

C.8 Gender and global issues

This section applies some of the analytical frameworks learned in the previous section to a selection of issues of global concern. We have chosen four sets of issues to illustrate the use of gender analysis.

Gender and conflict: in 1993 Oxfam ran a workshop in Thailand with the AGRA-East (Action for Gender Relations in Asia network for East Asia) on Gender and Conflict: we present a number of activities from that workshop. Armed conflict is, increasingly, having a devastating impact on the lives of women and men in the countries and regions in which Oxfam and other NGOs work. The gender dimensions of conflict are examined in detail in the report of the above workshop (available from Oxfam): in this section we can do no more than offer an introduction to the topic and to the way that gender analysis can illuminate the effects of conflict on women and men.

Gender and the environment: within the context of the search for sustainable development, environmental issues are of central concern to Oxfam's development programme, but we have not run a gender workshop on this topic: we have instead borrowed and adapted two activities from *Gender and Environment: Lessons from Social Forestry and Natural Resource Management*, published by Aga Khan Foundation Canada, and hope to expand our experience of this area of gender analysis. To quote from a paper given by Nanneke Redclift in 1991 to the ODA/NAWO review:

We cannot create sustainability on the basis of existing gender inequities, because to do so is once again to subsume women's interests under the wider notion of general and, in this case, even global well-being.

Gender and economic crisis: a group of activities address the effects of economic crisis from a gender perspective, at the macro-level of Structural Adjustment Policies, and the micro-level of women's daily experience. The micro-level activities can be used with grassroots groups or with NGO groups to examine the kinds of problems that women workers face.

Gender and culture: this is a topic of crucial importance. Religion, as one of the foundation stones of culture in most parts of the world, is also the seat of the most entrenched beliefs and practices relating to the roles of women and men. We present some activities based on texts from the Christian Bible, which have been used primarily with Christian groups. As long as they are balanced with activities from other religions, they can be used in any group looking at the influence of religious tradition in the construction of cultural gender roles. The two activities which use Biblical texts were developed in the African context, for use with Christian women's groups. They could be adapted by replacing the excerpts from the Bible with other religious texts. 'Creation Story' is suitable for use with mixed-sex groups, while the **Activity 73** Chains that bind us is more suitable for groups of women only.

C.8 Activities

1 Gender and conflict

60	The impact of conflict	2-2½ hrs	371
	(Handout 66 Uganda case study)		373
	(Handout 67 Somalia case study)		377
	(Handout 68 Identifying women's needs)		381
	(Handout 69 Women's issues in conflict)		383
61	Drawing lessons from case studies	1 hr	385
62	Capacities and vulnerabilities analysis	1½ to 2 hrs	387
	(Handout 70 Capacities and vulnerabilities analysis)		389
	(Handout 71 Charts for CVA)		393
	(Handout 72 El Salvador refugees)		395
63	Timeline	1 hr	401
	(Handout 73 Case study: Lebanon)		403
	(Handout 74 Timeline)		407
	(Handout 75 Note on the use of timelines)		409
64	Debate on gender and conflict	1 hr	411

2 Gender and environment

65	Gender and environment myths	1-1½ hrs	413
	(Handout 76 Gender and natural resource management)		415
66	Downstream effects	45 mins-1½ hrs	419
	(Handout 77 Impacts of interventions)		421
	(Handout 78 Downstream effects)		423
67	Drawing livelihoods	1 hr	425

3 Gender and economic crisis

68	Structural adjustment	1-1½ hrs	427
	(Handout 79 Debt and structural adjustment)		429
	(Handout 80 Impact of structural adjustment on women)		431
69	The debt web	1 hr 20 mins	433
	(Handout 81 A debt web)		435
70	The Shamba and Mama Florence	1 hr 10 mins	437
	(Handout 82 The Shamba)		439
	(Handout 83 Mama Florence)		441
	(Handout 84 Case study: Bolivia)		445

4 Gender and culture

71	A cautionary tale	1 hr	447
	(Handout 85 Working with women Part 1 The tale,		449
	(Handout 86 Part 2 The outcome)		451
72	Creation story	1½ hrs	453
	(Handout 87 Biblical background notes)		455
73	Chains that bind us	1½ hrs	457
	(Handout 88 Our experience)		459
	(Handout 89 Biblical background notes)		461

The impact of conflict

Objectives

- 1 To consider ways in which social processes are affected by armed conflict.
- 2 To explore gender issues in situations of armed conflict.

Method

- 1 Before the session, prepare flipcharts or OHP transparencies with the texts (or notes from them) on **Handouts 68** Identifying Women's Needs in Conflict, and **69** Women's Issues in the Context of Conflict).
- 2 Introduce the two case studies, highlighting briefly the impact of conflict on four levels: personal, family, community, state
(10 mins)
- 3 Give each participant a copy of both case studies (**Handout 66** and **67**) and ask them to read them through carefully, taking account of the main points at the end of the case studies.
(20-30 mins)
- 4 Go through the points and issues in **Handouts 68** and **69** using the OHP transparencies or flipcharts you have prepared.
(15-20 mins)
- 5 Ask the participants to form small groups of three or four, and give each person a copy of the two Handouts. Ask the groups to discuss first one case study, and then the other, in relation to the issues in the Handouts. They should identify women's needs and issues for each case study
(30-60 mins)
- 6 Convene the whole group again, and go through any questions raised by the small groups.
(15-20 mins)

Materials

Flipchart, OHP transparencies, pens
Case Studies and **Handouts 66, 67, 8 and 69**

Facilitator's Notes

1 This is a long session and participants are asked to absorb and think about a lot of information. You may want to have a 10-minute break, for tea or an energising game, between steps 4 and 5.

*2 These case studies can also be used for learning the Capacities and Vulnerabilities framework of analysis (CVA), **Activity 62**.*

*3 These case studies were presented in a workshop on conflict by the person who wrote them and knew the situations, and who could therefore respond to questions. We include them here to be used as an introduction to gender and conflict, and as examples of case studies. However, if you are able to, it is better to write up cases yourself about situations you know well, or ask participants to do so. (See also *Facilitator's Notes for the CVA **Activity, 62**, and **Handout 59** Designing case studies, **Activity 56***).. If you or participants write up case studies, make sure they bring out the points you need for the activity i.e. the impact of conflict at the different levels of personal, family, community and State, and that all information takes both women and men into account.*

Uganda case study

Background

Uganda suffered a series of brutal and destructive civil wars and despotic regimes from the late 1960s till the mid-1980s. It is well endowed with agricultural resources, though these were all but destroyed during the war years when people fled from their lands and when huge numbers of animals were killed.

The present government has installed a system of popular representation and overseen a substantial return to production. Insurgency and insecurity continued to exist until recently in the north, but the situation now appears to have stabilised. The country's struggle to regain economic viability puts enormous strain on the small rural producers who form the majority of the population, caught between their own subsistence needs and the needs of the country to collect taxes and to produce for export.

Changes in gender relations

Until about 20 years ago, gender relations among many Ugandan population groups were characterised by a clear division between men's and women's tasks and between the resources each needed to perform them. Broadly speaking, men took responsibility for livestock, over which they had total control, and for the cultivation of cash crops, the income from which was used to underwrite the family's expenses such as taxes, school fees, clothes and basic household supplies. Women helped their husbands on the family farms, following a fairly strict division of labour in which the heaviest tasks were reserved for men. Women also kept fields of their own with which they provided for the family's subsistence needs; they alone worked on these fields and controlled the consumption of the produce, which was never sold and to which men had no access.

This division was backed up by a framework of marriage dominated by the husband's authority but within which wives had certain defined rights, upheld by the clan and the community. From the legal point of view marriage was indissoluble, except by the repayment by the wife's family of the bridewealth that had been paid

by the husband. Until this happened, the husband and his clan had total control over the wife's productive and reproductive capacity i.e. neither her produce nor her belongings nor her children were her own, and the burden of supporting her and her children economically fell on her husband and his family. Many Ugandan communities practised the 'inheritance' of widows by the surviving brother of a deceased husband; a widow who refused this arrangement would not only have to fend for herself but would be entirely dispossessed by her husband's family, and stripped of all except — and sometimes including — the clothes she stood up in.

Since then, various factors have impacted on gender relations to create an arrangement in which women have the greater share of responsibility and work, yet still the same limited control over resources, and few enabling rights. These factors include the war, male labour migration (leading to women being obliged to take over many previously male functions), and the increasing pressures to find cash which have resulted in even women's food crops being sold. Loss of oxen through war also adds to the family's agricultural labour burden.

Saved from soldier but not from husband

The personal status of women has in certain respects changed for the better. The ending of the war and the disbanding of armed camps has lowered the risks of violence and rape from soldiers; economic opportunities for women have opened up and there is an increased recognition of the importance of their role. However, there are numerous exceptions to this and levels of domestic and other forms of violence against women are still high. Abused women have few refuges: the common understanding among both women and men is that violence is part of marriage and women have no choice but to tolerate it. Likewise women who have been raped, especially if they become pregnant, may not be able to count on the sympathy of their families.

An increased imbalance between men and women

Within the family, the division of labour has changed from being a relatively clear one to being blurred. Women may have to clear land or perform other traditionally male agricultural tasks in men's absence, while men have moved into women's activities wherever there is a profit to be made by doing so. Women have also tended to lose access to their own subsistence land because of the need to concentrate family labour on cash crops, a factor which has sometimes had alarming consequences for food security and for the environment.

Whereas previously it was regarded as a husband's responsibility to pay children's school fees and provide basic household necessities, these are now regarded as women's responsibility. The need to find cash for family expenses imposes an additional labour burden on women, who habitually work without rest from dawn to night, while their husbands are free for the latter part of the day to engage in

leisure pursuits. Women often provide their husbands with spending money, which they may use to buy beer, (often coming home drunk and beating their wives) or save so as to marry additional wives. This labour burden is a critical constraint to women's full participation in the lives of their families as well as their communities. However, it is important to point out that there are increasing numbers of men who recognise this problem, many of whom seek to share the burden of domestic work with their wives in spite of often being ridiculed for doing so.

The imbalance between women's and men's work is one of several factors which have led to increased fragility of marriage, and unhappiness in marriage figures very highly in women's accounts of their problems. Fear of violence and of rejection by husbands is a major cultural undercurrent in the songs and poems sung by women. Women married to violent or indolent husbands may decide to continue in unhappy marriages because they seek the respectability that married status brings or because they are offered no sympathy or help from their own families.

Communities have been changed

In the past, irresponsible behaviour on the part of men, women and young people was censured by the community. Now community pressures have all but disappeared and this has had both welcome and unwelcome effects. On the one hand, brutal punishments such as those meted out in cases of unmarried pregnancy (to the girl and to the boy if he could be identified) are no longer practised. On the other hand, the moral education of children is increasingly neglected as fathers spend more and more time in the bars and mothers are more and more overloaded with work. One consequence of this is the perpetuation of dysfunctional attitudes towards the opposite sex. Similarly, violent or unreasonable husbands are no longer held up to criticism.

In some areas of the country, especially in the north where camps of armed soldiers of various armies have been in existence, there is a growing problem of 'camp followers' — women who have no means of support other than to attach themselves to garrisons, providing sexual favours for the armed forces. Many of these women have been rejected by their communities after being raped — sometimes by the soldiers themselves — or have been repudiated by their husbands, and have been unable to rely on the support of their families.

A positive outcome of the present development outlook of the country is the widespread acceptance of women's role in community affairs. Women are influential in local government and there are a large number of women's groups of different sorts which play important community roles. Women are widely represented in community-based (mixed) groups.

No consideration of gender relations in Uganda can be complete without mentioning AIDS, which is now affecting every village and every section of the

community. As is well-known now, women are affected by AIDS not only through their own sexual relations but also as mothers and grandmothers of AIDS patients. There is little doubt that the disruption of the war and the post-war years, and the continued presence of camps of armed forces in some parts of the country, have contributed substantially to the spread of the disease.

The role of the State

The present Ugandan government has put much weight behind its policy of encouraging the participation of women in all areas of national life. A Women's Ministry has been set up to review projects and ensure that women's needs are taken care of. A minimum number of women is required in local government councils at all levels, in addition to the inclusion of specific women's representatives. A constitutional commission is reviewing, amongst other things, women's legal rights, and these rights should be enshrined in the new constitution.

The implementation of such positive policies is beset by many constraints, not least the lack of funds from which all government initiatives suffer, and the even greater lack of resources allocated specifically to women's activities. Moreover, the Women in Development policy as spelt out by the government has been criticised for being focused on encouraging women into ever-more-intensive income-generation, thus increasing their burden of work without making changes in their position in society or in their control of resources.

Main points

- 1 The division of labour has become much more flexible following the war. This has come about through necessity and has resulted in a huge burden of work for women.
- 2 Women, whether in marriage or single heads of families, have had to take responsibility for managing and providing for their families. The ending of the war has not resulted in this burden being lifted.
- 3 Violence against women is still common, and is a function of the levels of violence in society as a whole and of the lack of respect for women in general.
- 4 Government policies and pronouncements have had a very positive effect in enabling women to take wider public and family roles. However, since they have been focused on increasing women's productivity, they have not tended to amount to much more than an increasing imposition of work on women.

