

C.10 Communicating gender

It is important to consider the way in which development work is conveyed to others — whether for fund-raising, education or other purposes. NGOs have a responsibility to represent their partners in development fairly and accurately. NGO publications or advertisements may be one of the few places where people in Northern countries gain information about other countries. NGOs' commitment to opposing racism, sexism and all forms of discrimination should be reflected in the materials they produce.

This section is designed for workers in NGOs producing materials for the public. It is based on training done with Northern (European) NGO workers, who in their work communicate about Southern (African, Asian, Latin American, and Middle-Eastern) people. Racism and representation have to be considered at the same time as gender. Communicators should look at the way women of colour are represented in materials, both images and text, and at the way messages are communicated about women of different religious traditions. For example, messages about Muslim or Hindu women may be presented in a way which echoes Western cultural prejudices. If you use these activities for other groups of people, you may need to adapt them.

The activities aim to help participants to:

1. Look at how meanings are constructed through the interplay of words and images.
2. Look at the range of stereotypes of 'Third World' women in a variety of media and how they fit into a broader context of racist/sexist ideology.
3. Explore what is meant by 'positive' and 'negative' images of women in development.
4. Look critically/constructively at their own agency materials, and share policies and experience in producing materials which reflect women's roles: problems, successes, examples.
5. Develop practical ideas for communicating roles of women/women organising for change effectively, looking at the process as well as the actual materials.

These activities should be used with participants who have some understanding of gender. We have used them as a one-day course following on from a one-day Gender and Development course. If you are not incorporating these activities into a gender and development workshop, you would have to, at least, start with **Introductions**, **Expectations** and **Sharing Work Experiences** on gender, as usual, and include one activity, such as **What is gender? Activity 17**, so that people had an agreed understanding of gender. Note that some of the activities in this section require preparation well in advance, to select photos or slides and NGO materials.

The activities in this section were developed by Janet Seed and Focus for Change for Oxfam's Gender and Communications Course.

C.10 Activities

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Images

Objectives

- 1 To look at how images are 'read', and how this is affected by cropping and captioning of images.
- 2 To explore visual stereotypes of different cultures, races, men and women in the media, and how this wider context affects how NGO materials are 'read'.
- 3 To examine what we mean by 'positive' and 'negative' images.
- 4 To explore the issues of power and accountability in relation to visual images.

Method

- 1 Prepare in advance three sets of slides or photos to correspond with the first three objectives, according to the trainer's notes below. (The fourth objective will be covered in all groups.) If using photos, pin the photos onto three separate boards.
- 2 Show the first set of slides or photos. *(10 mins)*
- 3 Lead a discussion on the set of slides or photos, bringing out the points in the trainer's notes and handout. *(10-15 mins)*
- 4 Repeat stages 2 and 3 for the other two sets of images (total 40-50 mins), (10 mins to view images plus 10 mins discussion per set).
- 5 Sum up, and give out **Handouts 103 and 104**. *(10-15 mins)*

Materials

Either a set of about 30-40 slides, plus slide projector.
Or a set of about 30-40 pictures, plus three large boards.

These will need to be carefully chosen, well in advance, to represent the points you wish to make. You can collect pictures from development NGO publications or advertisements, travel or tourist brochures, newspapers and magazines. If the training takes place within one NGO, you can use some of the pictures they have in their library. Some ideas for images are in **Handout 105** Samples Images. There are also many training packs which use images (See Resources section).

Handout 104 Afterword

Handout 103 Images

Handout 105 Sample Images

Facilitator's notes

Set 1: choose a picture that has a very different meaning if you cut it in half. Show first one half, then the other, then both; and ask for people's reactions. show a complete picture and a small part of it enlarged, wherethese give different meanings; ask for reactions. (See Handout 105 Sample images.)

Set 2: choose pictures of both black and white men and women from a variety of different sources. Choose images which are 'consumed' in your country but which may be 'produced' in another country. The images chosen should reflect the stereotypes commonly seen: women being passive, dependent, decorative objects, as in advertisements whshowing women cooking in evening dresses; men being strong. Also, show differences between races, such as adverts with white men and computers, not black men or women. In Northern countries, Southern women may be seen as 'exotic', Southern men as dangerous. Also include some of the NGO stereotypes: 'starving, helpless victims of famines'; wide-eyed dirty children with outstretched hands, desperate mothers; and pictures which romanticise or idealise women: rural images with a 'timeless quality, scenic poverty.

