From Rhetoric to Reality: Gender Mainstreaming Urban Policies and Enabling Legislation

for

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Sangeetha Purushothaman, Monika Jaeckal and Catalina Trujillo
On behalf of the Hauirou Commission
Our Best Practices Task Force

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Introduction

India was nominated as the launching pad for the Campaign for Good Urban Governance in Asia. *The campaign being launched in India today has the overall objective of supporting government and civil-society in enriching and deepening local democracy and good urban governance, thereby promoting the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, namely Adequate Shelter for All and Sustainable Human Settlements Development in an Urbanising World.* Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UNCHS (Habitat)[1]

Women, who represent a large proportion of the urban population and an even larger proportion of the urban poor, are often excluded from the process of urban governance. For example, in India the urban poor are estimated to be 80 million (40 per cent of the total urban population), of which 65 per cent are women and children. *Homes, neighborhoods and communities are the very substance of urban governance and that is where women are extremely active. If we want sustainable urban development, women must be involved in decisions about how cities and neighborhoods are governed. Involving women in urban governance is a key principle for UNCHS Habitat not only because it is right but because it is practical.* Klaues Toepfer, (2000)[2]

According to Toepfer (2000, p1), *Inclusiveness is vital to good governance. In our urbanizing world women's needs are different from that of men.* Thus including grassroots women and their concerns in governance is essential. In turn through their inclusive style of governing, women will ensure that governance takes into consideration the needs of the rest of the population and of the most marginal. Women have always understood the home and its habitat better than men. Yet men have invariably taken decisions that have influenced women's lives.[3] An understanding of how urban environments affect women and how women's needs are different from those of men, is a first step towards engendering urban governance.

This paper provides a gender perspective on urban issues, women's initiatives that have emerged in response to urban problems, a framework for engendered governance and finally, policy implications towards designing gender sensitive urban policies. Women's innovations address a range of issues including housing, health care, urban services, childcare and other family services, safety, community building and social cohesion in neighborhoods, environmental sustainability and local governance. These initiatives designed from the ground contain the seeds for future systemic change.

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[1] Opening address by Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UNCHS (Habitat) At The Launchlng Of The Global Campaign For Good Urban Governance In India, 4-6 September 2001, Delhi, India

[2] Klaues Toepfer, Then Executive Acting Director, UNCHS, Habitat, "Women in Urban Governance" *Buildings Materials News*, Special Issue, October 2000.

[3] Renu Khosla, Associate Professor (Urban Poverty), National Institute of Urban Affairs, New Delhi, ", *Buildings Materials News*, Special Issue, October 2000.
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II. Gender Concerns that Stem from Urban Problems

Poverty in urban areas is the consequence of the lack of access to public services, resources and information.[4] Decisions on development are made by a small group of decision-makers and the impact of their decisions is experienced differently by men and women. Among the poor, men and women's experience of poverty is also different. Women put their needs last, be it material, nutritional, health, or sanitation.

In the third world slums are the epicenter of urban problems. From health epidemics, social blight to riots the worst manifestations of urban problems manifest in slums. Within slums, women face the brunt of the problems. Regarding corruption, bribes paid by the poor are larger in size than those paid by the more affluent. A study on Bangalore slums (Paul and Sekhar, 2000, p.33-5) found that a fourth of slum residents paid bribes to officials and middlemen get their work done. Bribes were paid for health services, safety, electricity, rations from public shops, primary schools, water supply and buses and were highest to hospitals, followed by the police. Being primarily responsible for the home it is women who have to ensure the provision of all household services. They are therefore at the mercy of the slumlords, corrupt officials and middlemen.

Viewed as unskilled, women invariably end up in low-paid jobs in the informal domestic sector and home based activities. In both formal and informal sectors, for the same work they are paid lower wages than men. Often women are illiterate or lack professional skills, they are considered unfit for work in the more white-collar formal market. Many lack opportunities to improve their incomes like training, credit assistance, crèches and childcare. Although low incomes are the primary reason for poverty, not being able to choose from a range of options make the poor, particularly women, vulnerable. In most countries, programmes deny the poor the right to choose. For example, community toilets are provided to women even while they prefer household latrines. They are pushed into illegal arrangements such as illegal housing, tapping electricity, as legal options are not available, practicable or within reach. Paul and Sekhar (2000) found that the poor are in fact willing to pay more for services, if assured of improved services.

During periods of hardship and transition (such as economic recessions, migration and natural disasters), women absorb household economic shocks disproportionately by managing their households with minimal resources and by working more for low wages. Their productive work increases although their reproductive work remains the same. This is often accompanied by reduced food intake, postponing healthcare or other needs. During these transitions, being unaware or illiterate, they do not exercise their right to select from a range of other alternatives (social welfare programmes, emergency relief programmes, bank loans and the like). Local moneylenders provide credit in poor neighborhoods at exploitative interest rates. Women usually work harder to pay back debts since she lacks access to any emergency source of funds, official credit or savings. Formal credit for employment or shelter is often inaccessible, as women cannot meet

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[4] Renu Khosla, Associate Professor (Urban Poverty), National Institute of Urban Affairs, New Delhi.

their official requirements. Since title deeds of the land or house where she resides is never in her name, she is not the legal owner of these assets and has no collateral.

Family income, particularly a woman's income, is spent on procuring basic services, paying rent for shelter, purchasing water when not provided by the municipal government free of charge, paying for the use of community toilets and other sanitation facilities. Residing in inadequate shelters especially in third world countries, better facilities being unaffordable, less than half the urban homes in countries like India have private taps and personal latrines which results in unsafe, unhygienic conditions and increasing women's drudgery. For slum women lack of privacy is a major problem. *In case a woman was menstruating she would wash her clothes in the dark behind the hut, not to be seen by any man.* Privacy is also affected by the lack of toilets and bathrooms. Food intake is linked to this problem where according to Letsch (2001, 156) *[women] reduced their food intake to be sure they could wait till the next morning before going to the fields to defecate.*

Open defecation has other consequences. Fields may contain glass pieces, snakes and rodents that add to the health risks a woman faces. Lack of toilets and access to water are two of the major problems faced by women. Often women in third world slums have to pay for water, use of toilets and for other basic amenities. These charges can be direct or indirect to middle men for illegal electricity or water tap connections. It can be in the form of corruption for hospital services that are supposed to be free of charge and so on. Thus, every trip to the toilet and every mug of water costs and hence in the interest of optimizing scarce resources, women avoid using toilets, take bath less often, fermenting stomach ailments or increasing the risk of disease through living in unsanitary conditions. Besides being unhygienic, community toilets are often unsafe, infectious and badly maintained. Even when toilets are available the number available for women are very few. According to Schenk-Sandbergen (2001)[5], urban slum women had only one common bathroom, which they all shared to avoid bathing in public. Muslim women in India faced the additional problem of not being allowed to bathe in public. For them bathing in their huts was the only option and resulted in dampness in the huts.