Somalia case study

Background

The Somali nation is spread through five countries of the Horn of Africa, divided by boundaries imposed by colonial divisions. Somalis are predominantly pastoral people, living in a desert environment which is very prone to drought, though towards the south of Somalia higher rainfall permits a variety of different livelihoods including agro-pastoralism and settled agriculture.

The clan system forms the basis of society and its breakdown has been one of the main factors in the current civil war. A clan is a group of people descended from a common ancestor and claiming priority access to a certain piece of land and its resources (such as water and grazing). Clans are divided into sub-clans and even smaller divisions. Although each clan has its own territory, in practice before the war people were scattered throughout the country, often living in peace as minorities within the territory of another clan. The clan system was held together by a number of factors that created checks and balances, preventing any one clan or individual from acquiring inordinate power. These factors included the sharing of natural resources, intermarriage, and trade links.

The breakdown of the clan system was brought about through colonial interference and through 20 years of manipulation by the previous government, headed by ex-president Siyad Barre. The current civil war began in 1988 in the north of the country and worked its way south, breaking out in the capital, Mogadishu, at the beginning of 1990. The north-west (the ex-British colony) later declared itself the independent state of Somaliland.

One of the main effects of the war was to cause the movement of people back to their clan territories, the only places where they could feel safe. In some cases, people had to move several times, as the fortunes of the different armed forces changed. Another change was that central and local government collapsed, and with it all service and supply systems. Even for those people who were not obliged to move, production (agricultural and livestock) soon broke down through lack of supplies and through insecurity — animals and crops were looted, and people lost the

confidence they needed to carry on producing. All this led eventually to widespread famine, which earned Somalia world-wide publicity, and which still continues, albeit on a reduced scale.

Some systems have survived, however. The clan elders, a traditional male authority structure which had been almost suppressed during Siyad Barre's regime, took over the responsibilities of local government in many areas. Petty trade, mostly carried out by women, continued as long as there was anything to be sold. Men also continued to operate big business, now controlling the profitable trade in arms, food and drugs.

Trapped in their own homes

Traditionally conflict between clans was regulated by certain 'rules of engagement' which ensured that friction was kept within limits and the vulnerable did not suffer. Fighting was carried out only by men; a code of honour ensured that the women and children of any clan were protected. During the present conflict there have been many examples of this code being followed, but equally there have been examples where women and children living as minorities within the territory of an opposing clan have been massacred, and it seems that this code has at least in part been abandoned.

Loss of mobility is a major constraint on women's ability to fulfil their family responsibilities in the present circumstances. Fear of rape or shooting prevents women from leaving their homes. People who stand in food queues (mostly women and older men) run a strong risk of being caught in the cross-fire if gunmen attack the food as it arrives. Lack of clothes is another reason why women may confine themselves to their houses. Women who need to work on their farms or sell goods in the market-place prefer to go out only at midday when the danger is less. Lack of services and supplies also means that women have further than usual to go for water, for example. In one town, a dozen women have been killed by crocodiles while fetching water from the river, because there was no fuel to operate water pumps.

Impoverished by aid

Owing to the absence of men, women have taken on responsibilities for maintaining and providing for the family. This is nothing new for Somali women, many of whose menfolk have worked away from home (in the Gulf states, for example) for decades. But in the present circumstances, when food, money and other basic necessities have been difficult to come by, providing for a family has been exceptionally difficult. Almost the only avenue open to women is petty commerce, and this has been limited by the lack of produce to sell and by the lack of money circulating in the economy. In addition, food aid has brought its own problems. In some places, farmers who have a

marketable surplus have been unable to get a price for their produce which covers the production costs, since food aid has depressed prices. Food aid has put many women retailers out of business, especially in the major cities where food distributions are relatively regular. At the same time, people just a few kilometres away are dying of starvation because they are not on the main routes for relief convoys.

The conflict between different clans has had a very divisive effect on the whole Somali community, breaking up friendships and families even among those who have sought refuge outside Somalia. Owing to the general preference for marrying outside the clan, there are many families in which husband and wife are from opposing clans. Many such marriages have been unable to withstand the pressures this has created. When marriages break up, women are affected differently from men since they run the risk of being separated or alienated from their children, who belong to the clan of their father, as well as from their husband.

More work, no voice

Despite the increased responsibility women have had to shoulder as family providers, they have not always found it easy to gain access to the resources they need to meet this responsibility. Councils of elders consist exclusively of men, and there is no place for women in the taking of major community decisions. Men have tended to resist suggestions that women should join committees or take part in decision making about resources. Though the elders have generally taken seriously their responsibility to protect and defend the interests of those in their care, there are nevertheless many women who for one reason or another cannot claim the protection of a well-placed elder. Some observers have remarked that women heads of households report the number of their dependents honestly, while men tend to inflate the numbers to receive more than their fair share of rations; and generally women have difficulty in pushing for their own and their families' interests.

The existence of elders' councils and other male-dominated committees in many localities poses a dilemma for agencies trying to assist the Somali community to recover from the present crisis: on the one hand, the elders have proved to be instrumental in ensuring the survival of many communities and must be supported if genuine recovery is to take place; on the other, a way must be found for the elders to take greater account of women's vital contribution and need for access to mainstream resources.

Women's behaviour has been under stricter control since the coming of foreign troops to Somalia to oversee relief distribution. One woman who was suspected of being over-friendly with French soldiers was stripped, beaten and imprisoned, to be rescued eventually by a women's organisation. A representative of the organisation was reported as saying that the incident 'highlights the powerlessness of women and lack of respect for them in this society'.

When the State is back, how will it respond to women?

In the absence of a national government one cannot talk of the State in Somalia. In future however, the apparatus of the state will reappear. It is difficult to predict whether the war will have had a lasting effect on social attitudes towards women. Pessimists point out that the previous government had generally positive policies towards women's rights and had introduced legal changes (in women's status in marriage and divorce, for example) which were generally advantageous towards women; many of these policies may in future be discredited by association. However, the present situation contains some positive signs, such as the emergence of genuine women's organisations for mutual support.

Main points

- 1 The situation of women in Somalia highlights the vital needs that women have in conflict situations: particularly for personal protection and for safe access to the means to continue economic activity, whether it be agriculture, animal rearing or commerce.
- 2 In a situation of such severity, male attitudes towards women may harden and it may become even more difficult than usual for women to be accepted as partners in economic activities and in community councils.
- 3 Opportunities exist in even the most desperate situations. Community mechanisms can be very resilient and building on them offers the best hope of guaranteeing people's survival both in the short and long term.

(Source: Judy El-Bushra, ACORD, 1993.)

Identifying women's needs in conflict

- 1 Women's role in the survival of their families and communities is critical. Efforts to support women may be important for their own sake, but in conflict situations they are essential.
- 2 Women's ability to survive and support others must be seen holistically, addressing issues of personal psychology, protection of and by women, economic resources and activities, community support, and national and international issues of governance, representation and human rights.
- 3 Women's capacity to extend their economic performance depends not only on access to the means of production, but also to community fora in which their needs can be addressed, as equal and active community members.
- 4 Women's health issues have to be seen in a total context of collapse of services and support systems as well as of the range and depth of suffering women experience in conflict. Women's health in conflict covers issues of psychological and social adjustment, personal integrity, injury and disability as well as physical and reproductive health.
- 5 Conflict dramatically increases levels of violence against women, whether from the actual fighting or not. Personal violence is a major threat to women's well-being and hence to the integrity of communities. Violence against women must be addressed at different levels — locally, nationally, and internationally, and further research should be promoted into the factors which enhance it.
- 6 Trauma is a largely unrecognised outcome of conflict for men, women and children. It needs to be researched and measures taken to help people recover from it at both personal and community levels. Men and women react to psychological stress differently, with women's needs for supportive social networks frustrated by the lack of privacy and opportunities to have intimate conversations with friends and kin.. Meeting men's needs in overcoming trauma may be of direct benefit to women if they lead to more egalitarian relationships.
- 7 Women's principal focus of identity tends to be the family. It is at the family level

that conflict can cause women much distress and at the same time it is the family that may offer the most solace and security. Demographic imbalance — more women than men, more female-headed households — limits women's marriage prospects.

- 8 Women's 'invisibility' and the highly personal nature of some of their problems means that identifying their needs cannot be done by superficial methods of assessment.
- 9 It is essential to recognise the positive outcomes of conflict as well as the negative ones. Women already do so through their efforts to protect, mediate and promote peace, and through their emerging organisations. New roles and new opportunities may emerge for women in times of conflict: men also have to adjust in various ways, and new arrangements and new attitudes can be judiciously nurtured by NGOs with an appropriate strategic vision.

Women's issues in the context of conflict

1 Women-headed households:

temporary, in the context of displacement until reunited with spouse in original place of residence; or

permanent, in the context of death of spouse, or resettlement in a far away place without the spouse who may have decided to stay behind in the conflict area or join the armed forces.

Specific problems:

- 1 Increased burdens as women are left alone to care for children and the aged.
- 2 Issue of survival/increased marginalisation in a society where the sexual division of labour determines allocation of resources, rights and opportunities (statistics from Third World countries show that women-headed households tend to be the poorest).
- 3 More vulnerable to sexual abuse (though women who have their spouses around have also been raped, some in front of their defenceless and fearful spouses).
- 4 Mental stress/psychological impact of war and its consequences; women have to attend to the needs of family members who have been scarred by war even while they suffer severe stress themselves, and the damage and vulnerability caused by conflict.

2 Sexual abuse and harassment, in the context of the following:

within area/community of conflict, during operations (civilians caught in the war, local or international);

under interrogation/detention by military;

when seeking welfare assistance (e.g. evacuation, food, water, health services).

Forms of sexual abuse/specific problems:

- 1 Rape: military/political rape (repeated rape by one man/multiple rape).
- 2 Sexual harassment: threat of sexual abuse; humiliation through verbal vulgarities and abuse by men; vulnerability to touching of sensitive/private parts by men.
- 3 Sexual slavery: in the context of forced, regular sexual favours through the mistress system.

- 4 Sexual commodification: military prostitution, as an established institution/culture of patriarchy.

3 Severe condition of reproduction-related responsibilities among women civilians caught in the midst of military operations/total war tactics and strategies:

Specific problems: (outside of sexual abuse and harassment, and as women-headed households)

- 1 As food producers, procurers and preparers: increased hardship due to food blockades, no man's land (limited mobility), food quotas, economic constriction, devastation of livestock/crops;
- 2 As household health managers: increased hardship due to bombings and strafing resulting in deaths in the household, deaths of infants and children due to malnutrition and outbreak of epidemics, cutting-off of institutional support, limited mobility;
- 3 As child-carers: unimagined hardship due to all of the above, as managers of children during evacuations, bombing, etc.
As pregnant and lactating mothers: malnutrition, physical and emotional stress.
- 4 Women's health: (there is a need to separate this as an issue since most often, it is only the health of children and mothers which is addressed in the context of relief assistance during armed conflicts and in evacuation centres)

Specific health problems:

- 1 Malnutrition among women.
- 2 Maternal health;
- 3 Psychological/emotional stress or instabilities resulting from war and its consequences (death, dislocation, rape, etc.).
- 4 Physical disabilities/illnesses arising from war that make it difficult for women to carry out critical reproductive roles.
- 5 Sexually transmitted diseases and/or viral/bacterial infection: may be due to rape, inadequate/poor sanitation; often overlooked by women themselves; if unattended, may lead to more serious reproduction-related illnesses such as cancer.

(Source: Gigi Francisco, Women's Resource and Research Centre, April 1991)

Drawing lessons from case studies

Objectives

- 1 To draw lessons from the case studies in **Activity 60**.
- 2 To provide a framework to look at gender in conflict.

Method

- 1 Explain the activity and distribute the coloured cards (1 set, or 1 card per person; in a large group, each person has one card; in a smaller group, each person could have a set of four). Explain that each colour represents a different level: personal, family, community, State.
(5 mins)
- 2 Ask each participant to write on their card one lesson they have learnt about the impact of conflict, at the level their card represents.
- 3 Ask the participants to bring the cards and stick them to the board. Ask two participants to help out in organising the cards by common issue at each level.
(20-30 mins)
- 4 Read out the cards and using the lessons learned, present the broad outline of the way conflict affects gender at all levels.
(20-30 mins)

Materials

32 cards (4 colours)
Blutak or Sellotape

Facilitator's Notes

1 As the previous activity (60) presents a considerable amount of information, it is important to come back to the issues after a break, to give participants a chance to absorb and process the information. Using cards helps to make it more graphic and direct.