Set 3: choose pictures which show people being helpless and being strong, family pictures taken by people living in Southern countries, charity pictures from Northern countries, photos which deliberately use different titles or are constructed in such a way as to challenge our way of viewing them. Include some pictures which challenge sex-role stereotyping: men with babies, women working in traditionally 'male' jobs. Include pictures of women in women's groups. You may have difficulty in finding some of these images. The Oxfam journal Focus on Gender may be a good source. If necessary, take your own photos.

*Use the above notes, plus the notes on **Handout 103**, to guide discussions. Allow people time during the session or later to read the handouts and discuss them. Note that the book 'Our Own Freedom' from which **Handout 104** comes received some criticism for not naming all the women in the pictuures and not contextualising enough. Nevertheless, we have found the handout valid and useful.*

Images

Set 1: Images are ambiguous. Our own experience and the dominant ideology of society can affect how we ‘read’ a picture. The photo shows appearances at a particular moment — it doesn’t tell us about what happened before or after, relationships or power — or anything happening outside the frame. The same place, people or event can be photographed in many different ways. The photographer chooses what to focus on. How the picture is framed — at the time of taking it and afterwards through cropping — affects how we see it. The title makes a big difference to how we ‘see’ the picture. General titles such as ‘a village in Africa’ encourage generalisation and stereotyping. We need people’s names, place, context, to understand.

Set 2: These stereotypes have enormous power over us — both as producers of images and how we read them — even when we know them to be untrue. Whatever images NGOs produce, how they are seen is influenced by these other images which may be in the same publications. For example, images may construct:

a sexist context — women are used to sell consumer goods, represented as passive desirable sex objects; the ‘norm’ is white, young middle-class, slim, rich — others are invisible. Women at work are shown in domestic caring roles. Images of Third World women may romanticise their poverty.

a racist context — the development of photography coincided with the spread of colonialism. It was used to reinforce an ideology of racism which in turn sustained widespread theft of land and resources. Ethnography focused on measuring ‘Primitive’ peoples, portraying them as alien, exotic (‘the noble savage’), and inferior. Present-day images of black people continue to stereotype them.

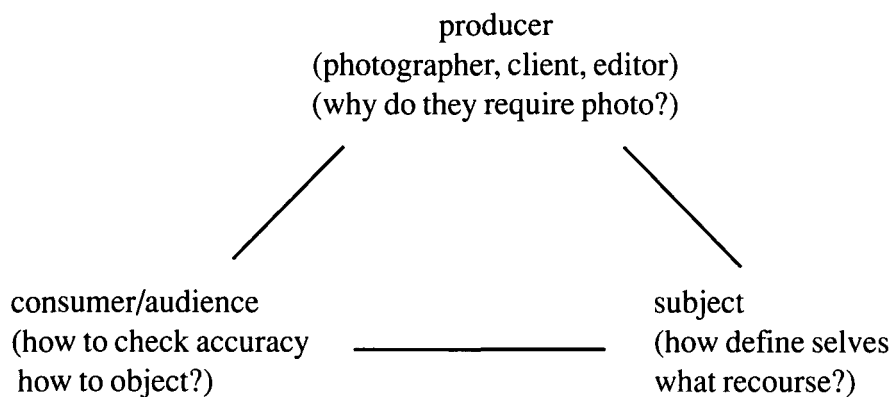
The same process of constructing an ideology of inferiority was used in relation to people with disabilities, and is a common one experienced by many oppressed groups. **Northern NGO images** of people from Southern countries used to, and some still do, show images of passive starving victims, in need of help.

Set 3: Are images of poverty and suffering always to be avoided by NGOs or does this also distort reality? Should we only show Third World poverty with its root

causes and links to Northern countries, such as the international trade system, arms trade, debt crisis, or political oppression? If such images are used, do people understand the intended message, or will they be ‘pulled’ to see only the image of the helpless famine victim? Can ‘positive images’ of women also become stereotypes and not reflect reality when they are used continuously? NGOs should include images of women in all their roles: home management/child care; community work; productive work; employment; leadership; and in different situations — urban and rural, peace and war.