Access to water is a function of volume, price, quality and timing of availability of water. As women are primarily responsible for ensuring water availability for domestic purposes they are the ones responsible for the collection and storage of water. In the third world, and slums in particular, water scarcity and collection increases women's drudgery. Schenk-Sandbergen (2001) found that in Bangalore slums water was not supplied daily and often only at night. *The result of these irregularities in the water supply was that many women had to wait in long queues in the middle of the night to fetch water.* This study estimated the waiting time to vary between 1-2 hours. Health concerns and sanitation standards maintained are directly linked to the availability of water. According to Schenk-Sandbergen (2001), women in Indian slums are able to wash clothes for the family only once a week due to water scarcity but to meet minimum hygienic standards

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[5] Loes Schenk-Sandbergen "Women, Water and Sanitation in the Slums of Bangalore: A Case Study of Action Research" in Hans Schenk (editor), *Living in India's Slums: A Case Study of Bangalore*. IDPAD, Manohar, New Delhi 2001.

she would have to wash clothes at least thrice a week. Schenk-Sandbergen found that poor slum women were able to change their clothes and take a bath only twice a week.

Lack of childcare increases women's reproductive work. Girls stay at home to take care of younger children, fill water, cook and thus miss school. Low household budgets result in high hidden costs related to local transport, health care, school and child-care services paid by women and girl children largely. Gender unfriendly work timings, jobs located far from homes, unfit public transport systems (reduced frequency of service during off peak hours) serve to keep women in poverty and increase their drudgery.

Health of a woman is linked to health care expenses and prioritized less than the health of other family members or against other needs. This can often result in indirect costs of absence for work and daily wage loss due to sickness, adding to family economic stress and lack of resources for women. In the case of family crises, such as sickness, visits and care of relatives, hospitalization and so on it is the woman who misses work and loses her wages. Frequent illnesses pushes women further into a deepening cycle of under nutrition, illness, debt, lower productivity, low incomes, and poverty. Access to medical services are limited where a doctor may or may not treat a poor woman if she is badly or unhygeinically dressed.[6] Inadequate ventilation in housing results in women inhaling smoke and hazardous gas substances affecting their respiratory systems. Often women prioritized feeding their husbands and children before themselves.

Bad environmental conditions, bad sanitation and bad health were found to be strongly linked. Responses linked ailments from water borne diseases such as scabies, diarrhea, cholera, typhoid, and fever, to bad sanitation and improper hygiene. Open defecation and walking barefoot in the fields resulted in worm infestations such as hook tape and round worms and malaria. Respiratory illnesses and eye infections were mostly the result of smoke and improper ventilation. Stomach related ulcers and liver diseases were caused by cheap liquor consumption. Extremely unsafe unhygienic conditions characterize urban conditions where safety against fire, theft and violence is a luxury for poor women.

Social problems pervade poor communities like alcoholism, gambling, smoking and other urban influences whose consequences are particularly hard on women.[7] First they consume a substantive portion of family income. Second, women bear the brunt of violence that arises from conflict from scarce resources diverted to these uses. Drinking and violence often go hand in hand. In the household women do not have any bargaining power with the lowest share of resources and assets in the family? Without adequate savings or safety nets, women slip in and out of poverty, indebtedness and sickness.

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[6] Mirjam Letsch, "Poor Women in a Bangalore Slum Habitat" in Hans Schenk (editor), *Living in India's Slums: A Case Study of Bangalore*. IDPAD, Manohar, New Delhi 2001.
[7] Mirjam Letsch, "Poor Women in a Bangalore Slum Habitat" in Hans Schenk (editor), *Living in India's Slums: A Case Study of Bangalore*. IDPAD, Manohar, New Delhi 2001.

III. Community Based and Gender Based Innovations

Grassroots women have evolved a range of survival strategies to address the above problems. These initiatives have embedded within them implications for good urban governance and gender sensitive solutions. While innovations of grassroots women span several sectors, select sectors are examined specifically to surface policy implications.

The innovations of women and communities are looked at in specific development sectors such as
- Housing, land, and tenure,
- Environmental Management: Water, Sanitation and Health Services
- Income generation and livelihoods
- Other initiatives including child care, education, awareness, rights initiatives

Here both generic community based initiatives and women specific initiatives are presented. The findings and information drawn upon here are based on the Our Best Practices Campaign (OBP) of the Huairou Commission which documented close to 50 submissions and five in depth case studies. The purpose behind selecting these cases is to find gender sensitive policy implications for urban issues.

3.1. Housing, Land Tenure and Slums

The importance of secure, safe and adequately serviced housing for all citizens remains a central issue for good urban governance. Housing especially in cities is extremely expensive and constitutes a significantly high item of expenditure and often a high proportion of income is spent on housing. Illegality of housing tenure can arise from violating land ownership laws, building and planning regulations or both. Unauthorized housing, slums or squatter settlements, are all facets of illegal, insecure housing tenure.

One of the most crucial problems faced by the urban population is secure tenure. In the third world for the slums secure tenure is the fulcrum around which all issues revolve. A slum constitutes an under serviced settlement be it unauthorized occupation of land, congested inner city built up areas, fringe area unauthorized developments or peripheral villages within urban areas. Secure tenure along with lack of basic services are the primary problems faced by slum dwellers and women in particular. It is the women slum dwellers who face the demolition squads, cannot get access to banking and other formal sector services whose prerequisite is a legal permanent residence. The women being the primary caretakers are the ones who have to face the brunt of the problems related to inadequate clean water, services for health, sanitation and basic amenities. It is vital therefore that they be equipped with the capacity to defend their habitats in terms of both security and adequate services. Equally important is that women be able to have a say in the design of their homes and communities in case of resettlement.

Ensuring that women have legal status for their tenure is an important factor in dealing with demolition squads and with obtaining basic services.

Capacity building of women to negotiate with local authorities, design their own settlements, save, maintain and manage their own community assets becomes a vital part of future sustainability of housing. Land becomes a primary issue for negotiation. Women's negotiation skills must be built up for this a was the case for both SPARC and SAMA SAMA in the Philippines.

Here again organizing the women and building their capacities was essential to helping build new communities and to ensure that basic services were put in place in these communities that met the needs of its residents.

PREZEIS is a programme for regularizing the situation of land tenure and prioritizing the provision of urban facilities for slums or low-income areas. Based on a municipal law that created some Special Zones for Social Interest (ZEIS), the programme has promoted by law the working of permanent gender balanced committees for discussion, implementation of new special zones and further definition of priorities for community development, land tenure and urbanization, monitoring and evaluation.

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[8] Interview with Architect Manuel MaÒosa, principal PROS. Arch. MaÒosa is considered as one of the most respected architect and urban planner in the Philippines, SAMASAMA became his client through the endorsement of Dr. Mary Racelis. The relationship between Arch. MaÒosa and SAMASAMA left him with a recognition of the importance of people's participation and SAMASAMA with an appreciation of the need for technical information in community development.