2 Use bright, distinct colours for cards to make the levels clear.

Capacities and vulnerabilities analysis

Objectives

- 1 To provide participants with a tool to analyse people's needs in times of crisis.
- 2 To look at ways of identifying women's and men's strengths and weaknesses during crisis.
- 3 To look at agency interventions in emergencies.

Method

- 1 Present the Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis framework to participants, based on **Handout 70**, allowing time for questions, and using flipcharts or OHP to show charts. (30 mins)
- 2 Ask the participants to form groups of three or four, and give each participant a copy of the El Salvador case study **Handout 72**, to read through. (10 mins)
- 3 When they have read the case study, give each group two copies of the matrix on **Handout 71** and ask them to fill out one chart for the situation of the refugees before they fled; and when that is completed, to fill in the second chart for the situation of the refugees during their time in the camp. (30 mins)
- 4 In the large group, ask each group to report back briefly on their analysis. Ask them to identify any difficulties. Was there sufficient information? (20-30 mins)
- 5 Sum up the session, highlighting:
 - a Gender relations change in conflict situations.
 - b Despite negative impact, conflict opens up opportunities for change.

- c In most situations, people have resources/capacities for survival.
- d Women's capacities have been ignored far too often; this leads to discrimination and can make a project inefficient.
- e Disaster-preparedness requires a gradual understanding of capacities and vulnerabilities to be able to respond without undermining men and women.

Materials

Flipchart, pens, **Handouts 70, 71, and 72.**

Facilitator's Notes

1 This framework could also be used with other case studies in this section—for example the Uganda and Somalia cases in Activity 60. These two case studies provide a picture of situations rather than specific interventions. If you use CVA with one of them, you could adapt the activity by asking the participants to fill out the chart, and then respond to the question: What could your agency do to reduce vulnerabilities and increase capacities in this situation?

*2 Before teaching this method, it would be advisable to look at the original book, if possible: **Rising from the Ashes; Development Strategies in Times of Disaster**, by Mary B. Anderson and Peter J. Woodrow, published by UNESCO and Westview Press, 1989.*

3 Make sure you don't allow participants to make any assumptions and guesses where the information is insufficient—challenge these if they appear.

4 Please bear in mind that this framework, like the Harvard frameworks, requires detailed information of the kind it is difficult to provide in a Manual like this. Ideally, CVA should be used with a situation with which the facilitator or participant is very familiar. They should present the case study, and be able to answer questions which participants ask in order to fill out the matrix. CVA should always be applied first to a situation, and can then be applied to the intervention to assess whether capacities and vulnerabilities were identified by the project and appropriately addressed.

Capacities and vulnerabilities analysis (CVA)

‘Development is a process by which vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities are increased.’

The Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis was developed by the Harvard International Relief and Development Project by Mary B. Anderson and Peter J. Woodrow. It is outlined in *Rising From the Ashes: Development Strategies in Times of Disaster*, by Mary B. Anderson and Peter J. Woodrow published by UNESCO and Westview Press Inc. It is a tool intended to help predict the outcome of interventions as well as assess them by mapping out the strengths and weaknesses of people in an emergency.

CVA is based on the central idea that people’s existing strengths, or capacities, and weaknesses, or vulnerabilities, determine the way they respond to crisis. The aim of interventions in emergencies should be to increase, in the long term, people’s capacities and reduce their vulnerabilities. This is a developmental approach to relief in emergencies.

- **Capacities:** are the existing strengths in individuals and social groups. They are related to people’s material and physical resources, their social resources and their beliefs and attitudes. They are built over time and determine people’s ability to cope with crisis and recover from it.
- **Vulnerabilities:** are the long-term factors which weaken the ability of people to cope with sudden onset or drawn-out emergencies. They also make people more susceptible to disasters. Like capacities, they are also categorised in CVA into material/physical, social/organisational and attitudinal/motivational.

It is important to distinguish **vulnerabilities** from **needs**. **Needs** are immediate requirements for survival or recovery from crisis. They are often addressed by short-term, practical interventions (such as relief food). Vulnerabilities require the long-term strategic solutions which are part of development work.

Capacities, vulnerabilities and needs are differentiated by gender — as they are by other factors, such as race, caste, class, ethnicity and age. Women and men experience crisis differently, according to their gender roles. They have different needs and interests. Women, by virtue of their lower economic, social, and political status, tend to be more vulnerable to crisis. They may also be more open to change, and gender roles can change rapidly as a result of emergencies. CVA enables these forms of social differentiation to be taken into account and mapped out on the matrix. (See **Handout 39**)

The CVA framework distinguishes three categories of capacities and vulnerabilities. These are:

- **Physical or Material:** these include features of the land, climate and environment where people live, or lived before the event; their health, skills, housing, technologies, water and food supply; their access to capital and other assets. All of these will be different for women and for men. While women and men suffer material deprivation during crisis, they always have some resources left, such as recoverable goods or skills. These are capacities upon which agencies can build.
- **Social or Organisational:** this category refers to the social fabric of a population or group, and includes structures like families and kinship groups such as clans, social and political organisations, and systems for distributing goods and services. Gender analysis in this category is crucial, for women's roles in these different forms of organisation differ widely. Decision-making in social groups may exclude women, or women may have well-developed exchange systems of labour and goods. Divisions on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity or class can weaken the social fabric of a group, increasing its vulnerability.
- **Motivation and Attitudes:** these include cultural and psychological factors which may be based on religion, on the people's history of crisis, on their expectation of emergency relief. When people feel victimised and dependent, they may become fatalistic and passive, and suffer a decrease in their capacities to cope with the situation, and to recover from it. Their vulnerabilities can be increased by inappropriate relief aid, which does not build on their own abilities, develop confidence, or provide people with opportunities for change.

CVA is a flexible tool:

- The matrix model can be adapted to take into account all forms of social differentiation, such as gender, class, caste, age, race, ethnicity and so on.
- By applying it over time, it can be used to assess change, particularly those in gender relations as a result of the emergency, and of agency interventions.

- There is constant interaction between the six boxes in the basic matrix. Vulnerabilities and capacities are related to each other, and changes in one affect the others. For example, increasing people's social organisation may reduce their vulnerability to material loss, and increase group confidence. This helps to predict and assess the impact of relief and development work.
- CVA can be used at different levels — from community, to national, regional and even international levels, thus enabling links between the different levels to be assessed.

(Adapted from *Rising from the Ashes: Development Strategies in Times of Disaster*, by Anderson and Woodrow, Westview Press, 1989)

Handout 71

Activity 62

Capacities and vulnerabilities analysis matrix

	Vulnerabilities	Capacities
Physical/material What productive resources, skills, and hazzards exist?		
Social/organisational What are the relationships and organisation among people?		
Motivational/attitudinal How does the community view its ability to create change		

Source: *Rising from the Ashes* Andersen & Woodrow, Westview Press, 1989

Gender disaggregation

	Vulnerabilities		Capacities	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Physical/material				
Social/organisational				
Motivational/attitudinal				

Disaggregation by economic class

	Vulnerabilities			Capacities		
	rich	middle	poor	rich	middle	poor
Physical/material						
Social/organisational						
Motivational/attitudinal						

El Salvador refugees

Background

El Salvador is the smallest Central American republic, a densely populated and mountainous country, most of whose citizens depend on subsistence farming. However, the wealth created by the major export crops — coffee and cotton — was concentrated in the hands of only 14 families. For generations, these same families also dominated the government and the armed forces. El Salvador has suffered military rule for much of the twentieth century.

In the early 1970s, the export market collapsed, leaving 40 per cent of the rural population both landless and jobless. Peasant families could not survive on the maize and beans they produced on their poor land. Throughout El Salvador, poor men and women formed organisations to press for fairer distribution of the country's resources. Their peaceful demands for political and economic change were met, however, with brutal repression. Political and religious leaders, including the Archbishop of San Salvador, were assassinated by right-wing death squads. By 1980, a cruel counter-insurgency war had been unleashed, which was to cost the lives of more than 70,000 civilians by the end of the decade.

More than one in four Salvadorans became displaced within their own country, or fled elsewhere. Over a period of six months, some 9,000 refugees from the remote department of Morazan fled to Colomoncagua — 5km across the Honduran border — where they survived for nine years in an enclosed camp, under military surveillance. The escape was fraught with danger, as the groups of refugees had to walk across rough terrain, avoiding military ambush and eating what they could find on the way. Some people died en route; women talked about having had to smother their small babies, to stop the sound of crying.

Almost 6,000 of the refugees in Colomoncagua were under the age of 15 when they arrived. Most of the adults were women who were pregnant or with sole responsibility for their children: hardly any families arrived intact. Of the men, most were considerably older (average age 52) — younger men had either been killed, or joined the guerrilla opposition, or remained in El Salvador as civilians, in hiding. There were a small number of elderly women and men, some of whom had lost their entire families.

Deprivation and repression

Morazan is one of the poorest and most neglected parts of El Salvador. There were few schools, clinics or roads, and no sources of employment, apart from farming. One in four households owned no land at all, and about the same proportion were women-maintained. Thus most men, and many women, had to work as agricultural wage labourers in order to survive. Though earnings were below the minimum wage, one man in three would migrate to Honduras during the coffee-picking season, leaving their families to maintain any subsistence farming plot or kitchen garden. However, only one woman in ten had ever left her home area before becoming a refugee. For most rural women, daily life consisted of keeping the household together: getting up at 4 a.m. to grind maize for tortillas, preparing food, caring for their children and families, washing and mending clothes, agricultural work and managing small livestock (poultry, goats, ducks). Only about 15 per cent of households had access to piped water, and under one per cent had electricity.

There were even fewer educational opportunities for children growing up in rural Morazan than in El Salvador as a whole, where only about 25 per cent of children would complete primary school. A boy might have a two in three chance of going to school for a few years. Half as many girls would attend. Only about 15 per cent of adults could read or write, or do simple arithmetic, when they fled the violence: 35 per cent of men and 40 per cent of women had never set foot in a classroom.

Outside the handful of market towns, *campesinos* in Morazan lived in hamlets made up of just a few scattered houses and would rarely have time or opportunity to socialise. As in most rural areas of Latin America, the Catholic church was often the most important focus of getting together to discuss common concerns. The church had become a stimulus to social action in some areas, for example by promoting interest in local development initiatives, such as agricultural cooperatives and primary health care programmes. Amongst a sample of 126 refugees (60 men and 66 women), 28 (10 men and 18 women) had been involved in some kind of social activity: four men and four women were members of agricultural cooperatives, three women belong to church-run mothers' clubs, three men and three women were on school and road committees, one woman had joined a macrame class, another had attended talks on agriculture, and one man had been in a credit bank.

A small number of these people had been Delegates of the Word, or community lay-preachers — 20 per cent of the men and 16 per cent of the women had held some kind of religious office. Outside the church, about 30 per cent of the men had served in local government, usually in some kind of military or police function; this compares with only 3 per cent of women who had been involved in similar activities. However, it was people like these who were most viciously persecuted by the Salvadoran military — accused of being subversive and savagely murdered. By the early 1980s, the military regarded Morazan as a 'free fire zone', saying that anyone found living there was *ipso facto* a guerrilla sympathiser, and should be killed. Large

areas of the department were strafed and bombed. In one village alone, the army slaughtered over 1,000 women, men, children and babies — first shooting them, then cutting off their heads and setting fire to their bodies and belongings.

Only one woman survived, having witnessed the massacre of her entire family, as well as all her friends and neighbours. She began a long and terrifying trek across the border, to the relative safety of Honduras. Many thousands of others did the same. Once there, the refugees nominated representatives to take charge of coordinating essential activities. This was not a simple task for people who had never before lived in such a large settlement, or faced such complex civic responsibilities.

Life in the refugee camps

The circumstances of their arrival in Honduras had a profound effect on the way the refugees were to organise their lives. They had no reason to trust anyone but themselves. In adversity, they looked to each other for support. They wanted to return to El Salvador as soon as it was safe to do so, and saw their unwelcome exile as an opportunity to learn new skills.

Most of the international NGOs which worked with them were development agencies, who constantly stressed the need to address the longer-term dimensions of humanitarian relief. It was clear that the refugees wanted to keep their enforced dependence to the very minimum. Within a few months of their arrival, six of the older men with some experience in tailoring were busy altering the second-hand clothes donated to the refugee community. Soon, with the help of a couple of sewing machines and material provided by a local church organisation, the work was expanded to include shirts, trousers and dresses. Nine years later, every single item of clothing — including underwear, hats and shoes — was manufactured within the camps, in collective workshops which boasted 150 machines and 240 trainees, virtually all of them women and children or youngsters (male and female).

These achievements were replicated across a whole range of traditional activities: hammock-making, pottery, tinsmithing, embroidery, blacksmithing, knitting, musical instrument making, carpentry and shoe-making. The approach was to find an experienced artisan (usually male, since — with the exception of embroidery and knitting — these were male skills) from among the older refugees and establish a training programme to share traditional skills, and to learn new ones. The make-up of the population of Colomoncagua meant that the vast majority of the trainees were necessarily women, children or adolescents. Aid agencies brought in artisans and skilled workers from Europe and elsewhere to upgrade existing methods and modify them for application on a semi-industrial scale.