Power and accountability

We need to consider the ‘power triangle’ involved in photos -



People using images for fund-raising face particular constraints. They may feel it necessary to use dramatic images showing people as victims in order to draw people’s attention and thus raise money. What is the long-term impact of this?

Sometimes there are difficulties in obtaining photos that reflect the reality of a group. Some groups do not want to be photographed. How would we feel if we were photographed in this way? (We tend to take pictures of ourselves when we are ‘looking nice’ and to commemorate happy occasions, holidays, weddings etc.) How much can people be informed about the use the photos of them will have?

How far can ‘Southern’ groups be involved in the process of NGO image-making in the ‘North’, and what would the consequences be of increasing this involvement? It would imply changing the whole process of producing images (see power triangle above) — who takes the photos, what brief they have, who’s involved in choosing the images used. Such a process must be part of the long-term policy decisions of the agency.

The EC-NGO liaison committee has produced a Code of Conduct for producing ‘Images and Messages related to the Third World’ (see **Handout 107**) and a number of Northern NGOs (eg Oxfam, Christian Aid, and SCF) also have their own guidelines. These are discussed after **Activity 86** What do you want to say?

Afterword: from 'Our Own Freedom'

On a photographic trip to West Africa I travelled with one of the few women field staff working for a development agency. Years previously, in a village which was part of a United Nations Women's Project she had asked the women what they thought of the project. Their response was clear. 'Oh them', they said, 'They come to the village, talk to the men and then go away again. They never speak to us.' From that point she determined never to visit a village again without talking to women.

Working with her, taking pictures and listening to women express their point of view was an education for me. This book started then. In villages all over Africa I have sat in circles and listened to women's lives being interpreted by men. Sometimes by foreign development agents, sometimes by local aid workers and sometimes by village men themselves. In Upper Volta though the women did the talking. They spoke about health, about literacy, about farming and everything else that concerned their lives. They spoke from their own everyday experiences. Gradually, I began to realise that I had been as guilty as anyone else in the way I had photographed and selected images of African women for more than thirteen years. I had the Western attitude which devalues women's work and ignores their central contribution to their own economies. I had accepted men's interpretations of African women's work and lives.

Photography has been used to exploit or misrepresent many peoples outside the modern, industrialised economies of the West. The African view is that most photographs are taken of them to ridicule and oversimplify their culture. They know photographers earn large sums of money by presenting them as exotic fodder for colour magazines or as emaciated victims with no autonomy or skills.

(Source: Maggie Murray and Buchi Emecheta, *Our Own Freedom*, Sheba, London, Britain, 1981.)

Sample images



1



2

Set 1: Examples of photos with a different meaning if half is cropped out of the picture.

1 A woman villager from Bubrubi on Lake Victoria, Tanzania, collecting firewood. Geoff Sayer/Oxfam

2 Two English visitors to Calcutta photographing Mr Biswas, Director of the Fellowship of the disabled. . . Peter Wiles/ Oxfam



3



4



5

Set 2: The power of stereotypes: 'exotic' people, helpless victims, and idealised views of rural life..

3 Young tribal women, Hyderabad. Rajendra Shaw/ Oxfam

4 Child in emergency feeding centre, Somalia. Martin Pope/ Oxfam

5 Boatmen on Inle Lake, Burma. Ben Fawcett/Oxfam



6



7

Set 3: Pictures which challenge gender stereotypes by showing women in traditional 'male' (strong, active) gender roles, and men in 'female' (weak, passive) gender roles.

- 6 Father with his children, Kalsaka village, Burkina faso. Mark Edwards/Oxfam
- 7 Rajasthani woman, at work carrying sand, on a building site in Delhi. Mike Wells/Oxfam
- 8 Women soldiers, Honduras. Oxfam.



