**Improving ways of consulting women**

Women are not a homogenous social group and their needs will differ according to their relative ages as well as their different activities, resources and responsibilities. A needs assessment should therefore take into account this social and personal heterogeneity. Women may well need support in defining their needs and various techniques have been employed to facilitate this process: documenting and sharing life histories; stimulating discussion around a series of photographs of the women themselves and other women; using a situational analysis or other data collection tools to highlight inequalities in the gender allocation of tasks. Needless to say this is also a learning process for the agency.

It is important that the context and style of discussion should be accessible for women for whom speaking out may be an unfamiliar event; the location, materials used, the size and membership of the group may all be significant. A group action may require organisational skills. Providing women with enabling skills for group management or supporting existing organisations that women use may be a vital investment in the development process even before the entry strategy is agreed.

As Moser and Levy say (1986), consultation on issues that perpetuate gender inequality, and the active participation of women in the planning process is desirable not only as a means of achieving
development objectives, but as an end in itself. At the same time, women's expression of their situation and their demands for the fulfilment of certain practical interests may well provide a more accurate appraisal of what assistance would be appropriate than blueprinted objectives developed by outsiders based on strategic interests. How the meeting of practical needs is linked to longer term strategic needs must be decided as a result of frequent consultation and monitoring with the women concerned, and then a testing of solutions within the community.

**Improving the quality of information for planning**

A balance has to be struck between spending time on diagnosing gender inequalities and formulating proposals. Participative techniques that go beyond a dialogue with a target group can provide the means for the community and the agency to learn about each other's values and criteria. Testing this data in an interactive way is part of the process of building up a body of planning and monitoring information. The employment of Rapid Rural Appraisal techniques in a range of situations is beginning to show the importance of using a portfolio of methods. If these techniques can be aggregated, they can perhaps be used as an index of equity for women across particular profiles, to assess project performance and to highlight conditions which may improve the chances of success. Three of these techniques are as follows:

**i. Direct matrix ranking and preference ranking:**

Arriving at a common analysis of a situation has already been mentioned as an important stage in formulating an agreement for action in the community. In situations where women hold particular indigenous skills and knowledge, it is also important to understand the criteria leading to their decisions and preferences regarding productive or organisational practices. Ranking methodologies have been used with some success to identify local knowledge. Direct matrix ranking involves the respondent(s) listing criteria which are important to them when considering the value of a resource or when considering why one type of the resource is preferred to another. Scores are allocated to each criteria for each resource type and a matrix is constructed which can pinpoint the preferred type as well as indicating why one type, for example, a high yielding variety (HYV) or a traditional variety of the same crop, is not
Ensuring gender awareness

preferred for that particular locality. The ranking of preferences can be conducted between two types of an item or between several types, thus building up a scoring matrix of ranked preferences. Having used the technique of direct matrix ranking for training village extension agents, I consider two characteristics of the method as potentially important:

The quality of discussion required to arrive at a consensus within the group on the criteria to be ranked and then scored is a valuable learning process for all concerned, and yet one that is conducted under the control of the group.

The criteria chosen by the group are often indicators of links in the system of resource management and decision making which might not otherwise appear. Once these links are known they can be a further reinforcement of a shared analysis.

ii. Situational analysis and food paths:
Gathering data through group interviews is a method requiring training and practice. A methodology which focuses on the stages and sequences of an activity can facilitate the process of acquiring gender sensitive data in a group interview. The situational analysis builds up a diagrammatic representation of a sequence of activities by focusing on the situation (e.g. introducing contour ploughing or allocating irrigation water). Each stage of the sequence can be examined and discussed to highlight the gender allocation of labour, resources and responsibilities. By using this technique for a 'food path', focusing on one crop, tracing the production of food from the purchasing and planting of the seed to the sale or preparation of the food, I have found it enables further layers to be added, such as hours spent, technology used, and seasonal variations identified, throughout an interactive process of discussion.

iii. Checklists:
Although checklists have become established as gender conscious tools for planning a project, the checklist can become a barrier to effective interaction between agency and community unless, like any tool, it is frequently refined and sharpened in the context in which it is used. Our understanding of this context is, after all, only the first step in the process through which women may come to realise the benefits from jointly planned interventions.
Conclusion
The importance of fitting projects to the real needs of a community cannot be over-emphasised; and to achieve this it is essential for agencies to discuss and negotiate fully with the community. In order to ensure that women are an integral part of the process it is important to improve gender awareness among all the participants, to find ways of communicating with the women directly and to base planning on the best level of information possible.

References


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WOMEN'S STATUS CRITERIA

ZAMBIA ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

A woman's development project may be counted as improving the status of women to the extent that progress may be seen in the following indicators:

**Basic needs:**
Better provision for women of such basic needs as food, water, fuel, housing and health care; proportional distribution of basic needs between men and women.