Participation in the workshops was organised on a rota basis, so that trainees had the chance to acquire a range of work experiences: as they mastered one skill, they

would have the opportunity to move on to another workshop. Almost two-thirds of the refugees — 59 per cent of the women and 63 per cent of the men — learned two or more practical skills during their nine-year exile. The most common skills acquired by the men were: housing construction, vegetable gardening, administration, literacy, car mechanics, tailoring, carpentry, tin-smithing, shoe-making, animal raising, pastoral work, health care, teaching, hammock-making and nutrition. In addition, many men learned the traditionally female skills of: child care and discipline, day care for children and grinding maize. The range of skills acquired by women were very similar (including car mechanics), almost all of which were traditionally male areas of work. However, the women also stressed that the organisational skills they had acquired in running collective kitchens had profoundly changed their lives and opportunities. The system was designed to rationalise the amount of time (and fuel) used in cooking for a large population, thus releasing the majority of women to participate fully in the workshop training programmes and other social activities.

Fluid internal and external communication was a key element in uniting the refugee community. A clandestine newsletter was set up to document what was going on in El Salvador as well as in the other refugee camps in Honduras. Local and international radio and press were routinely monitored, to maintain a community bulletin-board. Contact with the outside world was seen to be vital in increasing the negotiating strength of the refugees. A donation of filming equipment became an opportunity for them to learn how to make documentary videos. As a peasant farmer, the man who became the coordinator of these productions had never even seen a tape recorder before leaving El Salvador.

Most of the women in the camps were solely responsible for maintaining their family group. Many had either been widowed, or their husbands had joined the guerrilla opposition forces. Many women were looking after orphans, in addition to their own children. Initially, a Committee of Mothers came together to use the teaching of the Bible to help them reflect on their bereavement. Their meetings also became a space within which they could, for the first time in their lives, share their experiences as women. They began to ask themselves why, for example, a midwife would be paid half as much again for delivering a boy as a girl. As more women came to join them, the Committees established day-care centres for small children — so that their mothers could get involved in other activities — and also set up embroidery workshops, which gave them an outlet for their feelings. In the early days, their artwork depicted the violence they had fled — bombings, massacres and destruction. In time, they depicted also the life of the camps, full of busy activity and creativity.

Building a future

These achievements were possible only because of the investment in education. This gave people access not just to new skills but also to greater confidence, ability to express themselves, and organisational capacity. In 1981, there was not one refugee teacher or health worker. By 1990, the returnees included 407 teachers and 358 health workers, 'to contribute to a new El Salvador', as their flyers said. On the eve of their departure, there were 6,057 students of both sexes and 299 refugee instructors in self-run formal education programmes. Illiteracy had dropped considerably, though it remained greater amongst women (25 per cent) than amongst men (12 per cent). This probably reflects higher initial levels of female illiteracy, as well as the greater household burdens and deeply-held assumptions about the aptitude of women to study.

What is remarkable is the way in which desperately poor and marginalised Salvadorans of all ages developed the vision and the abilities to take control over their lives and their futures — and refused, ever, to become victims. They have taken all of these skills and experiences, as well as confidence, back with them, to build a new country from the ruins.

A Time-line

Objectives

- 1 To understand changes in programme approaches from an historical perspective.
- 2 To be able to look at the different factors which were decisive in integrating gender into the approach.

Method

Preparation: Ask at least one participant to prepare a case study (see Facilitator's notes).

- 1 Explain that the session presents a tool to understand changes and trends in programme development. Give each person a copy of the Timeline chart (**Handout 74**) to study, meanwhile, draw this chart on a flipchart. (5 mins)
- 2 Ask a participant to present his or her case study, or to tread out the case study in **Handout 73**. Give out **Handout 73** if using that case study.ation
- 3 Ask participants for the critical events, responses, and influencing factors, and fill these in on the timeline chart on the flipchart. Invite participants to ask questions about policy development and the constraints and opportunities faced in introducing gender. (40 mins)
- 4 Sum up the session by:
 - a. Drawing conclusions which may be of general use.
 - b. Highlighting the kind of sources and information which are useful in this exercise. (5-10 mins)

Materials

Handouts74, 75 and 73 ,
Flipchart Pens

Facilitator's Notes

1 This method enables a broader, more dynamic analysis of the programme, not just individual projects.

2 A timeline requires a detailed case study, prepared in advance by one of the participants or facilitating team, who will be able to answer questions. It can help if others also know the programme concerned.

*3 The case study should contain relevant background information, relevant dates, responses and factors affecting responses, and gender issues. See **Handout 59** Designing case studies (**Activity 56**).*

Case study

The evolution of Oxfam's gender strategy in response to conflict in Lebanon

Oxfam's role in Lebanon has evolved in response to the general situation in the country, and in particular to the way the Lebanese NGOs which Oxfam supports have developed their own response to the unfolding war. Factors internal to Oxfam have also played a significant part in determining its policies and actions in Lebanon. This evolution can be seen by looking at four periods of significance in the progress of the war:

- 1 The Israeli invasion, which took place progressively over 1981/3.
- 2 Israeli withdrawal, which precipitated the 'camps war' and others over the period 1985/7, giving rise to massive displacement of populations.
- 3 The height of the Lebanese civil war (1989/90) in which almost the whole country was affected by intense and devastating fighting with huge numbers of casualties.
- 4 The period following the 1990 peace treaty in which security was restored and political and economic reform has been under discussion.

The first of these periods saw the establishment of an Oxfam office in the country channelling relief goods through local NGOs and UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees in the Near East). It is hard to tell how far Oxfam was attuned to gender issues at this time since little documentation survives, but gender was not generally seen as an issue then, either within Oxfam or among the partner NGOs. Some women's groups did exist, often affiliated to political parties — and the majority of NGO field staff were women; however, decision-making was largely in the hands of men. The priority of the NGOs was the struggle to survive under occupation.

During the second period Oxfam began to focus on a number of 'progressive' NGOs, supporting the work they were doing in the fields of relief and rehabilitation

together with primary health care. NGOs — and especially secular ones — were going through a period of religious and political persecution, and Oxfam's aim was to help them to survive. A substantial number of projects supported dealt with women, and employment of a part-time gender project officer was contemplated. The emergency had given rise to an increasing number of female-headed households and many NGOs were starting to work with women on, for example, childcare and income-generation projects. Though staff in the Oxfam office recognised the need to look at women in development (WID) issues, they did not have the skills to deal with them and were in any case swamped by the pressures of the emergency situation.

The third period (civil war) could be characterised as 'business as usual' for Oxfam, which continued to support NGOs and their work in relief at community level. However, staff in the Oxfam office began to think about carrying out a review of the programme's basic assumptions. As far as gender was concerned, WID was definitely recognised as an issue by this time: partner NGOs recognised women as a main target group in this conflict situation, and Oxfam made deliberate attempts to involve women in project-related discussions. However, women's issues were addressed basically at the individual project level, and nothing like a gender analysis had appeared at this stage.

During the latest stage, internal factors had a greater bearing on developments. Oxfam's strategic planning process was in place, and within the Lebanon, Oxfam began discussions with partners on thinking afresh about their and Oxfam's strategies, and identifying for the first time a coherent shape and direction for the Lebanon programme. Gender and the environment emerged as main themes in the future programme, helped both by incorporating gender into the strategic planning process, and also by the NGOs' awareness of the word — an awareness sparked off in part by the new-found habit of donor agencies to link gender to funding.

The present situation is that political and economic reform and the optimism of the Middle East peace process is coinciding with Oxfam's first year of strategic planning. Gender training and a new gender analysis within the country's own context are in process, and gender will be promoted within a joint review with partners. The atmosphere within Oxfam is now conducive to gender work and there is a consensus on gender within the Lebanon office. The peace process provides some space to discuss gender issues, even though it may ultimately not succeed. Lebanese NGOs are having to consider their position on gender issues very carefully, partly because of the increasing conditionality of donor agencies who believe the Lebanon is no longer an emergency situation, and partly because they — like Oxfam — will soon be having to take religious fundamentalism into account more seriously than they have before.

Main points

- 1 In the Lebanon, the growth of local NGOs has been closely linked to the course of the war and the emergency needs of the people.
- 2 Oxfam's view of its role has been oriented towards developing solidarity with its partners and helping to ensure their survival through very difficult times, and this gives Oxfam the credibility to raise new issues such as gender in a positive environment.
- 3 Gender awareness in Oxfam and its partners has been stimulated by the needs of the situation in the Lebanon, and also encouraged by institutional factors within Oxfam.
- 4 In order to promote discussion of gender issues among its partners, Oxfam recognises the need first to equip its own staff with appropriate skills.

Handout 74

Activity 63

Time Line

Dates	Critical Events (These can be external such as changes in government, laws, disasters, conferences, or internal such as new staff, workshops etc.)	Your team's responses	The gender element in responses	Internal factors affecting your response	External factors

A note on the use of time-lines

A time-line is a way of charting the evolution of trends, showing how past events led to the present situation and illustrating recurring themes.

A time-line is constructed by looking back over a given period and ‘mapping’ critical events. This provides the opportunity to discuss with people who were there at the time:

what really happened and why;

what were the factors contributing to the events;

whether core trends can be observed and what they are;

which of these core trends may be expected to continue into the future.

A time-line is best constructed by a group of people, including both those with direct knowledge of the events concerned, and those without that knowledge who can ask questions. It may be a useful tool for conducting participatory research at grassroots level, especially since it makes use of and validates the knowledge and experience of older people. It may also be used as a planning tool within agencies, helping them to assess what conditions are necessary for the achievement of goals, and illustrating areas of ‘core competence’ which the agency has.

Debate on gender in situations of conflict

Objectives

- 1 To initiate the debate on incorporating a gender perspective in interventions during situations of conflict.

Method

- 1 Explain that this is a role-play of a panel discussion in a television studio where a journalist is interviewing two members of two international NGOs: Voice for All and Save the World. Choose actors to be the journalist, NGO workers, camera person, make-up person. The rest of the group are the studio audience.
- 2 The journalist interviews members of the panel: introduces members and gives the background of the organisations.
(10 mins)
- 3 Each NGO presents an opposing view: Voice for All believes that it is necessary to integrate gender in conflict response. Save the World is totally opposed to integrating the gender perspective .
(15 mins)
- 4 The journalist opens the debate. A maximum of three questions are asked of each NGO worker by the studio audience.
- 5 The camera follows the debate. The audience can try and interrupt, clap or boo.
(30 mins)
- 6 The journalist closes the debate, highlighting the main issues.. *(5 mins)*

Materials

Paper	Props
Camera	Microphones
Make-up person	Camera operator

Facilitator's Notes

1 This session is suitable only for groups with a fairly sophisticated understanding of and familiarity with television. When it was used in a conflict workshop in 1992, it generated a very lively and funny debate. Presenters were selected for their acting skills. However, all the participants in the workshop were urban-based development professionals familiar with TV culture. With other groups, you may find a different form of the role-play would be more suitable — such as a village meeting, an NGO country or local office, etc.

2 If you have a video camera available, you could video this debate and use it as a training tool in a subsequent session or workshop.

Gender and environment myths

Objectives

- 1 To discuss a variety of myths and stereotypes frequently encountered in relation to gender and environmental issues.
- 2 To raise awareness of the power and effects of myths and stereotypes in decision making.

Method

- 1 Preparation: take a few key points from **Handout 76 Gender and Natural Resource Management**, and list them on flipchart or acetate for an overhead projector. Present the myths and discussion points outlined in *Facilitator's Notes*.
- 2 Make a short presentation, allowing time for a brief discussion in the whole group.
(10-15 mins)
- 3 Divide participants into small groups of five or six people and ask them to work on the following questions:
 - a What assumptions/myths about gender and the environment do you know of?
 - b Why have these myths developed?
 - c Can or should these myths and stereotypes be changed?
 - d How do they influence your work? *(30 mins)*
- 4 Ask each group to feed back to the plenary on their discussions.
- 5 Note down on flipchart some of the assumptions and myths participants have identified, and what suggestions came up about how they influenced participants' work, and how this could be tackled.
- 6 Give out **Handout 76**.

Materials

Flipchart, pens, **Handout 76**

Facilitator's Notes

1 There are a number of myths regarding the participation of women in agroforestry, cited in **Agroforestry: Four Myths and a Case Study**, by Fortmann and Rocheleau:

- Women are housewives and are not heavily involved in agricultural production.
- Women are not significantly involved in tree production and use.
- Every woman has a husband or is part of a male-headed household.
- Women are not influential or active in public affairs.

2 Gender myths include: (see also Activity 35 *Myths and Effects*, and use some of the myths already identified by the group instead of, or as well as, these listed below)

- Women are submissive and men are aggressive.
- Men are ruled by the mind and women by the heart.
- Women cannot get along together while men are by nature team players.
- Women are better at fine, meticulous work because they are patient and their hands are smaller.