8

9



10

11

Set 4: More pictures to make us think

9 A positive image, showing that women can take an equal part in mixed groups. A meeting of an organisation of landless people, Bangladesh. Tanvir/Oxfam



10 The caption for this image, used by the Edinburgh District Council Women's Committee to draw attention to violence against women, is 'By the time they reach 18 one of them will have been subjected to sexual abuse'; this shows how a caption can transform the way an image is perceived. Franki Raffles

11 The caption for this image was 'Refugees receiving kitchen utensils and agricultural tools, Tore, Sudan'. Such a caption reveals a degree of gender-blindness: the fact that there are no women in the photograph is not acknowledged. UNHCR/Miller

Representing community groups we work with

Objectives

- 1 To help participants to focus in greater depth on how images are read.
- 2 To help participants to relate the analysis of images to their work.
- 3 To show how gender is implicit in all images.

Method

- 1 Choose about 50 photos from various sources. These can be from the same sources as the previous exercise, but they should not be the same photos.
- 2 Place the photos on tables or on the floor, in the middle of the room, where they can all be seen.
- 3 Ask participants to walk round and look at all the photos, and to choose one which they feel represents the community groups with which their organisation works. They should also have a second choice, in case two people choose the same one. At this point people should just look at the photos, not pick them up.
(5 -10 mins.)
- 4 Ask if everyone has made their choice. When they have, ask them to pick it up. If two people choose the same photo, they should negotiate.
- 5 Divide the group into small groups of four to six. These should be composed of people from different organisations or different parts of the organisation. Ask them to show their photos and discuss:
 - a. Why they feel the photo is representative.
 - b. Differences within the group: why there are different perceptions about the people shown in the photos and what they are doing.*(10-15 mins.)*

6 Reconvene the large group. Each person holds up their photo with no comment: then lead a general discussion on:

- a. Similarities and variation in perception within the group.
- b. Is there a gap between the photographer's intention and the effect on the viewer?
- c. What is said about women and men, and what or who is left out.
- d. What is a good image for the organisation and for the community represented?
- e. Is there a tension between images used for fundraising and those used for education?
- f. Does the photo fairly represent both women and men in the community?

(15-30 mins)

Materials

50 photos from various sources: development publications or photo library, family snapshots, showing a variety of different situations, types of development projects, men, women, girls, boys and mixed groups.

Facilitator's notes

1 This exercise is very similar to Activities 11 What is development and 12 What is community development, so do not do those activities as well as this one. This is an example of activities where the basic task is the same (choosing a representative picture), but the objectives, and therefore the discussion and outcome are completely different.

2 Points to bring out:

- a. It is impossible to represent even one small community group in a single representative image, and certainly impossible to represent the variety of groups and organisations that an agency works with.*
- b. There are very personal responses to images, for example as to what one sees as positive or strong*
- c. Every image says something about women and men: what is it, and is it what we want to say?.*

What do you want to say?

Objectives

1 To arrive at some guidelines for practical work in using images, using learning from previous activities and existing guidelines.

Method

- 1 Ask the group to brainstorm: 'What do you want to say about women and men in development?'
- 2 Highlight key points for producing guidelines, and write them on newsprint.
- 3 Give out **Handouts 106** and **107** and any other relevant guidelines on images (eg organisational policy on images).
- 4 Discuss in the large group:
 - a. How useful are guidelines and checklists?
 - b. How can they be implemented?
 - c. What are the barriers within the organisation to implementation?
- 5 Put up the flipchart with basic communication needs as a reminder. Keep this and the other handouts and the brainstorm on the wall for reference

Materials

Flipchart, pens

Handout 106 Extract from Oxfam draft paper on gender and communications
Flipchart with contents of this Handout written on it.

Flipchart with basic communication needs written on (see *Facilitator's notes*).

Handout 107 (EC-NGO guidelines)

Organisational policy or guidelines on images (if any).

Facilitator's notes

1 Checklists can be difficult to follow, unless people work through them in practice.

2 Guidelines can be contradictory, confusing, and overgeneralised. Yet it is important for people to think about the principles of what they are trying to do in order to move on from critique to production.

3 Remind group of basic communication needs (written on newsprint)

Who is the target audience?

What is its existing viewpoint?

What message do you want to get over?

How to cut through indifference: why should they read it?

Design and image.