Access and control of resources is the root of many problems experienced by women. Several basic urban services are linked to ownership of assets such as land and housing. Therefore promoting women's access to housing and other assets is an important factor to be kept in mind in designing gender sensitive urban policies. From the Indian Draft National Slum Policy and from the Philippines and Brazilian experiences, the following gender specific principles have international relevance:

- Legalization of slums is a pre-condition for the legal provision of public services and for people to be able to fight for these rights. Women's capacities should be built in this context by providing them basic information on these services.
- When tenure be granted, it should be in joint names of the head of the household and spouse subject to the proviso that single women or men headed household should not be precluded from having full tenure rights.
- Collective ownership of the land through title deeds being put in the names of an entire collective, preferably of women can prevent their resale and the consequent fragmentation of the community.
- Women's specific needs and concerns be specifically addressed in the development of physical infrastructure and the delivery of social and economic services.
- Women should be involved in planning and decision making for any resettlement process
- Women should be involved at every stage including monitoring, management and evaluation of services.

Quality of housing includes the use of permanent materials in its construction, structural stability and capacity to withstand disaster situations, adequate lighting and ventilation, access to piped water and sewage facilities and average floor space per person. The quality of housing depends on the availability of affordable land, materials and finance for infrastructure and housing. Women are the ones who spend the most time in the home and responsible for managing the home. Thus involving them in decisions on their homes and communities is key to engendering urban governance.

3.2 Environmental Management: Water, Sanitation and Health Services

The most serious citywide environmental problems include broadly air pollution, water pollution, management of solid waste and noise pollution. Besides these, cities are also at risk from natural hazards or disasters.

Types of Pollution:

Air pollution: This includes industrial emissions, emissions from electricity generation and motor vehicle emissions. For women, it includes pollution from smoke from cooking stoves in closed environments.

Water Pollution: Dumping of untreated sewage into water bodies, industrial discharge and lack of protection of freshwater sources results in water pollution. The declining availability of drinking water increases women's drudgery and health related problems.

Solid Waste pollution: This includes collection, handling, transporting and disposal of solid domestic and hazardous wastes and recycling of waste. Often the poor, women and children are the ones handling solid waste and therefore adequate protective measures as well as research on the impact of this waste on the health of those concerned is needed.

Noise pollution: This includes industrial operations, construction activities, social activities and noise, related to transportation.

Poor women and children are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation of habitats. Water and air pollution in communities and habitats affects the health of women and children in particular. Housing design looking at the SPARC case, shows how ensuring adequate ventilation and access to water are important to ensure minimum sanitation and environmental standards and to protect the health of the community.

Similarly for waste collection and management, women are often the ones involved in these types of activities. In the Kenyan case study, women scavengers organized to deal with a range of health and environmental problems created by waste collection. For women who do not own assets, waste management can represent an opportunity for income generation provided their health and safety is ensured.

Environmental, waste management, health and water problems are intrinsically linked and a community-wide approach needs to be adopted where these problems are dealt with holistically and creatively. More importantly in the third world in particular livelihood and survival issues are at the forefront of all problems and therefore solutions need to be designed that center stage this consideration. This implies that all solutions that involve the possibility of income generation and payment for services should try and retain the flow of funds within the community. Therefore, where women or local populations can earn incomes from providing services they should be given the option to do so.

In the examples below of Tulewane and SEWA, women and the youth from the community earned their livelihoods from solid waste management and environmental management in their communities and neighborhoods. The Tulewane case is one which exemplifies rehabilitation of scavengers and the restoration of their dignity. This is relevant for many third world countries where the poor handle solid waste.

These instances show generic community based examples and initiatives to handle local problems through the creative use of local skills and resources.

Urban Solid Waste Management…[9]

Ahmedabad: The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has assisted in forming cooperatives among women to develop alternative skills to waste gathering and sorting. Despite difficulties arising out of secret deals and corruption in the trade of waste paper from government offices to contractors, women have persevered to advance themselves beyond picking scarps. The women are concentrating on gaining more autonomy from paper contractors, agents and mills because at present they are still paid only 10 percent of the price that contractors are able to obtain when they again sell the paper to the mills. The women have acquired a warehouse in the hope of bypassing the middlemen. Their long-term goal is to own a paper processing plant.

Bangkok: Community cooperation has developed among four hundred households who live and are engaged in waste-recycling work near Bangkok's On Nooch dump site. Cooperation is based on the resident's desire to acquire land and low-income housing. A Bangkok-based NGO has been working with the community. They have been successful in resisting eviction by the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority in 1984, and have since found a suitable land to purchase. Funds for the land are coming from household contributions and from collective waste gathering drives held once a month.

Bandung: In the early 1980s, a group of faculty with Dutch funding aided a squatter-picker community (Jati Dua) in community development and the improvement of waste recycling. The Jati Dua people, about thirty families, learned techniques of composting and fish and rabbit raising. They developed a nursery for growing compost seeds gathered from refuse. This project was disrupted when, in 1983, the local government evicted them from their squatter settlement and dispersed the families to different resettlement sites around Bandung. The cooperative has since been reformed and has purchased land so as to reunite the community. Housing units have been designed with the assistance of the Dutch Women's Association.

Source for Ahmedabad, Bangkok and Bandung: Furedy (1990).

Manila: An average 2,650 tonnes of solid waste per day is generated in Metro Manila. 1,675 per day tonnes are collected by the Environmental Sanitation Centre and 155 tonnes per day by other private haulers. 70 percent of generated waste is collected. 820 tonnes per day is either recycled, burned, scavenged by itinerant scavengers, falls into the sewers, or is not collected. The biggest of the city's nine dump sites is the enormous "Smokey Mountain" consisting of about 34 hectares of reclaimed land from the Manila Bay that rises 40 metres above sea level. There are 3,000 to 5,000 persons scavenging at the nine dumpsites.

Source: Uriarte, F.A. (1989) cited in UNESCAP (1990).

A clearer gender perspective on women can both be integral to the solutions as well as integrate other populations is clearer in the Tulewane example shown next.

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[9] Box reproduced from *State of Urbanization in Asia and the Pacific, 1993,* United Nations, New York, 1993.

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Women's Self Help Initiatives in Urban Environmental Management:
Tulewane, Kenya

The Nairobi City Council earlier used to provide Mathare, one of the largest informal slum settlements in Nairobi with essential basic services just like in other formal settlements such as garbage collection and disposal, provision and cleaning up of toilet facilities and proper sewerage maintenance. But with the ever-increasing growth in the slum population local authorities slowly withdrew support. Garbage was no longer collected, the toilet facilities were not cleaned, and the drainage and sewage systems became blocked. One pressing problem was the toilets which were turned into dangerous garbage disposal sites. The roofs, doors and water pipes had also been vandalized and they became hideouts for criminal activities. The community members were robbed, murdered and women constantly raped. In addition, the environment turned into a breeding ground for disease carrying organisms causing epidemics of cholera, typhoid and scabies. Apart from the unclean water, the whole place was filthy with garbage that had accumulated over many years. People were frustrated, cynical and many youths turned into criminals.