3 Myths related to natural resources include:

- Trees use light better than bushes because they are taller.
- Cattle should not be kept in semi-arid scrub lands because they contribute to deforestation.
- Trees should never be cut.

4 Discussion points:

- a. Why is it important to question commonly held myths or stereotypes in the environmental arena?
- b. What is the relative influence of myths and stereotypes on various groups (women, men, local decision-makers), and on state policy, and project initiatives and implementation?
- c. What are the values and roles of myths in social processes? Can you use old and new myths to accomplish your development goals? What are the ethics of manipulating myths from the 'outside'?

5 This activity has been adapted from the **Gender and Environment: Lessons from Social Forestry and Natural Resource Management**, published by Aga Khan Foundation Canada, referred to in the Introduction to this section, with some suggestions from Irene Guijt, of IIED.

6 The activity works well if visual images can be used. It has been used with the video **Questions of Difference** (see Resources Section), showing the section 'Images and Realities' to the group. If this video is not available, other visual images could be used showing women and men interacting with their environment. These images would have to be selected to demonstrate some common myths or wrong assumptions.

Gender and natural resource management: an introduction

How we manage our global natural resources — soil, water, air, flora and fauna — has become an issue of unprecedented concern. The goals of natural resource management — *productivity and efficiency, distribution and equity, and conservation and environmental quality* — often raise more questions than solutions. Although progress toward these goals may be at times uncertain and inconsistent, the transition from advocacy to action has already begun to take place.

The interest in the environment has not always included a concern for the role of women. However, because of pioneering accounts of the role of women in agriculture dating from the 1960s and 1970s, the importance of women in rural wage, proprietary, and household sectors has received increasing attention. The stereotype of ‘invisible’ women in rural economies is slowly declining in influence, as is the myth of an earth with perpetually renewable resources.

Deforestation has received the widest notoriety as a symptom of environmental degradation. One of its most forceful illustrations has been the social, economic, and environmental costs of fuelwood scarcity to women and their families. Time allocation studies of women’s work have illuminated with frightening clarity the hours and days spent collecting combustible material for the preparation of cooked food.

Other productive activities for the household are equally affected by decreases in natural resource availability. The capability of land to support grazing and fodder production for household livestock has declined, especially in areas of sparse or sporadic rainfall. Access to and control over water for household use remains problematic in many regions. Loss of forest habitat that supplied supplementary foods, fibres, medicines, and other goods has adversely affected not only household maintenance requirements but small-scale rural and household industries.

It seems that the least powerful sectors of society suffer first from loss of access to natural resources: women with their primary responsibilities for household maintenance and wide-ranging productive work; forest-dwelling peoples dependent

on forest habitat for sustenance and trade goods; landless people dependent on wage labour and common property for their livelihoods. Ultimately, however, the effects of mismanagement of natural resources also reach the powerful.

Our focus is on gender and environment, with primary examples drawn from social forestry and natural resource management. There is no intention to imply that only women can undertake new and constructive steps toward the wise stewardship of natural resources. However, programmatic attempts to integrate women into active responsibility for natural resource management are a recent phenomenon. They require increased awareness of gender differences and disparities, new sets of social and technical skills, and a decided revision of the traditional worldview that only men manage resources outside the household.

Gender and natural resource management

The natural resource management components of development programmes have expanded rapidly in the last two decades, responding to regional fuel, fodder, and water scarcities, soil degradation, and to decline in forest cover. Women are frequently identified as direct participants and beneficiaries of natural resource development programmes, and yet there has been inconsistent success in ensuring that women benefit in this way.

Many of the constraints to women's participation and benefit have been identified. These include:

- lack of access to technical education and training, credit, extension information, material inputs, markets, and funding;
- lack of input into planning and decision-making processes;
- lack of ownership and tenure rights to land, trees, water, and other natural resources;
- inequitable distribution of goods and services supplied from natural resources;
- differing perceptions between women and men, and between agencies and participants, about types and allocations of resource use.

The institutional response

Spurred by household studies and gender analysis, international programmes for women, and the rising influence of political and professional women, governments and development organisations have, at a minimum, absorbed the words enabling recognition of women's roles in the process of rural development. One result has been the creation of 'women in development' (WID) divisions in many aid organisations. Their goal has been primarily to improve women's lives through such activities as income-generation, literacy and education projects, provision of support for credit and cooperative schemes. In addition to programming specifically for women's projects, the WID divisions of some development organisations have

undertaken the ‘conscientisation’ of their own colleagues. And in certain organisations, the groundwork has been laid for regulations that would require a gender or women’s component to every project.

On a more extensive scale, governments, supranational and national donor agencies, NGOs, and Private Voluntary Organisations (PVOs) have designed natural resource management programmes and projects. Many of these focus on forest conservation and social forestry, soil conservation and improvement, water capture and distribution, and watershed management. Although, in most cases, the long-term development goal remains increased productivity, both distributional equity and resource stewardship have attained some importance.

Experience has shown that no single sector can be successfully isolated in any development project. Focus cannot be placed only on a farmer’s field; both inputs and outputs inevitably yield unexpected results felt economically, socially, and environmentally. There is an increasing consciousness that management of natural resources takes place in an ecosystem context, in which the consequences may not be measurable or even discernable during a normal project cycle. In the same manner, interventions designed to improve the status of women take place in the context of a human ecology — in their household relationships, their community relationships, and their relationships with the environment around them.

The creative tension between ‘women in development’ and ‘gender’ approaches

Inevitably within any discussion of women’s issues in rural development, there are creative tensions between the necessity to *focus* on women and the equal necessity to recognise their integration into the system in which they live. As we train ourselves to look at women — women as beneficiaries, women as participants, women as trainers, women as disenfranchised, women as losers, women as winners — we must equally train ourselves to look at women and men at various ages and stages, and at the differing perceptions of reality that we may encounter among them.

We frequently encounter these tensions, both theoretically and in practical project implementation. The availability of considerable funding for both women’s programmes and gender analysis studies adds to the tension, but also provides room for reconciliation. When either a gender or a women’s component is overlaid on a natural resource development project, it can be significant. When a gender approach is fully integrated into natural resource management development projects, its potential is much greater.

(Source: Adapted from: ‘Gender and Natural Resource Management: An Introduction’ by Sarah Warren in **Gender and Environment: Lessons from Social Forestry and Natural Resource Management**, Aga Khan Foundation Canada; Toronto, 1992.).

Downstream effects

Objectives

- 1 To practise using an ecosystems approach in development and policy design and planning.
- 2 To analyse the results of interventions (outputs) in order to become aware of the consequences of any action.
- 3 To look at the potential for chain reactions as a result of any intervention.
- 4 To relate 'Downstream Effects' to women's practical and strategic gender needs.

Method

Part 1

- 1 Divide participants into groups of four or five people, and give each group **Handout 77** Impacts of interventions.
- 2 Ask them to analyse at least three of the five hypothetical situations presented, predicting:
 - a. two to three positive medium- and long-term impacts on women and men;
 - b. two to three negative medium- and long-term impacts on women and men.

(45 mins)
- 3 Ask each group to select one member to report back on their work, which should be presented on the flipchart in the form of a matrix for the large group discussion.

(5-7 mins per presentation)

Part 2

- 1 Give each group the two mini case studies in **Handout 78** Downstream effects and ask them to relate the discussion questions on the Handout to each case, and

to the first part of the activity. How could the outcomes of these project interventions have been predicted?

(35 mins)

Materials

Flipchart, **Handouts 77 and 78**.

Facilitator's Notes

1 Not all of the hypothetical situations tie both gender and natural resources management together in obvious ways. Encourage participants to look for relationships and identify the gender dimensions of impacts. You could extend this activity to include more hypothetical situations suggested by participants, or make up your own before the beginning of the workshop. Work out some positive and negative effects for each one yourself, before the workshop, on women, on men, and on both.

2 In the general discussion at the end of the first part, ask participants if they find the 'ecosystem' approach to programming useful.

*3 This activity should be done after Gender and environment myths **Activity 65**. Participants should have read the **Handout 76** related to this activity. It can also only be done after participants have worked through the activities on gender roles and needs in **Sections C.6 and C.7**.*

*(Source: Adapted from **Gender and Environment: Lessons from Social Forestry and Natural Resource Management**, op.cit.)*

Impacts of interventions

Although the law of physics ‘For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction’ may appear irrelevant to social science, there is merit in reminding ourselves of it. Well-intentioned development interventions have often backfired. Regardless of the balance between success and lack thereof, unpredicted secondary and tertiary effects of interventions form the backbone of evaluation literature.

One of the goals of an ecosystems approach is to attempt to predict and weigh the outputs that derive from inputs into a system. For each of the interventions summarised below, predict two to three *positive* long-term impacts and two to three *negative* long-term impacts. Pay careful attention to both biophysical and social, economic, political and cultural results, and to different effects on women and on men.

- A major donor institution establishes a special division that will identify and support appropriate ‘women in development’ projects in five countries. One of the first activities of the division is to organise a symposium, inviting representatives from each of the five countries.
- Foreign producers of DDT are prohibited from selling DDT in a less-developed country. There is no production capacity in the country, but \$5 million is available for alternative malaria-control measures. Barefoot health workers are given a mandate to improve household control measures in the hinterlands.
- For the seventh year, women’s groups protest against groundwater pollution arising from an industrial point source. Following publicity related to violence during the last protest season, numerous small grants have been awarded to the best-known protest group.
- A South-east Asian country bans the export of teak harvested from its own forests. It bans all logging in its own forests, and expands a programme of enrichment planting in already-logged forests. It intends, however, to remain a trade centre for timber shipments.
- Private foreign investors, under protest from environmentalists, withdraw plans for construction of a highway connecting the Amazon basin with the Pacific Ocean.

(Source: Adapted from: *Gender and Environment: Lessons from Social Forestry and Natural Resources Management*, op.cit).

Downstream effects

The following two mini-cases illustrate real situations in Southern India. They relate 'downstream effects' to an analysis of the practical needs and strategic interests of women. Although the information may seem sketchy, it is surprising how much you can extrapolate, using your own experiences.

Toymakers project

The State Handicrafts Corporation planned to expand the sale of its handicrafts to a European catalogue market. A tribal group used a simple foot-powered lathe system to make small toys. The corporation gave the group a loan to electrify their lathe, and it hired a foreign toy designer to teach the toymakers about new designs and colours.

Most of the toymakers were young women. They purchased special wood, which was the only local wood suitable for turning on a lathe, from the Forest Department. However, as the group's wood needs increased, the Forest Department was unable to meet them consistently because this wood had been over-harvested from the natural forest.

Discussion questions:

- a. Does this activity address women's practical needs, strategic interests, or both? Does it have the potential to do so?
- b. What changes might be made to this activity to help it to address women's strategic needs?
- c. Do any of the myths that you have recently explored relate to this situation?

Tendu leaves project

In a remote village in Kerala, women collected *tendu* leaves (*Diospyros melanozylon* which are used to wrap local cigarettes called *bidi*) from the natural forest and dried them around their household cooking fires. They sold the dried leaves to middlemen to supplement household income.

Personnel from a local rural development project suggested that fuelwood would be saved if a charcoal-fired drying centre was constructed in the village. They proposed that the women form a cooperative and bring their leaves to the drying centre.

However, over the years one man gained control of the cooperative and interceded with middlemen, so the women were forced to sell their undried leaves to this man. They had to collect more *tendu* leaves and made less money than they had before project personnel intervened.

An energy audit of the project found that 50 per cent more fuel wood was being used than prior to the project.

Discussion questions:

- a. Does this activity address women's practical needs, strategic needs, or both? Does it have the potential to do so?
- b. What changes might be made to this activity to help it to address women's strategic needs?
- c. Do any of the myths that you have recently explored relate to this situation?

(Source: Adapted from: *Gender and Environment: Lessons from Social Forestry and Natural Resource Management*, op.cit).

Drawing livelihoods

Objectives

- 1 To draw the links between the activities of women and men and their use of natural resources.
- 2 To identify the ways in which natural resource use is differentiated by gender.

Method

- 1 Ask the participants to form the same sub-groups they were in for the 24-hour day **Activity 36**.
- 2 Give each group some flipchart and pens, ask them to use their 24-hour day charts and identify those of the activities they had noted down which require some form of natural resource.
- 3 Ask participants to reflect on all the different components related to the tasks (e.g. fetching water requires a water source, a jar which might be made of clay) and draw them on the flipchart. Participants should identify clearly which resources are used by women, by men, and by both.
- 4 Ask participants to identify which resources were important to women's and men's different roles — reproductive, productive, and community.
(45 mins)
- 5 Put the flipcharts up on the wall, and draw out the main points in the plenary.
(15 mins)

Materials

Flipchart, pens, participants' 24-hour day charts.

Facilitator's Notes

1 This activity should be done after participants have learned the 24-hour day, and the Analysing roles and needs (Activities 36 and 37). Ideally, it should follow immediately after them.