Extract from an Oxfam paper on communications

Gender sensitive communications should highlight that:

- 1 Women in poor and developing countries bear a large part of the burden of poverty and are the key to successful implementation of projects, yet they are rarely consulted in decision making.
- 2 Many problems faced by women in developing countries originate in industrialised countries.
- 3 Overcoming discrimination and exploitation is a complex, long-term process, in which poor women are already engaged.
- 4 The variety of experiences of poor women shape their views of development and determine the strategies they are adopting to overcome poverty and gender inequality.
- 5 Women in developing countries must have an opportunity to define their needs and priorities, the solution to their problems, and the support they want.
- 6 Women are not a homogenous group, and their roles and needs vary greatly from one culture or society to another.
- 7 Women cannot be seen in isolation from men: the nature of gender relations determines what they can do, what supports, and what oppresses them.

EC/NGO Code of Conduct

Images and messages relating to the Third World

1 General objectives of the Code of Conduct

- This Code is both a challenge and a guide for European NGOs. Its aim is to encourage NGOs to examine the material they produce on the Third World and to be especially attentive to images that over-simplify or concentrate on the apocalyptic or idyllic aspects of life.
- It invites NGOs engaged in fundraising activities to re-examine their appeals to the public.
- It serves as a reference for NGOs working to strengthen the solidarity, cohesion and force of the NGO movement.
- It is recommended that the EC Commission take this Code of Conduct into account in its work with European NGOs.

NGOs and fundraising

Several systems of fundraising are used by Northern NGOs. These include large-scale annual appeals, thematic campaigns or emergency aid campaigns. The means applied can involve mailings to regular donors, the production of posters or the holding of sales (books, cards, crafts, background material, etc.).

A lot of images and messages are produced by NGOs during these fundraising activities and the type used are determined by the particular viewpoint of the NGO concerned.

Each NGO must decide on the best system to adopt whilst ensuring that the methods applied and the messages sent out by the NGOs, its partners and its sponsors do not present an image of dependency or 'handouts'.

NGOs should avoid the following:

- images which generalise and mask the diversity of situations;
- idyllic images (which do not reflect reality, albeit unpleasant), or 'adventure' or exotic images;
- images which fuel prejudice;
- images which foster a sense of Northern superiority;
- apocalyptic or pathetic images.

2 Code of Conduct

We, development NGOs established in the member states of the European Community representing a variety of humanitarian non-profit-making associations engaged in activities to support the development process in the South and in the North, adopt this Code of Conduct as a guide in our daily work in order to improve the images projected by the North of the South.

This Code calls on European NGOs to:

- **examine** their work and review their working methods so as to put an end to the old notions of 'emotional shock' and disaster relief and to ensure the right kind of development education is undertaken;
- promote greater **unity** among NGOs and other social movements to enable an improved distribution of information;
- undertake to examine the **contents of messages** sent out in disaster appeals to ensure these do not undermine the work of development education which calls for long term response;
- provide **adequate training** for members of staff who are responsible for producing information material and seek specialists to advise them in their work;
- above all, ensure that the **viewpoint of the South** is taken into account when producing images and messages.

If international development co-operation is based on the principles of solidarity and the sharing of resources, then the **participation of our Southern partners** in public awareness raising activities is essential for the correct projection of images and messages. In this day and age we can no longer speak about the Third World and project images thereof without previous consultation.

This is not an easy task as the communications possibilities vary significantly from

one developing country to another, and from NGO to NGO. Communication is hindered in some places by the remains of the colonial system or the effects of control of the international communications system: the traditional media either give no coverage of the South or they do so from a Northern perspective.

NGOs should work towards:

- guaranteeing the Third World **right of access** to the major means of communication in the North;
- guaranteeing the **circulation of Southern cultural products** in the North, beyond the traditional market outlets;
- promoting **local and autonomous cultural production**;
- **facilitating further the movement of people** in both directions, to ask Southern visitors for their opinions on Western society and to share their knowledge and experience.

True solidarity is not a one-way process. Is it not arrogant to wish to resolve single-handedly the development problems of the South when our own society is itself suffering from widespread development problems?

3 Recommendation

In the light of the above, European NGOs will undertake to review their development education material and content of the messages produced. Messages should aim to improve the public's understanding of:

- the **realities and complexities** of the countries of the Third World in their historical context;
- the **obstacles** posed to development;
- the **diversity** of situations in these countries;
- the **efforts** being made in the South itself;
- and the **progress** made.