The community, especially women, could no longer stand the situation and in 1995, 25 women formed a group called "Tuelewane", a Kiswahili word meaning "let us agree", to deal with the toilet and sewage issue. The solutions were to clear up the place, remove the garbage, clean the toilets and un-block the drainage system and sewers. To sustain a clean environment, the group agreed to charge for the use of all rehabilitated facilities.

As a first step women requested and got permission from local authorities to rehabilitate toilets used by about 35,000 people. They had to confront local criminals inhabiting these spaces. First they tried to talk to the youth individually. Each woman discussed the issue with her own sons, relatives and neighbors involved in crime. Some youth agreed to forego their criminal hideout for healthy living environments, but shifted bases elsewhere. Women then offered them an alternative use of their time by engaging in productive activities. The members contributed a sum of KSh 10 each (equivalent to 1/7 of a dollar) a day to hire the youth. The youth, some previously involved in criminal activities, had to dig up the garbage that filled the toilets, transport them in wheelbarrows and carts to a distance, were now earning an income and had no time for criminal deeds. A few were employed as night guards. Some criminals persisted to use force to "reclaim" their hideouts by assaulting women group members who were forced to seek police protection. After lobbying, policemen were deployed to curb the situation. Today, armed police are a part of the community and the crime rate has drastically reduced.

After completing the first three toilets, services are administered to the community at a fee of Kshs 2 per visit. Members contributed more money and were able to re-construct water pipes and taps. Next, they sold water at a subsided rate of one shilling (compared to 3 Kshs for a 20-litre jerrican charged by another business). The rehabilitated toilets were converted into bathrooms and each person would pay about Kshs 2 for a shower.

The money obtained pays for the night guard, iron sheets for roofing, timber and water pipes for further development of the toilets and to employ someone to clean the toilets. To support the youth groups further, Tuelewane organised a fundraising drive. The money was spent to buy wheelbarrows and protective clothing for the youth group. The group has further opened up an account for their savings.

One major achievement is the physical improvement of sanitation and access to clean water. Areas, previously breeding grounds for diseases, were cleaned thereby reducing the spread of diseases. Regular collection and disposal of household garbage and un-blocking of sewers also improved the health situation in the surrounding houses.

Tuelewane Women Groups is now affiliated to a number of organisations and networks. They are founder members of "Mungano wa Vikundi vya Kujisaidia", a network of 52 self help groups with 3,500 members drawn from different slums in Nairobi. The current co-ordinator of this network is a founder member of Tuelewane Group.

Participation in workshops and seminars has given the Tuelewane group members leadership skills. They are no longer afraid to speak out. Earlier the group members would not vote women into electoral positions and perceived men as sole decision-makers. They now realise that even they themselves, can become leaders. During the last election, they lobbied several groups to support a woman candidate. Five groups even contributed 600 KSh for a lady candidate, the chairperson of Tuelewane Women Group, to attend a management course and compete effectively with men at the Kenya Institute of Management (KIA). They have mobilized themselves to make major decisions that have affect their community and have negotiated with police and local councils when necessary. The Chair of Muungano participated in meetings of the Nairobi Informal Settlement Committee hosted by Nairobi City Council and was elected to head the sub committee on Environment and Health and in the village committee of the Mathare Division Health Committee.

Sustainable partnerships have been developed at local levels with community members, other self-help groups and local authorities. Since its inception, the Tuelewane Women Group has been involved in many negotiations with local authorities. They have convinced the City council to view them as an entity that provides essential services in place of the institutions. Here "ex-criminals" now are gainfully employed as night-guards whose incomes were generated by fees charged for use of the toilets. These initiative points towards partnerships that can create holistic community based and designed

solutions where a series of issues from health, environment, sanitation, crime, employment, and gender concerns can be addressed simultaneously.

The Mukuru Recycling Center Women´s Group
Nairobi, Kenya

Scavenging recyclable materials from the city dump is one survival strategy for the urban poor, low-income earners and slum dwellers. Most scavengers toil all day long in search of valuables in garbage that can contain hazardous industrial and hospital waste. The main problems faced here are the lack of access to water and toilets. In the slums people charge high fees for water, unaffordable for many families. Because of inadequate water, the standards of health and cleanliness are quite low. The slums in Nairobi have no sewer facilities are provided resulting in serious environmental problems and bad smells from poor disposal of toilet waste affecting women and children more than others. The reason they formed a women´s group is that the dumpsite is a dangerous isolated place for women. Drugs are a problem. Men drink alcohol and bandits rape women.

At the Mukuru dump site in Dandora, Nairobi, a group of 20 women started the Mukuru garbage collector women`s group, a registered NGO, engaged in savings and activities to start livelihood projects. For them, garbage is money, not dirt and filth. By making compost, collecting recyclables, washing and selling them, people earn livings. Papers from offices and hotels are sold to shops, composted and sold in the market or used for urban agriculture.

Women are trying to organize a school project for their children's education and to set up informal training for unemployed youth. Over 50 percent of the leadership of the Recycling Center is in the hands of women. The women´s group is planning livelihood projects. Every woman contributes 30 Kenyan shillings every week, 10 for a house, 10 for savings and credit, 10 to deal with potential health problems. From savings they bought utensils, pigs for a pig rearing project, dye table cloths and sell them.

The Group has created a community. Earlier they were ashamed to walk openly in public. By forming a group they have obtained dignity, let go of shame and can now go out and to talk to the community. They have cleaned up the environment and made use of organic waste, which would otherwise be burned or swept into rivers polluting them.

Women who are engaged as waste collectors and rag pickers for their livelihoods need to be organized, need to be trained on health and safety issues and for their dignity to be restored in the process.

There are also instances of state initiated partnerships which can generate successful community partnerships to deal with solid waste management. Model Community Programme and Exnora examples in India show successful partnerships between government and local communities on the issue of urban environmental management.

Participatory Health and Hygiene
Joseph Patel Wadi (JPW), Versova, Mumbai.

The main problems faced by the JPW residents were poor waste management in terms of collection and disposal, inadequate toilets for children, water with low pressure and poor drainage and choked up adult toilets. Joseph Patel Wadi was selected to make it a model community in Mumbai. JPW was a typical community with dirty and unclean surroundings. The 415 households only 19 had common toilets, insufficient to meet the needs of the adult population. Garbage heaps were lying around the settlement, which leads to unsanitary and unclean conditions. Medical practitioner from the area confirmed the presence of worm gastroenteritis, diarrhea in children and adults.