**Leadership roles:**
Proportion of women to men in leadership roles in the community; involvement of women as women's leaders on women's issues.

**Consciousness:**
Awareness amongst women of women's needs and women's issues; awareness of discrimination against women; ability to analyse issues in terms of women's interests and women's rights.

**Needs assessment:**
Involvement of women in identifying the priority needs of the community, and in identifying the special needs of women.

**Planning:**
Involvement of women in project design, implementation and evaluation.

**Sexual division of labour:**
Level of involvement of women in tasks traditionally performed by men; level of involvement of men in tasks traditionally performed by women; number of hours per day worked by the average working woman, in comparison to the number worked by the average working man.
Control over the factors of production:
The level of women's access to, and control over land, credit, distribution of income and accumulation of capital.

The order in which these indicators are presented is not intended to imply an order of priority, nor a sequence of what should come first and what should come later. It is merely suggested that a successful project should be making progress across several of these indicators, and that a successful programme should include projects which seek to improve women's status across the full range of these indicators.

*Lusaka, 12 July 1987.*
WOMEN AND EVALUATION

FRANCES RUBIN

It is now nearly two years since I first coordinated an Oxfam Country Programme Review. The exercise gave plenty of food for thought about the difficulties that women can face in development work, and particularly in the process of evaluation. This note is anecdotal, but may illustrate some of the problems and give pointers to solutions, or at least steps that need to be taken to address the danger of excluding women from important moments of decision making.

Terms of reference

One of the first tasks to be completed was the drafting of the terms of reference (TOR) for the review in collaboration with the Country Representative. The programme staff had voiced concern about how to tackle gender questions within their work, and were trying to develop a country strategy where 'gender' was seen as an important issue. Following consultation with a number of colleagues, 'gender questions' were written into many aspects of the TOR. There was quite a strong reaction to this. Many people felt that such explicit mention of gender issues suggested that nobody, including consultants who might be contracted, were aware of gender issues. Because of these strong feeling the TOR were modified but remained explicit in terms of briefing the evaluation team members that gender issues were to be treated in an integral way throughout the evaluation. Above all, gender was not to be treated as a discrete issue in a separate chapter.

Contracting of consultants

At one time in the course of looking for members of the evaluation team it seemed possible that they might all be women. This raised reactions of alarm among some who suggested that an all women team might not be balanced. For how many years has Oxfam used all male teams without feeling concerned? At the end of the day the evaluation team was composed of two men and three women. At times they split up into different groups but these were always mixed.
Field visits

Even though gender was recognised as a central issue and there were always women in the visiting teams, we still encountered considerable difficulties in actually meeting women and hearing their views.

In a number of situations the male members of the team explained with confidence what women thought on a number of issues. To give one example, they explained that women could not participate in training courses because they needed to stay at home to look after the domestic affairs of the household. However, when we spoke directly with women, the women outlined various strategies that would enable them to leave their families and community, and attend meetings they saw as relevant.

On one particular day we were carrying out a programme of visits that had been organised by the village leaders. We asked if we (the visiting Oxfam team) could split up into two groups, so that the women on the team could talk separately to the women in the village. Since this was not on the agenda it took quite an effort to organise, and we were continually interrupted by people who wanted us to hurry so that we could rejoin the 'main' delegation.

Another time, I was reading the notes in the file, as we were on our way to meet a women's group. In one of the tour reports it was clearly stated on which days it was inappropriate to visit if you wanted to talk to the women — because the women were preparing for, and selling in, the market. Yet we found ourselves en route to this town precisely on market day! This happened again in another small community, where there was a very low turn out of women because they were all busy preparing manioc loaves for the market on the following day.

On our last project visit, committee members of a health post began to assemble for the customary discussion. One by one the committee members were introduced. There was one women member. Her name was read out 'Citoyenne (treasurer) — present'. 'Present?' I asked, 'but where?' The treasurer then popped her head into the inner circle of the crowd, bowed and disappeared.

After the round of introductions was complete I asked why the citoyenne who was present in the village was not participating in the meeting? The reason for her absence was that she was busy preparing lunch for the delegation. We politely suggested that she should be present at the discussions. She appeared, and in the
course of the debates raised a number of issues of importance: issues related to the management and safekeeping of the finances that had been entrusted to her, as well as health issues that were of specific importance to the female members of the community, and which had not been raised by the other members present.

A plate of cold peanuts was handed round instead of a lovely meal: we had passed up on some culinary delights but we had enabled the treasurer to raise some important questions for the community; had she not been in the meeting these issues would not have been brought to Oxfam’s notice.

Conclusion
It must be a rule that the TOR of all evaluations include gender as an integral part; that, except in very specific circumstances, there should be mixed evaluation teams and that, however difficult it continues to be, women evaluators must ensure that they get the opportunity to talk to women on their own.

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