4 Practical guidelines

- 1 Avoid catastrophic or idyllic images which appeal to charity and lead to a clear conscience rather than a consideration of the root problems.
- 2 All people must be presented as human beings and sufficient information provided as to their social, cultural and economic environment so that their cultural identity and dignity are preserved. Culture should be presented as an integral part of development in the South.
- 3 Accounts given by the people concerned should be presented rather than the interpretations of a third party.
- 4 People's ability to take responsibility for themselves must be highlighted.
- 5 A message should be formulated in such a way that generalisations are avoided in the minds of the public.
- 6 The internal and external obstacles to development should be clearly shown.
- 7 Interdependence and joint responsibility in underdevelopment should be emphasised.
- 8 The causes of poverty (political, structural or natural) should be apparent in a message in order to enable the public to become aware of the history and real situation in the Third World, and the structural foundations of these countries before colonisation. It is the situation today, coupled with a knowledge of the past, which should be the starting point for examining ways in which extreme poverty and oppression can be eliminated. Power struggles and vested interests should be exposed and oppression and injustice denounced.
- 9 Messages should avoid all forms of discrimination (racial, sexual, cultural, religious, socio-economic).
- 10 The image of our Third World partners as dependent, poor and powerless is most often applied to woman who are invariably portrayed as dependent victims, or worse still, simply do not figure in the picture. An improvement in the images used in educational material on the Third World evidently requires a positive change in the images projected of Southern women.
- 11 Southern partners should be consulted in the formulation of all messages.
- 12 If an NGO calls on the services of other partners (institutions, organisations or private companies) for a fund raising activity, it should ensure that the recommendations of this Code are respected by all parties. Reference should be

made to the Code in the sponsoring contract(s) between the NGO and its partner(s).

5 Conclusion

The information in our daily news too often presents the Third World in a way that is incomplete and biased — starving people portrayed as the helpless victims of their own fate. This fatalistic approach can be overcome with the provision of **more realistic and more complete information**, thereby increasing **awareness** of the intrinsic value of all civilisations, of the limitations of our own society and of the need for a more **universal development** which respects justice, peace and the environment. It is the duty of NGOs to provide the public with truthful and objective information which respects not only the human dignity of the people in question but the intelligence of the public at large.

This Code was adopted by the General Assembly of European NGOs meeting in Brussels in April 1989. The Liaison Committee's Development Education Working Group was called upon to formulate a strategy for its implementation and follow-up.

Critique of materials

Objectives

- 1 To analyse critically materials produced by participants' organisations.
- 2 To broaden the analysis to include text as well as images.

Method

- 1 Collect a wide range of materials produced by the organisation(s) to which the participants belong. Lay these on tables or the floor in the centre of the room, and ask each person to choose one at random. If the organisation does not produce many materials, you can hand one advertisement or leaflet to each participant. (5 mins)
- 2 Explain the method of analysis to participants, writing main points re visual, text and total impression on flipchart. Participants then each analyse their document individually. (10-15 mins)
- 3 Divide participants into small groups, to collate their information. (10-20 mins)
- 4 One representative from each small group reports back on what they have found. Lead a general discussion, writing any key points to emerge on a flipchart. (20 mins)

Materials

A variety of materials from different sources: newspaper adverts, 'mail drops', fundraising leaflets, educational materials, press releases, lobbying materials, trading catalogues and other publicity. There should be at least one per participant. These will have to be renewed each time you do this exercise. If you are laying them out, remember to allow time for that — perhaps do it in a break.

One pen per participant. Highlighter pens are particularly good. Flipchart and pen

Facilitator's notes

1 It is better to allow people to pick their own document to analyse from a range, as otherwise they may be suspicious that you have chosen the worst examples. It is particularly useful in a large organisation, which may have different departments producing different materials which may not normally be seen by people in other departments. If you are doing this activity with people from a variety of organisations, you need to stress that people should be analysing the document, not attacking the person or organisation who produced it.