The main aim of the Model Community Programme (MCP) initiated by UNICEF and to All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai was to empower communities to manage the environmental and sanitation issues in the settlement. The objective was not only to disseminate information about hygiene and sanitation issues, but enable people to overcome these problems by involving all members of the community and functioning as a 'empowered community' in a mega city like Mumbai. The MCP was set up to promote hygiene, sanitation, waste disposal and community management of water, garbage and sanitation facilities to improve the environment.

To minimize the waste the concept of separation of waste was introduced, which segregated the dry and wet (organic) waste. Community people were provided with two separate refuse bins to prevent people from throwing garbage and to maintain clean and hygienic surroundings. The problem of open defecation by children was handled by providing four baby toilets installed behind the adult toilets and sewage pipes were connected to the main manholes. The community members suggested the replacement of the community adult toilet doors and 19 new toilet doors were installed.

To solve the water supply problem the community was provided wider water pipes and more water sub-connections of 1.5 inches, which the community paid for. AIILSG staff approached the local municipality and got financial assistance of 1.20 lakhs towards 14 new water sub-connections.

Vermi culture project was initiated to utilize the 15-20 kgs of organic waste generated from the community. This was utilized for the beautification of the surrounding area, the roads through planting of trees by the community.

The water problem was solved and now the community is getting water with good pressure. Environmental pollution was dealt with through cleaning up and installation of toilets and through effective waste management via vermi-composting.

Here the community has taken responsibility for maintenance of toilets, cleanliness, waste management and for raising the funds for this.

Community Participation for A Clean Environment:
Exnora, Madras

Over the past decades, Madras has witnessed a rapid growth of its population and accompanying growth of urban slums with inadequate infrastructure. The lack of basic amenities has created such problems like contamination of water supply, the overflow of sewage systems and the presence of informal garbage dumps.

Exnora International was formed in 1989, with the basic premise that community participation is essential to transform urban environments. The main objective is to inculcate civic consciousness and organize civic amenities on a self-help basis and thereby creating a healthier environment, and to lobby for appropriate legislation to improve civic standards. Exnora concentrated its efforts on solid waste management

The Corporation of Madras developed made hydro-containers available in every street for waste collection. The experiment failed as residents found it inconvenient to carry the waste from their houses to the end of the street. Exnora introduced the concept of the *street beautifier* who takes the solid waste from individual households to the containers. This proved rag pickers employment and dignity of labour by giving them specially designed tricycles to collect the waste and sweep the streets daily. Exnora's demonstrated a successful partnership with rag pickers, community and government in urban environmental management. The success resulted in the birth of the 900 functioning Civic Exnoras in Madras with each comprising 75 to 100 families. Each household contributes Rs 10-25 for the salary of the street beautifier, maintenance of the tricycle and purchase of materials for waste collection. The Civic Exnoras operate in all sections of the city including the slums. Besides solid waste management, Exnora has initiated other environmental management activities. Exnora trains the street beautifier to separate waste at source. S/he can earn additional income by selling recyclables like plastic, paper, glass and metal scraps to agents and by using vermi-composting technology for producing and selling manure from organic wastes. Exnora through its Waterways Monitoring Program (WAMP) sensitize citizens and lobbies government on entry points of pollutants into waterways. Exnora through dialogue with slum dwellers found that they willing to offer free services to lay sewer lines if materials were provided to them. The Civic Exnoras in the city were instrumental in planting up to 10,0000 trees to beautify roads, parks, playgrounds, burial grounds etc. with the larger perspective of environmental protection. Exnora's other activities are Rain Harvesting, Student Environment Programme, Educational Advancement Programmes, Exnora Women's Guild, Exnora Naturalists' Club, Sustainable Madras Urban Project (SUMUP).

Exnora has successfully inculcated civic awareness and community participation on preventive environmental protection. Each Civic Exnora functions as a grass-root-level autonomous non-governmental organization, which chalks out its own local programme to meet its own specific needs. The Madras Exnora example has been replicated in other cities in Tamil Nadu, in Bangalore, Pune and Vijayawada and replicated internationally in University of Rochester and initiated its activities in Sri Lanka.

Timing, quantum and duration of water supply affect women's work in the homes more than men's work. If the timing of water supply is at night or during her work hours this affects her ability to work and earn. The quantum and duration of water affects her ability to complete her household work and the health of the entire family.

Policies that only look at increasing water supply and do not adequately address the issue of untreated waste water will result in increased water pollution.

- Quantum, duration, timing and water quality are the four critical factors in planning water supply delivery. Women should be involved in the planning and monitoring of water supply systems in communities, as they are the primary users of water in communities for domestic consumption.
- A community-wide approach is needed to deal with urban environmental management issues in a community with women involved at every stage.
- The link between gender, waste management and livelihoods needs to be assessed, recognized and policies put into place where the health and safety of those involved are ensured. These groups need to be organized and trained

Thus environmental policies need to be looked at from a holistic perspective.

Long term sustainability namely the *maintenance of health and environmental resources* of a community requires that polluting elements be removed and the living environment maintained. The Tuelewane Group, Kenya, cleaned out what were previously breeding grounds for diseases. An improved living environment, regular collection and disposal of garbage and un-blocking of sewers has improved the health situation of the entire community. They have provided access to clean and affordable water and people are able to now use toilets. There is now clean public space for families and children. Incidence of Cholera has also been drastically reduced.

The integration of the social, economic, environmental and cultural elements of sustainability is seen in the work of Prezeis, Brazil. Through partnerships with different organizations, joint initiatives such as the Selective Solid Waste Collection and Recycling Programme complements building initiatives for sanitation by providing the building material out of recycled waste and this in turn is linked to income generation. The Mukuru Recycling Center Women's Group, Kenya rehabilitated scavengers who now contribute to cleaning up the environment and utilize the organic waste which otherwise would have polluted the environment. Thus several examples illustrate the ability of grassroots organizations to ensure environmental sustainability of a community.

The Tuelewane case demonstrates a neighborhood ability to reverse environmental degradation. It has become a model for other communities who have replicated their efforts. The Model Community Programme and Exnora examples also show the capacity of communities and political will on the part of local government to support environmental management from below.

3.3. Livelihoods

The Self Employed Women's association (SEWA) Bank:
Women's self-help for poverty alleviation[10]

SEWA, Ahmedabad was established in 1971. In turn, bout 4,000 self-employed women formed the Shri Mahila SEWA Sahakari Bank in 1974 as a cooperative bank to provide credit to self-employed women, empower them and reduce their indebtedness. Qualified managers hired by the Board professionally run the bank and its operations are supervised by the Reserve Bank of India.

Initially the SEWA Bank concentrated on attracting deposits from self-employed women. It next served as an intermediary between nationalized banks and the poor to get loans. Thus 6,000 members received nearly Rs 25,00,000 in credit at a low 4 percent interest rate through SEWA's lobbying. In 1976, the SEWA Bank began giving loans to its depositors from its own funds. Today it has lent 100 million rupees to 22,538 poor women for economic activities. Women are encouraged to save with the bank and register their savings account and assets in their own name. Members themselves apply for loans, usually unsecured, or through the bank's field staff. The bank processes the application through a loan committee by carefully reviewing the applicant's income-generating ability, financial status, soundness of working conditions and ability to repay. There are no subsidies or grants. The Bank borrows and lends at market rates. It provides loans with a repayment period of three years for *productive* purposes such as for working capital, buying tools of trade and capital investments like a house, a store or work space.