2 This activity was used successfully in a workshop in Burkina Faso on PRA, Gender and the Environment, on the first day.

(Source: Irene Guijt, IIED.)

Structural adjustment

Part 1 Objectives

- 1 To understand Structural Adjustment Programmes.
- 2 To identify the impact of SAPs on gender roles.

Method

- 1 Explain the history of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), using a prepared flipchart adapted for the country or regional experience of participants (see **Handout 79**).
(10-15 mins)
- 2 Brainstorm the main elements of SAPs. Write the list on flipchart.
(10-15 mins)
- 3 Divide the group into the same small groups as for the ‘24 hour day’ activity (**Activity 36**), to consider the following questions.
 - a. How will, or how has, SAP affected the life of the particular man and woman studied in the 24-hour day exercise? Consider particularly
 - i. Government cutbacks in health
 - ii. Government cutbacks in education.
 - iii. Government cutbacks in support to small producers.
 - b. What are the implications of these effects on our projects?
(20-30 mins)
- 4 Ask each group to report back, and lead a general discussion about the implications.
(20-30 mins)
- 5 Give out handouts at the end of the session.

Materials

Prepared flipchart, flipcharts and marker pens
Handouts 79 and 80

Facilitator's Notes

*1 This activity should be done after **Activity 37 Analysing Roles and Needs in Section C.3**). Add any particular facts about Structural Adjustment Programmes in a relevant country to the information on **Handout 79**, to write on the flipchart for the first part.*

2 Add on any of the main elements of SAPs which may be omitted in the group brainstorm. Draw particular attention to the reduction of government spending by reducing and eliminating subsidies; reducing wages and salaries; increasing and introducing user fees for basic services such as health.

Part 2: Structural adjustment and gender needs

Objective

1 To identify the impact of SAPs on gender needs.

Method

1 Put up the flipcharts of the history and the main elements of SAPs and also the flipcharts of examples of practical and strategic gender needs (**Activity 38**).

2 In small groups discuss the likely changes to practical and strategic gender needs as a result of SAPs.

3 Each group reports back in turn, one change at a time, and the facilitator writes answers on a flipchart, only adding new ideas, until all changes are listed.

4 Discuss in a large group the implications for your organisation.

Materials

Previously prepared flipcharts.

Facilitator's Notes

*1 **Activity 38** on gender needs must be done before this, but it need not be immediately before. Re-read the notes for the activity as they apply here also.*

2 This activity raises political issues. You need to guard against despondency that we can't do anything. You need to be aware that debt and SAPs are a problem for everyone, not just women, but to make the point clearly that, when talking about debt and SAPs, gender analysis is vital in order to understand the way in which women and men are affected differently. This is often particularly evident at the household and productive level, and is invisible unless drawn out by gender analysis.

Debt and structural adjustment:

After decades of fairly steady progress during which mortality rates fell and life expectancy rose, the 1980s saw a major tragic reversal in the human condition. The main cause of the reversal was not a sudden deterioration in the internal policies of developing countries but in the external conditions they faced, due to adverse changes in the world economy.

In most parts of the world, the 1950s and 1960s, and to some extent the 1970s, had been a time of fairly steady progress in terms of economic growth and trade liberalisation. But in the early 1970s the rise in oil prices forced many countries to borrow heavily in order to meet the big additional costs which resulted; those who could switched to private borrowing and more or less managed to maintain economic growth. And at the end of the 1970s came a further series of shocks.

First, in 1978-79, was a new rise in oil prices, which precipitated a major world recession from which the industrialised countries have still not fully recovered; their growth rates were only half or two-thirds those of the 1970s, and this in turn depressed markets in the Third World. The second major shock was the unprecedented fall in commodity prices, which has still not been reversed. In 1988 alone, Africa lost something in the region of \$19 billion. And the third shock was rising protectionism in the industrialised countries; Third World countries had to pay higher prices for imports while receiving lower prices for exports. The fall in their purchasing power meant that they could import much less than before.

Not only could they no longer earn what they needed, they could no longer borrow it either, for interest rates rose to enormous heights in the early 1980s — to 18-20 per cent. In addition, private lending simply disappeared in the 1980s, and development aid stagnated. A net positive inflow of \$38 billion to the capital account of developing countries in 1979 was transformed by 1986 into a net negative outflow of \$50 billion — a huge deterioration. Hence the 'debt crisis'.

Developing countries were forced to go to the only lender who would still lend to them: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose programmes called for severe cutbacks in government expenditure, in employment, in credit creation and, wherever possible, in subsidies. As a result, the incomes of the poor were squeezed,

prices rocketed, and basic health and education services were often reduced by the government.

Statistics show that real wages during the 1980s fell by 40 per cent in Mexico; in Ghana they were just a quarter of the level of 1974. Unemployment was over 25 per cent in Jamaica and during the 1980s it rose from 10 per cent to 16 per cent in Chile and from 5 per cent to 11 per cent in Peru. In Latin America the proportion of the labour force in the informal sector increased by some 10 per cent, but here, too, incomes were depressed. Food prices rose steeply. In Ghana even households with two wage-earners had only enough money to purchase 30 per cent of an adequate diet; government expenditure on education in 1982 was only 30 per cent of what had been in 1974 in real terms, and on health only 23 per cent. In Jamaica there was a fall of 40 per cent per head in social service expenditure in the 1980s.

In 1989 the international community was increasingly concerned with the social effects of adjustment programmes, and the attention of governments and international institutions now focuses on the need to minimise the costs of adjustment to the poorer groups and to have adjustment with growth. It is important in this respect to study the specific effect of the crisis upon women.

(Source: Jeanne Vickers, *Women and The World Economic Crisis*, Zed Books, London 1991 .)

The impact of structural adjustment on women

Recent research indicates that in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, the instruments of most stabilisation packages have direct and indirect negative consequences for women. For example, currency devaluation in food importing countries results in rapidly rising food prices. Women are responsible for family food budgets and the increased prices but without any compensatory income. The consequent reduced food intake and malnutrition are measurably greater in the case of girls and women of all ages. This is the case also for pregnant and breast-feeding women. The increased time spent on producing, buying, preparing food brings stress, exhaustion and ill-health for women as family managers. This in turn reduces their effectiveness as carers. The removal of subsidies on food, transport, energy and fuel have similar effects.

Public expenditure cuts in housing, transport, childcare, health and education have well-documented immediate effects and serious long-term implications for future development. Women, who comprise a large number of the lowest-paid public sector employees, are the first to lose their jobs and meagre salaries on which so many family members depend. The burden of coping with these cuts in social programmes is transferred to women's time and personal resources. Rarely mentioned effects of public expenditure cuts are higher rates of women's morbidity and mortality. The effects on birth rates of the reduction or loss of family planning services has yet to be documented. The cuts greatly diminish women's reproductive rights at a time when they are least able to cope.

Adjustment — which encourages the production of goods for export and a one-sided liberalisation of trade and tariffs — has serious implications for women. Export promotion diverts investment away from the production of goods — particularly food, shelter, clothing and transport — for local consumption. Food production on small holdings, largely managed by women, has already suffered from chronic under-investment resulting in poverty, malnutrition and the destruction of national food security in many countries previously self-sufficient, especially in Africa, south of the Sahara.

Research shows that export-oriented production in weak economies rarely transfers technology or skills, creates secure employment, or generates long-term indigenous industry. Furthermore, women's incomes are reduced when food crop production is replaced by cash crops. Liberalisation of trade and tariffs, especially by the least-developed countries, without any reciprocal measures from the United States, Japan or Europe, results in depressed local production and rising unemployment in many cases, especially amongst women. The reduction in purchasing power is differentiated very clearly by gender.

Conclusion

The concept of structural adjustment is based on women's capacity to cope, to continue to carry out their economic and social responsibilities in increasingly adverse conditions, and to deny their own needs and interests for the survival of their families and communities. In short, structural adjustment relies on women providing those services previously provided by the State.

(Source: The National Women's Organisation (NAWO): Women's Strategies to deal with SAPs)

The debt web

Objectives

- 1 To enable participants to understand the links in the international economic system between Third World Debt and women's lives.
- 2 To enable participants to work out those links for themselves.

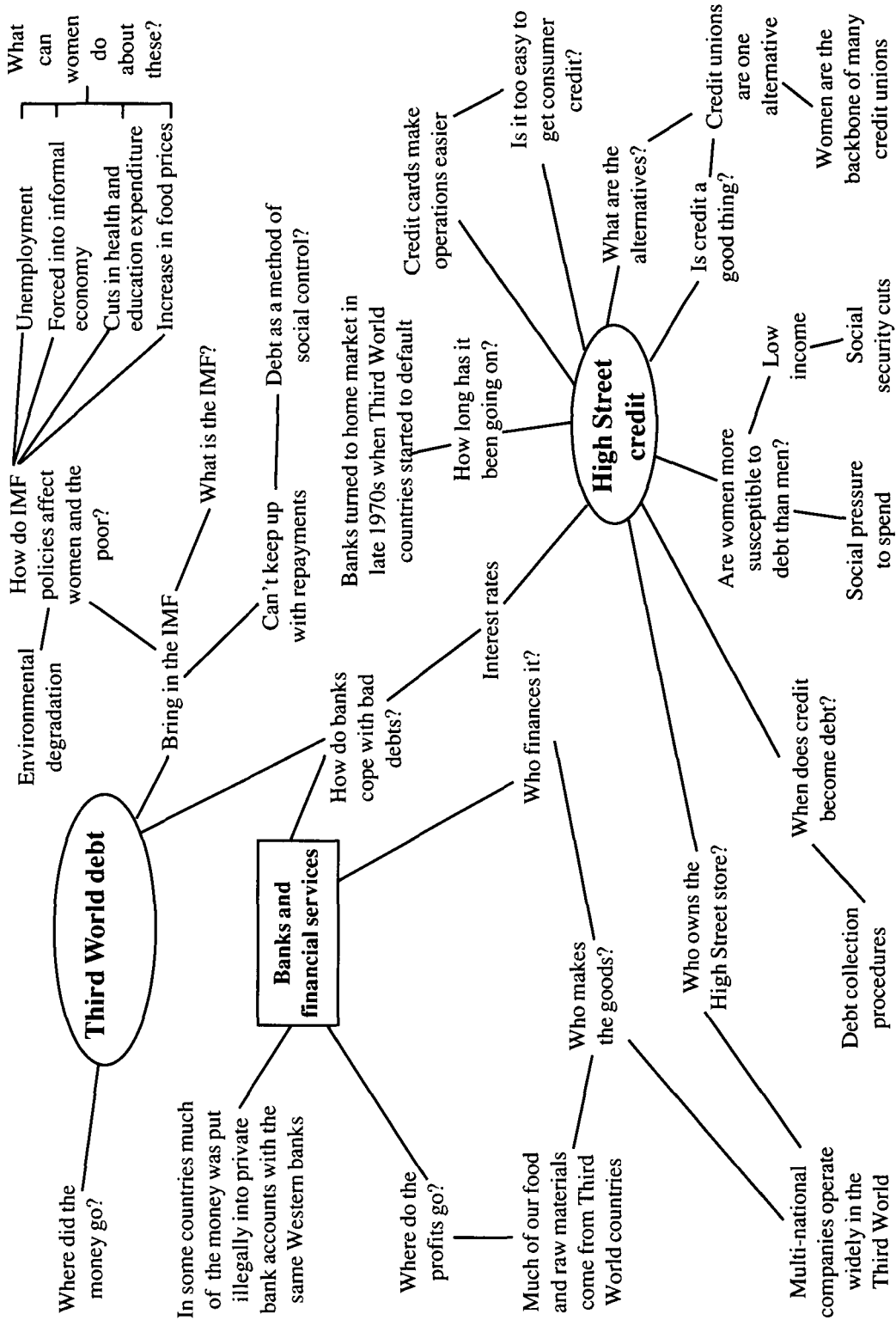
Method

- 1 Prepare a presentation on the human cost of the Debt Crisis, using **Handouts 79** and **80** from the Structural Adjustment **Activity 68** and **Handouts 82** and **83**. Bring in your own information and examples also.
(20 minutes)
- 2 Distribute the Debt Web (**Handout 81**) and ask the participants to form small groups of four or five in order to make their own web. Explain they should start their web by drawing two circles on different parts of a sheet of flipchart, writing 'Third World Debt' in one, and an economic issue of central concern to them in another.
(10 minutes)
- 3 Ask the groups to think of statements and questions that come to mind when they look at the two phrases on their sheet, and organise them into a web linking the two.
(30 minutes)
- 4 Ask the groups to pin their Debt Webs on the wall, and lead a discussion in whole group highlighting some of the main points arising from the activity.*(20 minutes)*

Materials

Handout 81, Flipchart, Pens

A debt web



The Shamba and Mama Florence

Objectives

- 1 To demonstrate some of the effects of the debt crisis on poor women's lives.
- 2 To enable participants to understand the links between the international economic system and Third World women's lives.