2 Materials should be analysed in the following ways:

Visual: *number of women, men, boys, girls; white/black people. What are they doing? How are they portrayed? How is photo labelled? Is any one named—who?*

Text: *mention of women, men, girls, boys (gender-specific); and children, people, community, youth, family (not gender-specific). What are the associations or messages? How accurate?*

Total impression: *what is the overall impression? Does the text back up or contradict the images e.g. 'children' for a picture of boys; 'community meeting' for a picture of men; 'family' with a picture of women.*

3 If participants work mainly with text rather than images, they may analyse documents only by text, not images.

4 Discussion points :

- a. What is the overall impression of women's and men's; girls' and boys' roles from these materials? How accurate is this?*
- b. How are women and men represented?*
- c. Where do women get left out, both in text and images? How accurate is this? (e.g. Refugees are mainly women and children—is this reflected in the images and text? In materials on debt, are women mentioned? How? In productive and community roles or only as victims?)*
- d. What are the differences between materials used for different purposes e.g. fund-raising and education?*
- e. Should materials consciously seek to redress the balance, in contrast to all the usual stereotyped images available?*
- f. How would you feel if you were represented by such images?*
- g. Would you use different images if you knew the subjects would see them?*
- h. What would be empowering for the women and men represented? Would they feel happy with the materials?*
- i. What are the successes? What are some of the gaps? What could be done to avoid some of the pitfalls?*

Construct an image

Objectives

1 To construct an 'ideal' image, based on previous learning and guidelines.

Method

1 Divide participants into two groups. Each group is asked to represent a particular aspect of Southern women in an image or collage of images. They should make a sketch in as much detail as possible — sex, setting, body language, activities, country, camera angle, etc. They should aim to make a strong impact and make the viewer /think about the issues, disturbs assumptions without using negative images. They should try to be adventurous using ideas in **Activity 84 Images**.

Group 1 : Poor women as the largest, most vulnerable sector of the population are particularly affected by natural and human-made disasters.

Group 2: Many problems faced by Southern women originate in the North.

(20 mins)

2 Each group pins up their sketches and both are discussed and compared in the large group.

(10 mins)

Materials

Large sheets of paper/newsprint, pens.

Facilitator's notes

1 Make clear that this is not a test of drawing ability. The roughest of sketches will do, with perhaps some notes at the side; the important thing is the ideas.

2 If you have a very large group, you can divide into more than two groups, giving the extra groups other aspects of women's lives (eg women's multiple roles).

Publicity design

Objectives

- 1 To develop practical ideas for communicating about development in a gender-sensitive way.
- 2 To relate what has been learned to individual work experience.
- 3 To be creative.

Method

Part 1

- 1 Divide the participants into small groups, based on their job or role in the organisation and the type of communications they usually produce (fundraisers, educators, campaigners, and so on). Explain that each group will design a different form of publicity, based on their job:
 - a. poster campaign
 - b. mail shot for fundraising
 - c. poster or leaflet for use in schools.
 - d. press release
 - e. one-minute speech for public meeting or radio programme.
- 2 Give **Handout 108** COPADEBA Case Study Part 1 (only) to each participant. Tell them to imagine that they have been asked to produce some publicity, based on this project, and this is the only information available to them.
- 3 Each group considers, and writes up briefly on newsprint:
 - a. main issues, including a gender perspective
 - b. what images would they like to use
 - c. who would like to consult with
 - d. what further information would they like
 - e. what process might they go through to try to get some input from the people involved in the project or from that country (At this stage they do not map out the design)

(30 mins)

4 Groups put up their newsprints on the wall, and read each other's. (15 mins)

Part 2

5 Participants return to their small groups. Explain that some more information has now become available, although it might not answer all their questions. Give out Handout 109 COPADEBA Case Study Part 2. From all available information, groups now design their piece of publicity. They should draw in the images and write in the text, or at least the captions and the headlines if producing materials. (20-30 mins)

6 Groups briefly present their publicity. (max 5 mins. per group)

7 Comments and discussion, bringing out points in Facilitator's Notes. (20-30 mins)

Materials

Handout 108 COPADEBA Case Study Part 1

Handout 109 COPADEBA Case Study Part 2

Flipchart, paper, pens.

Facilitator's notes

1 This is the only activity which is done in groups responsible for the same function, as it is useful to share ideas. You may need to adapt the case study, or write one based on your organisation's documents, but do not make it too long.