The first step is to extend bank credit to highly indebted women to end their indebtedness. Once a woman is free from exorbitant interest rates, the second step is to use her new credit productively to generate more income to repay the bank loan and build up working capital. Before borrowing, while repaying and after repayment, SEWA encourages its members to save. Around 10 per cent of women face difficulties in repayment, especially in times of crises. SEWA has learned that support rather than harassment strengthens the Bank's image as a friend of the poor and results in better repayment and is flexible in rescheduling installments at these times.

The SEWA Bank breaks the vicious circle of indebtedness and dependence on middlemen and traders, and increases women's bargaining power. They can organize themselves into cooperatives and develop the skills and confidence necessary to deal with formal and non formal institutions. Gradually, members are trained in banking and this inculcates a sense of thrift. The SEWA Bank provides a parallel flexible banking infrastructure to serve the self-employed and the small businesses. A large number of members now have their own hand-carts, sewing machines, looms and working tools. Many have upgraded their skills, developed more business and increased their income.

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[10] Source: http: cwis.usc.edu/dept/elab/oconnell/sewa.html

In an on-going study on periurban communities one key finding was that for women, environmental strategies did not improve their livelihoods the way it did for men or for those with assets[11]. This is because women and the landless have no assets to build upon. It was found that it was far easier to build upon existing assets and thus improve the livelihoods of populations with assets than to work with the absolute poor and asset-less populations particularly women. Thus environmental management, be it for urban or rural women, strategies cannot be divorced from livelihood concerns. Therefore livelihoods concerns of poor women in urban environments needs special emphasis and attention. This section discusses successful initiatives that have been undertaken to address issues related to poverty, income generation and credit for poor women.

For poor women, self-employed women and women in the informal sector the lack of access and control over resources and to finance and credit is a major problem. Many are in debt and pay exploitative interest rates. Women do not have the required experience, self-confidence, nor can they meet the regulations and procedures of the formal financial institutions to obtain credit from them.

Increased access to financial resources enables women to earn a higher income, have control over their money, integrates them into the economy. It enables women to acquire adequate shelter and space for production and storage, their own tools and other means of production and to upgrade their skills and improve their businesses. It builds self-esteem and self-confidence among women, improves their health, nutrition and education, raises their status in their communities, increases entrepreneurship among the women, builds individual and collective capital, and promotes assets creation.

3.4 Gender Specific Issues: Safety, Education and Child Care

The community based innovations of women have been unique in their ability to adopt a community wide approach to addressing gender concerns such as violence against women.

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[11] *Participatory Action Planning Process In The Peri-Urban Interface: The Twin City Experience, Hubli-Dharwad, India* by Meera Halkatti and Dr. Sangeetha Purushothaman Prepared for the Conference 'Rural-Urban Encounters: Managing the Environment of the Peri-Urban Interface' Development Planning Unit, University College London, 9-10 November 2001

A Community Based Approach to Safety Issues for Women
Bantay Banay, Philippines

A survey conducted by Lihok Pilipina in two urban poor communities indicated that six out of ten women were victims of abuse and 60 percent of incest victims were 15 years old. Battery and abuse resulted in a self-perpetuating cycle of destruction with many victims reliving their childhood experiences. Among battered women more than half the husbands are on drugs. Violence has resulted in homelessness, poverty, and sickness.

These findings were presented to representatives from government institutions, NGOs, POs police, church, lawyer's groups and Barangay Captains in 1992. Bantay Banay, a community-based program, initiated and operated by grassroots women, was formally organized in coordination with government, NGOs, the Philippine National Police and with legal assistance from FIDA. Bantay Banay Program (BBP) emerged from the realization that economic power alone was not enough to free women from conditions that prevented them from active participation in the community and improving their lives. The BBP (in 50 communities in eight cities and twelve municipalities with planned expansion to 13 cities and 2 municipalities) works with a range of partners including local and national government, NGOs and the church. BBP has reached out, vertically and horizontally, to respond holistically to the needs of physically and sexually abused women and children. The national, provincial, municipal, and city government agencies as well as village leaders have shown great support for the Bantay Banay groups.

Through involving different sectors (health, social welfare, religious, police, law and private sectors) with communities and government agencies to provide a range of services for victims and their families, alternative resources have been tapped to sustain local initiatives. Communities continuously educate themselves and find innovative ways to care for each other through intervention, referral and monitoring systems.

BBP broadened to include family and livelihood concerns such as Water and Sanitation program, Social Credit and Livelihood program, Women's Education and Organizing. Groups begin self financing economic ventures such as cooperatives. Women, especially, are encouraged to put up small businesses. Some groups use income from their cooperatives to support community projects.

Women now participate in politics through advocacy. Examples include lobbying at the barangay level to create a Women and Family Affairs Committee with corresponding budget allocation, support for campaigns against rape and gambling, information dissemination on child abuse and domestic violence.   They address land tenure, slum improvement and infrastructural improvement such as cementing of footpaths and street lighting, provision of health and sanitation services, Clean and Green projects, water management schemes for water cooperatives, drainage systems, and conducting watershed tours to promote environmental awareness.

A Community Based Approach to Safety Issues for Women   *Continued…*

BBP conduct a spectrum of interventions to alleviate/eliminate domestic violence and violence against women (VAW). It organizes women across sector and trains them to access resources and facilitate referrals for services like temporary shelter, immediate medical check-up, legal assistance, counseling and livelihood.   It influences policies and local budgets in local government units (LGUs) on VAW. One program objective is to make LGUs recognize issues of family violence by establishing desks in their offices and allocate a portion of their budget for training and honorarium for volunteers. The Bantay Banay experience has changed the face of local governance. DILG the lead government agency on Gender works together with Bantay Banay to provide support services such as shelter, organizing, livelihood, counseling, training, legal assistance, law enforcement, medical services, and youth involvement. BBP through training law enforcement officers transformed their attitudes making them more responsive to women. It forced government agencies like Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor (PCUP) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to acknowledge their equal contribution as a partner and recognize its expertise.

At the forefront of focusing enlightened attention on women and child victims are Bantay-Banay groups in partnership with government agencies, NGOs and POs. They have motivated medical practitioners to provide patients with personalized treatment, care, interest and follow-up. Laboratory fees, medical certificates, examinations are free for these patients. The importance of issues like VAW, special pediatric care and child abuse are being institutionalized through integration in the curriculum. Other NGO partners have integrated Bantay Banay to train communities resulting in new effective innovations such as the establishment of Women's Centers in barangays, telephone counseling, home based shelters and preventive measures like family home sessions. Minimal legal fees make legal services more accessible to disadvantaged women.