Method

- 1 Prepare two participants beforehand to role-play the story on **Handout 82**.
- 2 Ask the two volunteers to perform the role play. Ask the group to listen to and watch what is happening. *(10 mins)*
- 3 After the role play ask participants to work in twos to discuss the following questions for discussion.
 - a. What issues were raised in the role play?
 - b. What similarities can be drawn from the role play from your experiences?*(15 mins)*
- 4 Give participants **Handout 83** Mama Florence.
- 5 Ask them to form groups of three, read **Handout 83** and discuss again the two questions in 3 above, applied to the story in the handout. *(20 mins)*
- 6 In the big group brainstorm the issues that the role play and story highlight. Write these issues on a flipchart.. Bring out the key points that the Handout raises
 - Origins of the crisis
 - In comes the IMF
 - Human cost*(15 mins)*

8 Give participants **Handout 84**, and ask them to read it through.

(5 mins)

9 In the large group, lead a discussion on:

- a. What are some strategies people can use to overcome some of the effects of the debt crisis and SAPs?
- b. What can women do?
- c. What can men do

(15 mins)

Materials

Handout 82, 83 and 84

Flipchart, felt pens

Facilitator's Notes

1 This activity helps to relate SAPs to people's lives. The Shamba story and the Mama Florence story reflect the effect of SAPs on poor women. In an Economic Literacy workshop for Oxfam women partners in Tanzania and Kenya, women began to make links between the lack of drugs in hospitals, the imposition of charges for education, and the lack of support for the cultivation of food crops.

The Shamba

Two women are digging at a communal plot together. The first woman is complaining that the better part of her 'shamba' (field) is full of cotton plants which the government has insisted should be planted for export to help pay the foreign debt. She mentions that the government has to earn foreign exchange (dollars) to pay the debt and to buy goods like machinery. The second woman does not understand what the debt is, what dollars are nor what kind of machinery the government needs to buy. The first woman tries to explain.

In their discussion the second woman mentions a man who has stopped growing cotton in order to plant flowers. They find it extraordinary that someone should use their land to plant flowers.

The first woman then remembers their mutual friend who has been selling 'mandaazi' (doughnuts) very successfully, making 300 shillings in a day. Now she makes less than 80 shillings a day because a bakery has opened nearby and people have stopped buying her mandaazi. The second woman says that it not surprising because the loaves from the bakery are sweeter.

Mama Florence

Florence lives in a poor quarter of Lusaka, Zambia's capital. Prior to the debt crisis, this young woman might have been regarded as one of the better-off in Zambia. But for five years, prices of basic foodstuffs have been rising rapidly and it is more and more difficult to survive on the salary of her husband, a junior clerk in a government office. Often the family have to survive on just one meal a day and they can only afford the luxury of meat on pay day.

Florence's children are becoming more and more sickly: the youngest has developed an acute respiratory infection. The doctor prescribed a course of medicine but the clinic had run out of the drug because the government could only afford enough foreign exchange to import one-seventh of the country's requirements of essential drugs. Florence managed to buy the medicine at a high black-market price — and the family's food allowance for the week went at a stroke. She had to borrow.

A week later, her husband came home with news that, due to the IMF austerity programme, introduced to rescue the economy, the price of maize-meal, the staple food, was going to double. Florence says, 'Suddenly it occurred to me that we just wouldn't survive — we would all go hungry!'

The price rise prompted thousands of the urban poor to take to the streets and riot, and the food subsidy was restored after a few days. Even so, the incident shows just how close to breaking point successive price rises can push a family which was formerly reasonably well off.

Origins of the crisis

In the mid 1970s, the big commercial banks in the United States, Europe and Japan were flooded with dollar deposits — the so-called 'petro-dollars' — made by the oil-exporting countries. The banks began to encourage the bigger and apparently more stable countries in the developing world to borrow heavily on seemingly attractive terms. The poorer countries of Africa borrowed from Western Governments, and the World Bank.

By the late 1970s, the industrialised world was tipping into recession causing the world price of the commodities exported by Third World countries — tin, copper, sugar, coffee, tea — to nosedive. Soaring interest rates raised the annual debt burden on Third World countries six-fold. In 1982, Mexico became the first country to demand a longer period to repay its debts. The banks agreed, but insisted that debtor countries should first reach agreement with the International Monetary Fund on an adjustment programme.

In comes the IMF

IMF adjustment programmes force debtor countries to follow a three-point programme: to control inflation, to boost exports and reduce imports.

Control inflation: Make borrowing more expensive, cut public expenditure, raise the cost of public services, abolish subsidies, for example on basic foodstuffs, and hold back or reduce real wages.

Boost exports: Usually near impossible, with the world economy in recession, and Third World countries in competition with each other.

Reduce imports: Many Third World countries are heavily dependent on imported goods, particularly machinery and equipment. As imports are cut, local economies are thrown into complete disarray.

Meanwhile, the Western banks turned to lending at home, enjoying the consumer-credit boom of the 1980s.

Women pay the price of coping

The human cost of repaying debts to Western banks and financial institutions is devastating, and most particularly to women.

As traditional guarantors of family survival, it is they who are most burdened by making ends meet, who eat last, who are the first to be squeezed out of schooling and jobs, and who pick up the emotional and physical price of coping.

Some of these costs are:

Food and the environment: In rural Africa — as in many other parts of the world — it is women who are primarily the farmers producing food for the family. Their governments' need to earn more and more foreign exchange has led many to hunger and desperation. While forests are destroyed for their exportable timber, and more and more fertile land is given over to cash crops — tea, coffee, sugar cane, tobacco — peasant farmers are forced on to marginal lands. This in its turn leads to more soil degradation, the burning of forests and woodland, and hunger.

Employment: In the drive for exports, and the consequent loss of investment in local industries and public spending, millions have lost their jobs. As family incomes decline and prices rise, women must work longer hours inside and outside the home. In all Third World countries, there has been a dramatic rise in the 'informal' sector as women, men and children try to scratch a living by street-selling, making things in their home, prostitution and begging. In some cases, pressure to expand exports has actually increased the number of jobs available to women, but under extremely exploitative conditions, as in the assembly plants in South-East Asia and along the US-Mexico border.

Health: Government cuts in non-profitable sectors such as health provision hits the poor first, and leaves women to pick up the pieces. As subsidies are lifted from basic foodstuffs and taxes imposed, malnutrition is measurably greater among girls and women. The increased time spent on producing, buying and preparing food leads to exhaustion and stress for women. In Bolivia, which used to have an adequate health service, two-thirds of infant deaths are from malnutrition and other preventable causes, and preventable diseases such as TB are more and more prevalent; the price of imported medicines has rocketed and is well out of reach of most people.

The human cost

'I feel my children are going to face a difficult, anguished future. We have put their generation in a cul-de-sac. Their future is black. It's hard for us — it will be harder, blacker, more blighted for them. But they will have to learn that, however hard and bleak their path, they must keep going; because this country mustn't die just for a debt.'

Mexican mother and teacher

'We in the North don't need the Third World's pound of flesh; in fact most of us would be a great deal better off if the South bought our products rather than devote every last penny to interest payments.'

Susan George

'You know there is a limit to the cow, the cow has so much milk. And you can't go on milking the blood. At present they're really milking blood from the South. These countries can't pay it, so they'll collapse.'

Julius Nyerere, ex-President of Tanzania

'The debt crisis should not be discussed too politely. For polite discussions can imply a tacit acceptance of the unacceptable. And what has happened to large areas of the developing world in the 1980s is truly unacceptable.'

UNICEF

(Source: Scottish Education and Development (SEAD))

Case Study: Bolivia

Since 1985, the Bolivian government has rigorously implemented IMF adjustment policies. In the first months, bread prices rose four-fold, and a litre of petrol went up seven times. The consequences of being a 'model debtor' has made Bolivia the poorest country in Latin America on the evidence of infant mortality and malnutrition statistics. Free-market policies combined with the collapse in tin prices have closed most of the country's mines. Many thousands of redundant miners and their families have been 'relocated' from their government-owned homes to be settled as farmers and foresters in sub-tropical, uncultivated areas — without training or capital. Thousands of mining families and peasants seek survival as street traders, domestics, casual labourers, in illegal smuggling, or in growing and selling coca and cocaine. The latter generates more income than legal exports.

For mining families who choose to stay on in the mines, life — never easy — has become very hard. But women have found a communal way of coping through Housewives Committees and communal kitchens, leading to new and imaginative solutions. Zenobia is a miner's wife still living in Siglo XX, a large government-owned mine from which most of the work-force has been made redundant. She has been a member of the Housewives' Committee for nine years:

'We women were raised with the idea that women were made to cook and take care of the kids — that we shouldn't be allowed to get involved in politics. But necessity has made us change our minds. What motivates us to take action as housewives is the situation of need here in the mining centres. We are always dealing with problems like lack of food, medicines and education for our children. For us, the important thing is the participation of men and women together. Only that way will we be able to see better days and see more happiness for everyone. If women continue to worry about the house and remain ignorant about the things that affect our lives, we'll never have citizens who'll be able to lead our country.

'We've gone through years of having nothing to cook. We have had to learn how to cook potato peelings and bean husks, as there have been times when the company store has been empty 'We have always been dependent on the company store for food — the value is deducted from our pay packets. We have to take whatever is on offer — however expensive or unsuitable. What good is tinned pineapple when your

children need meat? We can't budget our husband's pay as it almost all goes to pay off our debt to the company store.

'But we've learnt to do other things — like how to run our own food store, how to build greenhouses and grow vegetables. We started the PAM project — the Programa de Ahastecimiento Minero (Miners' Food Programme) — in 1986. Now we run our own store as an alternative to the company's. We started by doing a survey to see what foods people needed to feed their family for a month. Now we sell families a monthly 'shopping basket'. Whatever we can, we buy from local sources and sell at cost price, so the food from PAM is cheaper than that from either the company store or local traders.' We encourage people buying from the store to be part of the project. We ask them regularly what their needs are, what they would like us to order. We make sure our supplies are delivered regularly to avoid panic buying, and we are very strict about quality.'

Eliana, also from Siglo XX Housewives' Committee, describes another part of PAM: 'As well as distributing dry foods, the PAM has helped us to build greenhouses so we can grow vegetables to help improve our families' diet, and to earn some money. The project is run through the Housewives' Committee. 'The *carpas* (greenhouses) are made from adobe bricks and plastic sheeting. By April 1988 six had been built in Catavi (a neighbouring mine) and eleven in Siglo XX, and some were into their second harvest.

'Before a carpa is built, a site is chosen and the soil tested to make sure it is suitable. Then women, men and children all work together, preparing the ground, and building the carpa. Working and eating together from the soup kitchens run while building is in progress has helped people to get to know each other better and helps to strengthen the community. Each carpa is about 30 square metres in area. Families work together in growing vegetables. Lettuces, radishes, onions, turnips, tomatoes, beetroot and spinach are the most popular crops.

'Each of the groups elects a delegate to take part in planning meetings. Planning what crop to grow in each carpa is essential to make sure that a wide range of food is available. Yields so far have been high. The sun shines all day and creates almost jungle conditions inside, and in the closed atmosphere a good temperature is maintained even at night when the temperature outside drops. 25 per cent of each crop is distributed free to the families involved. 75 per cent is sold at cost price. Each group sets aside money for seed and fertiliser and to replace the plastic when necessary. They are also paying 75 per cent of the value of the carpa back to the project — then they'll own the carpa — and the money is used for building another carpa. As a first stage, forty carpas are planned, which will involve 280 families.

'Everybody is very enthusiastic about this part of the project. We can't just sit back and wait for help, we've got to contribute as well. The project is going well because it's our own work, because the people of this district want it to.'

A cautionary tale

Objectives

- 1 To become aware of some of the complex cultural issues involved in trying to work with women.
- 2 To consider how development and relief agencies should deal with cultural barriers to working with women.

Method

- 1 Explain the objectives of the activity. *(5 minutes)*
- 2 Divide the participants into groups of four or five and give each group Handout 85 (Part 1 of the case study). Ask them to read through the case and discuss the question on the handout. *(20 minutes)*
- 3 Hand out Part 2 of the Case Study (**Handout 86**) to each group. Ask them to read it.
- 4 Bring the group together again and discuss the following questions:
 - a. Are there any ways in which this situation might have been predicted or avoided?
 - b. What cultural issues does it raise for the implementing agency?*(20-30 mins)*

Materials

Handouts 85 and 86

Pens

Facilitator's Notes

1 This is a particularly useful exercise for people working in an unfamiliar cultural situation, where they may be tempted to make assumptions based on their own cultural values. It shows the danger of introducing inappropriate views of gender equity. It also shows clearly that good intentions are not enough!