2 You may find some resentment from participants that there is insufficient information or time. However, in most cases, people find this quite realistic! If participants' work experience is very different, you could adapt this exercise: you will need to find this out in advance.

3 After groups have presented their publicity, ask:

a. Was the task difficult? Was it realistic in the amount, and type of information that they usually receive for their work?

b. What similarities and differences were there in the key issues as seen and represented by the different groups?

c. Did you quote Manuel Rodriguez? How do you think he would feel about the publicity?

d. What were the reasons for the choice of photos or other images.

4 Then lead on to wider discussion and draw conclusions and recommendations for the future:

a. What are the practical limitations on producing gender sensitive materials?

- b. How did groups tackle the problem of meaningful collaboration with partner groups? How can these problems be overcome?*
- c. There is a need for clear aims and objectives; this is a long process.*
- d. What training and guidelines should be given to photographers, fieldworkers, and communications staff? Are existing ones good enough, and are they followed?*
- e. How can communications be monitored for accuracy, accountability, and power?*
- f. What changes need to be made in participants' own working practice, their departments, and organisation (eg short and long-term funding, informal creative groups, basic communications courses, more black staff, work with black and women's organisations, consultations, use of local photographers)?*
- g. There is a need for co-ordination within and between organisations, and the formation of alliances.*

COPADEBA case study: Part 1

My name is Manuel Rodriguez. My city is Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic.

Like all Third World cities, Santo Domingo suffers from chronic lack of services and resources for the number of inhabitants.

The rural-urban drift has contributed greatly to this situation with rural dwellers escaping in their thousands from the harsh reality of the subsistence farmer in the countryside.

When these people arrive in the big city the promise of opportunity and plenty is a dream unlikely to be realised for the majority. They face homelessness and their children face the prospects of no education and a life on the streets — the lucky ones ‘employed’ in the legitimate informal sector, with the unlucky ones turning to crime, drugs and prostitution.

It is these marginalised people in their tin shack communities of the city shanty towns that my project was set up in 1979 to assist. The Committee for the Defence of the Communities Rights (COPADEBA) was set up in response to the threat of evictions from land on which they had established themselves on arrival in the city.

That struggle in 1979 was successful and together with these communities we have continued with efforts to improve their living conditions. The struggle for clean water, sanitation, roads, proper houses in these shanty towns has now been usurped by our current dilemma.

In late 1987 a plan was initiated by the government to ‘develop’ the northern part of the city. This plan was presented to the affected communities when it was already being implemented.

The plan called for the construction of major avenues to surround the city which would effectively mean the need to relocate whole communities with a view to beautifying the city i.e. hiding the ugly face of poverty behind high walls, to welcome the thousands of anticipated visitors in 1992 as part of the 500th Anniversary of Columbus’ arrival.

Seven marginalised communities, totalling around 50,000 families are to be uprooted to facilitate this plan. Properties are being rapidly destroyed in most cases without appropriate valuations.

The affected families are to be relocated in a new community about 20km away from the city centre, where the government plans to build houses and sell them to those concerned.

Very little has been said to the communities and many questions are unanswered.

COPADEBA, with church support, is talking to the government and offering alternative proposals to the plan, including the need to look at spending public money more appropriately by improving conditions in the shanty towns rather than building avenues to hide them and as a consequence dislocate some communities from their families, friends and livelihood.

COPADEBA is doing this through the production of popular information (audio-visuals and booklets) to facilitate community knowledge and action.

COPADEBA case study: Part 2

Some further information:

- 1 The committee is elected at meetings. They are men who can negotiate with the government and come up with plans.
- 2 Not enough homes are being built to rehouse everyone. The price of the new houses is too high for most people.
- 3 There are no facilities e.g. market, school or clinic at the new site. Transport is very scarce and expensive.
- 4 Some men are employed in the formal sector. Others are unemployed.
- 5 Many women have the sole or main responsibility for looking after their family, who may be with them or at home in the village. Women work in the city: many as domestic workers, others selling in markets or selling tacos illegally on the roadside to passing workers, a few as prostitutes.
- 6 Many women are very concerned about the implications of this plan and are active against it — distributing materials and demonstrating. There is one woman social worker attached to the committee.
- 7 Some people are reluctant to challenge tourism as it brings in money.