Bantay Banay youth groups address issues on children's rights awareness and child abuse. Increased awareness in communities captured the attention of local officials overcoming their initial reluctance to support the project. Barangay captains now even provide funds for BBP and some have successfully tapped the private sector for resources. BBP has shown women and men, the importance of knowing and fighting for one's rights. Legal literacy has become an important source of confidence and empowerment. Traditional perspectives on disciplining wives and children are changing as well as traditional perceptions of gender and motherhood.

Thus integrating legal, medical, referral and shelter related initiatives requiring collaboration across sector has provided an integrated holistic and community based solution to the issue of violence and abuse.

In the first world, similarly safety for women in public spaces is a crucial issue. Here again women's initiatives that tailor public services to women's needs are an important vantage point and precedent for urban transportation policies.

> **_Integrating a gender perspective into public transit: The "Between Two Stops" Service_**
> **_Montréal (Québec) Canada_**
>
> A major obstacle to equality is the lack of mobility for women, particularly the poorest such as heads of single-parent families. Fear is also a major factor limiting the mobility of women, particularly those who depend on public transit for their travel.
>
> Le Comité d'action femmes et sécurité urbaine (CAFSU), founded in 1992 has as its objective to increase women's safety and sense of security in the urban environment. In 1994, CAFSU partners mobilized to convince the La Société de transport de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal (STCUM) to put a permanent service in place allowing women to get off the bus between two regular stops at night to be nearer their destination. This originated from the observation that women were substantially reducing travel by public transit at night due to fear of violence. This service aimed at increasing mobility, autonomy, and empowerment of women, with the ultimate objective of gender equality. The implementation of the service constitutes a positive action, which recognizes that men and women live different realities and that specific measures must take these differences into account if we are to reduce the inequalities between the sexes.
>
> The principal result was obviously the implementation of the "Between Two Stops" service on a permanent basis in December 1996. After more than two years of service, user demand subsequently led the transit company to announce expansion of the hours of accessibility during winter, when it gets darker earlier. The announcement of the service to the general public and to transit users sensitizes men on the reality of women's insecurities, another fundamental objective of CAFSU partners on the issue of women's safety. This undertaking now serves as an example of how the local authorities can adapt their services to the specific needs of women without a negative impact on overall service or major additional costs. The service also demonstrates how resources can be allocated to increase the control that women have on their environment, increase their choices, facilitate their mobility and thus increase their level of empowerment.

The fact that women's experiences have been at the heart of this whole undertaking and that their voices have been heard by the local authorities due to support of community and public partners, is proof that women can exert an influence on the allocation of resources for urban public services. The fear women live with, often in isolation and guilt, thus becomes publicly recognized, and the service offered to women clearly sends the message that we can, as a community, make concrete gestures to support women in their move towards autonomy and equality. It also shows that the problem of women's insecurities is a collective and social responsibility. As the service is now permanent, it serves as a concrete example, one which the women's groups and the Montréal partners now use to promote consideration of the specific needs of women in the overall allocation of resources for the population.

Social problems are usually locally and culturally specific and disproportionately affect women. Having a women's collective take on these problems allows for solutions that are women's specific and tackle the problem at its root. Women's collectives in India take on social problems like violence, alcoholism, child marriage, devadasi dedication, opposing exclusion of lower castes from temples, and the abuse of women by officials. Social problems also arise when a country's traditions and history get destroyed due to war, dictatorship or other such reasons. In the Czech Republic, reinstating traditions that were devalued in the former regime build up both neighborhood relations and social capital. Building social capital such as community based organizations is a known strategy for dealing with social problems.

IV. Governance, Leadership and Community Based Movements

4.1. Innovations in Engendered Governance

In the south leadership is cultivated through women's self help groups and in countries like India and Uganda through women's entry into politics through electoral quotas.

Democratic Decentralisation of Local Governments in India:
The 74th Constitutional Amendment

The Constitution of India, in force from 1950, made detailed provisions for ensuring democratic functioning of the parliament and the State legislatures but not for urban local government. In consequence, democracy at this level has not been stable. In 1990-91 dialogue between local political leaders as well as grass root level functionaries were organised in India, as part of a consultative process to discuss the strengthening local bodies. The Government of India in response to the crisis of municipal governance accorded urban local bodies constitutional status to provide legislative parameters for State Governments to enact municipal laws to strengthen local democracy. The 73rd Amendment bill introduced in 1991, followed by the 74th Amendment Act of 1992, to the Indian constitution represents the boldest initiative anywhere in the world for spreading local democracy, both in rural and urban areas.

The major objectives of the **74th Constitutional Amendment Act** are to increase representation of weaker sections (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and backward classes and women) in municipalities. To empower women, one-third of Municipal seats, including Mayoral seats were reserved for them. To ensure fiscal autonomy, State Finance Commissions also Constitutional authorities, designed principles for tax assignments, sharing of taxes and grants-in-aid. To ensure free elections, State Election Commissions were set up. People's representations would have full say in all planning. The constitution requires Ward Committees with elected representatives perform the twin roles of governance and a utility organization with scope to involve non governmental and community based people's organisations, for public-private participation, privatization of civic services and the advocacy and action roles of citizen groups.

The democratic decentralization initiative in India is extremely significant to transfer successful innovations and it provides for sustainable urban and regional development based on partnerships in which national, provincial, and local Governments and the citizens at large have the widest possible space to decide, initiate and innovate. However it has been found that the 74th amendment has not been nearly as successful in implementation as the 73rd amendment as civil society in the rural areas is stronger, women's groups more widespread and aware and NGOs here are playing an active role in training the village elected representatives. The same is not true in the urban scenario.

The Uganda Women's Caucus

The Uganda Women's Caucus formed brought together women of all walks of life who spoke with one voice and who had common objectives. They strategized to entrench in the Constitution clauses that will have an impact on the lives of women and other marginalized groups. Constitutions made earlier lacked women's participation and so their interests were not specifically catered for. With the affirmative action measure decreed by the NRM Government, 51 women delegates out of 284 were members of the Constituent Assembly (CA), and they formed the Women's Caucus.

The Women's Caucus was formed in 1994 with the purpose of increasing the women's political clout and to broaden the support base for women's issues. Within the Assembly, women allied with youth, workers and persons with disabilities delegates, and with impetus from six women delegates calling themselves the "Gender Working Group" formed a caucus known formally as "The Constituent Assembly Women's Caucus, Working with Youth, Workers, and People with Disabilities." The caucus was strictly non-partisan in nature, taking positions only on issues of fundamental importance to women, youth or persons with disabilities and avoiding any issues that would create disagreement amongst the members of the Caucus.