*2 It is interesting to compare the situation described in **Handout 46 (Activity 48)**. The problems were similar, and were eventually resolved, after some difficulties. In this case, the approach was culturally-sensitive, and the women concerned were consulted and involved in the decisions that were made as the situation changed.*

Case study: Working with women — a cautionary tale

Part 1: The Tale

Introduction

This case study involves Afghan refugees living in a refugee camp in the North-west Frontier Province of Pakistan.

This camp is one of the oldest and largest settlements of refugees in the Province, with a total population in the region of 20,000. Numerous organisations have established a range of programmes in the camp, including health, education, water and sanitation, income generation, and shelter.

Programmes involving women were centred mainly around health (mother and child and basic health education) but also involved some income-generating projects.

The widows' project

The organisation involved in this case study had established projects in the camp and felt that they should be doing more for women.

A large proportion of women living in the camp were widows. These women ranged in age from teenagers to quite elderly women; some with and some without children. The organisation targeted this group of women for a specific project because it was felt that they suffered especially from isolation in the camp. They had no male relatives and, therefore, no form of access to the external environment beyond their homes.

The aim of the project was to establish a widows' centre where these women could bring their children and escape from the home for a short time. The centre would run health education programmes, and a children's playground would also be set up in the centre.

The project had been running for a couple of months when the organisation received a strong letter from one section of the camp community. The letter stated that women had been seen washing, and playing on swings, and that men, both Afghan and expatriate, had been seen entering the centre. The letter stated that the centre should be closed down.

The director of the organisation consulted colleagues and it was felt that no action need be taken since other members of the community had not expressed similar feelings.

Discussion question:

You are the director of the organisation involved. What action would you take on receipt of the letter and why?

Part 2: The Outcome

The organisation received a total of three letters over a period of about six weeks. All were of similar strength and content. The organisation maintained its original stance and ignored the letters.

A short while later during Friday prayers in the camp, the mullah condemned the women's centre and the organisation involved. Feelings were such that after the prayers, approximately 5,000 refugees marched on the centre, threatened the guard and destroyed the building and its contents. The refugees did not stop at this. The organisation also had a concrete-making factory and vehicle workshop established in the camp, employing some 350 refugees. The workshop ran training courses in mechanics.

The factory and workshop were destroyed, 15 vehicles vandalised and workshop equipment destroyed. The total damage was estimated at \$5 million.

Two weeks later the organisation's concrete factory in Afghanistan was destroyed.

The director was held up by a road block in Pakistan and fired upon. Fortunately he was not injured.

A short time later the organisation completely withdrew from any involvement with Afghan refugee projects in Pakistan.

Creation story

Objectives

- 1 To examine the Judeo-Christian creation myth in relation to women's subordination.
- 2 To think about myths from other cultures and identify the parallels with the Christian creation myth.

Method

- 1 Ask participants to read individually the following texts from the Bible:
Genesis 1: 1-2-4
Genesis 2: 5-3: 24 *(15 mins)*
- 2 Ask two people to read the texts to the group. *(5 mins)*
- 3 In small groups of three ask each person to share creation stories from other cultures, that have been handed down from generation to generation. *(15 mins)*
- 4 In the large group, ask people to share those stories, briefly, and draw out the parallels. *(10 mins)*
- 5 Give participants **Handout 87** Biblical background notes.
- 6 Go through the hand-out with the group asking different people to read in turns. *(10 mins)*
- 7 Discuss the following questions:
 - a. What purpose do myths serve?
 - b. How do people use the biblical creation stories to reinforce the domination of men and subordination of women?
 - c. How could you now respond to a statement such as 'Women are inferior to men;

- we learn this from the creation story in the Book of Genesis’?
- d. Identify traditional myths that reinforce the low status of women in society. Share these in small groups.
 - e. What can you do about myths and stories, both biblical and from other traditions, that serve to ridicule, insult or subordinate women?

(30 mins)

Materials

Bibles

Handout 87

Flipchart

Pens

Facilitators’s Notes

1 Most people know of a variety of creation stories and myths, and in this activity a wide variety of myths can be considered. Some may have come up in the Myths and Effects Activity 35 in Section C.4—and if so, they could be brought in here too.

2 You could adapt the activity to use other sacred texts if appropriate.

Biblical background notes

1 Biblical myths: Myths are made up stories or fiction, told to explain certain realities or truths of life that are otherwise difficult to understand. There are many such myths in the Bible, but among the best known are the creation stories in Genesis. These creation myths were invented to explain this notion of a Creator, the origins of the universe, the relationship between creation and its Creator, and lastly, our human condition that includes such things as temptation, sin, suffering and death.

Most biblical scholars and theologians today tell us that these creation stories are actually theological statements rather than scientific or historical truths about creation. They do not teach scientific facts; they are not history.

2 Two creation accounts in Genesis: These stories come from different Semitic traditions. Not all Christians understand these stories as myths. Some still believe them to be historical facts or true accounts of how God created the world. But believing this can present some very real problems for such people since there are actually two separate creation accounts in Genesis, each contradicting the other. Which account do we accept as 'historical' truth? And which to reject?

a. Genesis 1:1-2:4: In this account, God worked six days to create the world and rested on the seventh. The earth, day and night, the seas, plants and animals were all formed first before God created the 'crown of all creation', human beings. And all of God's creation was good. Woman and man were created as equals together in this story (Gen 1:27). There is no mention here of woman being formed from man's rib; no story of domination and subordination. In this account, our first parents are unidentified and unnamed. There is no story of temptation, sin, punishment, suffering or death.

b. Genesis 2:5-3:24: This is a very different story in which man was formed from the soil of the earth. Once man was formed, then God created plants, rivers, animals, and last of all, woman. This story continues with an account that attempts to explain in symbolic language such things as temptation, sin, suffering and death.

Points to ponder

Neither creation account in Genesis was intended to teach that woman is inferior to man. Yet the Genesis 2-3 story is often used to 'justify' this false interpretation.

We need to understand that Semitic peoples made frequent use of symbolic language in their speech and stories. And these symbolic references are scattered all through the Scriptures. We find them especially in the Genesis creation accounts where we read of woman being formed from 'man's rib'. The rib is a symbolic reference to woman being close to man, of the same kind and same flesh, not different like the animals. The talking snake symbolises temptation, the garden represents life in its fullness, harmony and peace, etc.

Recent studies of the original Hebrew words and texts of the Genesis 2-3 creation story have produced some surprising discoveries. One of the chief discoveries involves the mistranslation of certain Hebrew words. A more accurate translation reads:

Then the Lord God took some soil from the ground and formed earth creature out of it ... (Gen 2:7)

'Earth creature' is a Hebrew word which has no sex or gender meaning. Yet this word has been incorrectly translated 'man' for centuries. The Hebrew words for male and female were not used in the original text until after God removed the rib from 'earth creature'. Only then did the biblical author use words to distinguish the sexes. In other words, in this creation account, there was no 'male' until the 'female' had arrived. The two genders were created together, just as in the Genesis 1 story.

(Source: Choose Life! A Life Experience and Scripture-based Resource Book for Christian Women's Groups. Jacqueline Dorr, Nairobi 1991.)

Chains that bind us

Objectives

- 1 To help participants to look at religious rituals and practices that control women.
- 2 To relate those rituals and practices to our everyday reality.
- 3 To identify which of those rituals and practices need to be changed.
- 4 To have a symbolic healing session for women. (Part 2)

Method

Part 1

- 1 Give to the group the picture 'our experience' (**Handout 88**).
(5 minutes)
- 2 Brainstorm in the group the answers to the following questions:
 - a. How do you personally feel about such traditional practices that control and manipulate women?
 - b. What are some other traditional customs among your people that discriminate against women and girls, and are harmful to them?
 - c. Are any of these traditions in the process of changing? If so which ones? Why are they changing?

(30 minutes)

Part 2

- 1 Ask the group to stand in a circle, each person bent over double while one member reads again the story of the Sabbath healing (Luke 13:10-17). (See **Handout 89**.) Tell the women to remain in this bent-over position until they are 'healed'.

A minute or two after the reader finishes reading the story, she then hands a flower (or other healing symbol) to one person in the circle. On receiving the flower, that person stands upright: she is now 'healed'. She in turn then gives the flower to

another woman in the circle, who once 'healed', passes on the same flower to someone else, and so on until all in the circle are standing straight and 'healed' once more. Then divide the women into small groups and ask them to sit and discuss the following questions:

(10 mins)

- a. What did it feel like to be bent over double?
- b. What do you think it would be like to be forced into this position for 18 years? How do you think this woman in the Gospel story responded when she was finally released?
- c. Most of us are not physically bent over to the extent this woman was but we are bound down or chained to certain customs and traditions that control us socially, intellectually, and personally.

2 Give all the participants **Handout 89** and ask them to think about a particular tradition which damages women. They should prepare a short presentation to make to the whole group (not more than 3-5 mins). *(15 mins)*

3 Reconvene the group, and ask each small group to present their discussion to the whole group. *(25-30 mins)*

4 Traditional practices that harm women may come up in the brainstorm, such as female genital mutilation, preferential feeding of boys, child marriage, dowry, sati and so on. Include these in a discussion of what is good, and what is harmful, in traditional practices.

Facilitator's Notes

1 Part 1 of this activity is appropriate for groups of diverse cultures. It is designed for women, but depending on your group, could be used with men and women.

2 Part 2 is more meaningful for Christian groups with the text we include. By replacing this text with verses from other sacred texts, you could adapt it.

Our experience

Tradition has always said women must obey and submit to their husbands and in-laws!

My parents forced me to marry an old man because he offered the biggest dowry. I had no choice in the matter at all!

In my tradition the elders say it is useless to educate girls because once they marry, they no longer belong to the family!

When my husband died, my inlaws forced me to marry his brother so that I could raise children in my husbands name!



Biblical background notes

1 **Jeremiah 6:16** The prophet Jeremiah invites us to stand at the crossroads and look carefully in all directions, down every winding path and roadway. Search out the ways and study all the ancient traditions — and then choose the best from among them. If you do this, he says ‘*you will live in peace*’.

2 **Mart 2:23-28** When Jesus was harshly criticised for breaking with tradition in this story, he reminded his enemies that even their ancestor-hero, King David, broke traditional law when it failed to serve him in time of need. Jesus is telling us too that laws are made to protect, to enrich and to better our lives, and if they do not do this, then get rid of them. Laws must be our servants, never our masters.

*The Sabbath was made for the good of the people:
People were not made for the Sabbath.*

3 **Mart 7:1-23** The Jewish people had many laws controlling ritual practices, as for example, the washing of hands. This custom was a ceremony that had nothing to do with cleanliness for health reasons. Ritual or ceremonial washing symbolised an inner cleansing of the spirit, a washing clean of sin, a determination to change and become totally converted. And here, Jesus told the Pharisees that they were hypocrites, more concerned with the strict observance of the law itself than with any spiritual meaning or inner cleansing. Blind obedience to ancient traditional laws that have long since lost their significance and value is a useless exercise.

4 **Luke 13:10-17** In this story we read of a woman who had been bent double for 18 long years. It is one of the Sabbath healings for which Jesus was criticised. The Jews had many laws that regulated Sabbath observances and Jesus was accused by a synagogue official of breaking the Sabbath by ‘working’, eg healing. Once again he responded by accusing his enemies of hypocrisy, suggesting that anyone would do as much — or more — to help their animals on the Sabbath day. So why deny this same assistance to a suffering human being? His response made his enemies ashamed of themselves. Jesus completely rejected any law or tradition that treated people harshly and unjustly.

Whenever and wherever tradition or law denied life, freedom, hope and justice to

others, Jesus deliberately broke with these same traditions. We need to keep reminding ourselves that he came to set us free from all that binds and imprisons us:

*I have come that you may have life:
Life in all its fullness (John 10:10)*

Points to ponder

- 1 **Certainly, much of cultural tradition is sacred**, essential and good, and its positive values must continue to be respected and retained at all cost. But we are not speaking here of those godly and nourishing traditions that bring life to a society. Rather, we are referring to those negative practices and customs (found in all ethnic groupings) that hold woman enslaved, that prevent her from developing into a full human person intellectually, psychologically, socially, spiritually, politically, economically. Unfortunately, there are still many such traditions present today that cripple women and prevent them from walking upright with dignity and a true sense of self-worth.
- 2 **In patriarchal societies**, law and traditions benefit men. They are the ones holding the reins of power and authority. In order to retain this power, men often feel they must oppress and control women, and they accomplish this largely through laws and traditions that dominate women. Men are quite happy with this arrangement, so if women desire change, then women themselves must work together to bring this about.
- 3 Change can only come then, through women joining together to study these issues of domination and discrimination. They need to ask themselves, ‘which customs or practices in our communities oppress women?’ ‘What traditional values do we want to keep?’ ‘Which ones do we want to change or abandon altogether because they are oppressive?’ Discrimination and oppression of all kinds are forms of injustice and therefore sinful.

(Source: *Choose Life!: A Life Experience and Scripture-based Resource Book for Christian Women's Groups*. Jacqueline Dorr, Nairobi 1991)