The Women's Caucus worked effectively as a minority in the Assembly. The Constitution was written in gender-neutral language; an explicit statement of equality before the law was included in the new Constitution. The Caucus successfully lobbied for an Equal Opportunities Commission to guarantee enforcement of the constitutional principles. The Caucus also successfully lobbied to increase the affirmative action quota from one in every nine local council positions to one in three, guaranteeing women one-third of local government council seats. Totally women have 45 affirmative action seats guaranteed in Parliament while they can also contest other seats. The latter provision has provided more women with political experience, and has given them an increasingly important role as decentralization of political authority progresses.

Arising from the Women's Caucus, visible and invisible outcomes have been noted. The women delegates, through concerted caucus action enhanced the significance of the gender agenda in the politics of Uganda. The Women's Caucus enabled women and the other marginalised groups to gain a feeling of self-esteem. An increasing number of women have become involved in the political running of the country at various levels and in different capacities as a result off the efforts of the Caucus.

After the Constitution making process, the gender working group of the Constituent Assembly Women's Caucus formed an NGO called FOWODE that now promotes gender equality in all decision-making through advocacy, training, research and publishing. Through FOWODE activities, parliamentarians and the local government councilors have been encouraged to form caucuses.

The experience of quotas has been mixed with far better success being achieved in the rural scenario compared to the urban one. India is still fighting for the right to quotas for women in parliament where there representation is very poor.

In Uganda, women in parliament have been extremely powerful in instituting engendered mechanisms at the constitutional level and in fighting and winning to right to electoral quotas for women in local government.

One of the keys to the success of the Women's Caucus was its early acknowledgement of the need for alliances. The group forged links with grassroots women's organisations, high-level women in the public and private sector and women intellectuals, as well as the link with youth and persons with disabilities delegates in the Assembly.

Another vital ingredient of the Caucus success was its leaderships' insistence on a non-partisan approach. This was not easy, as many Caucus members had different political backgrounds and convictions. The Caucus leadership found that constantly identifying and articulating the Caucus' common agenda helped to counter these tendencies, as well as to remind members not to attempt to press the Caucus on issues on which consensus cannot be reached. When issues proved potentially divisive, the Caucus opted not to take a public stance, rather than jeopardise its unity.

The nature of problems faced by women in industrialized societies is different from those in the developing economies. The experience of motherhood is marginalised, and the mother child relationship is experienced under isolation. Children experience decreasing access to peer contacts and to public space, due to the rise of single child families and increasingly dangerous environments. Parents also often lack peer contacts. Parent education and outreach programs typically reach only a small segment of the middle class, not the poor. The work world and public culture function on the basis of full-time availability of workers, both male and female, for the labor market, leaving family obligations up to others. For men, these are usually their wives, for working and career women these are other women, grandmothers, daycare workers, nannies, or teachers.

The overall market orientation of highly industrialised societies has marginalised all those who fall outside of the labor market and its achievement standards. This has heavy consequences on the development of these societies, on the quality of life and of social relationships, on the social and spiritual quality of the neighborhoods. Sustainable neighborhood networks and neighborliness are drying up in northern societies.
The mother centers confront this central issue of underdevelopment in the North. Women who stay at home while their children are small, can be seen as a left over phenomenon of the individualization and modernisation processes in the north. In this respect mothers turn out to be the ones still keeping together the families, the communities and the neighborhoods in industrialised societies, the ones still having time resources to put into maintaining a humane quality to social and community life. In the mother centers women own this quality of their lives and go public with it.

The Story of the Mother Centers in Germany

Most women in Germany do not follow the male pattern of total availability for work. When they have children, they choose to stay at home for a period of time or to cut down on working hours and career aspirations in order to create space in their lives to tend to children and to family life. Mothers describe a process of loss of self-confidence, which they experience when living isolated with children, a life with norms contrary to public norms. On the one hand, mothering demands an incredible responsibility, competence and self-reliance. On the other hand, they are cut off from public values based on earning money, on principles of success and competition in (full-time) labor market participation.

Mother Centers meeting with Local Authorities

In the mother centers women break their isolation. The mother centers create public visibility for female life styles. The name itself, "mothers center" validates motherhood. They create a public space to voice issues that prevail when "looking at the world through the eyes of a woman with a child at her hand" and where mothers raise their self esteem and confidence to claim participation in designing neighborhoods and communities. Mother centers are a place where women organise without being clientalised. Women there experience themselves as experts on their own lives. They create strategies to solve their problems with the common vision of increasing the influence and leadership of women in their communities. Women here have the freedom to confront and challenge ideologies that marginalize motherhood and to collectively build their identities and images of motherhood on their own experiences.

The core of the mother center project is a daily drop-in coffee shop, which includes childcare. Activities in the centers involve:

- Provision of goods and services that help lower expenses for families like: second hand shops, hair-cutting, midday meals, sewing classes, repair services;
- Crisis counseling and support;
- Know-how on parenting (breast feeding, nutrition, what do I do when a child does not stop crying, and so on);
- Training in languages, computer courses;
- Relaxation and holistic health services like reflexology, massages;
- Job training and retraining.

First and foremost, the mother centers contribute to the empowerment of women in the communities. In the mother centers, women do not have to leave their communities to develop their self-confidence and to participate in public life. The centers also function as a stepping stone for women to reenter the labor market. They also contribute to raising the visibility and recognition of women's reproductive work by paying for it in the centers. The mother centers have also proven to be successful locations for retraining and job reentry programs. Training conducted in the setting of the centers can depend on the infra-structural support services of the centers like childcare, lunch services, ironing and laundry services, pick-up and transport services for children, home-work support for children and so on.

The mothers centers movement spread across Europe into other countries including the Czech Republic, Holland among others.

Czech Mothers, Prague presenting to Local Authorities and the Huairou Commission

In industrialised societies it is community based movements that provide leadership and inputs into governance mainly. The mother centers in Germany and Czech Republic provide a range of community based solutions for basic urban problems.

Women in the mothers centers are not approached by relating to their problems or deficiencies, but by relating to their strengths, capacities and positive visions. The centers are places where women are invited to bring their ideas, talents, visions and resources out of the limited sphere of their own four walls into a public setting to contribute to society at large. Life experience is valued as expertise and qualification.

The centers offer women access to some independent money. This is an important element in raising the confidence and the potential of women. Mother centers challenge mainstream society´s concept of professionalism, of expertise and qualification by highlighting the expertise of those dealing with the concrete aspects of everyday life, an expertise, not based on formal qualifications, but on practical involvement in care-giving in the family and in the community. This expertise is devalued in society because it is developed outside the channels of professionalism and labor market participation.

The mother centers challenge the exclusion of children from public life, which is one of the factors contributing to the exclusion of women. The unwaged character of family and community care-work makes this work invisible as work and with that also comes an invisibility of the expertise, qualification and leadership potential acquired by engaging in care work. Making these qualifications and this leadership potential visible, re-owning them collectively and re-integrating them into public life is the implicit and explicit agenda of the mother centers movement.

4.2. The Role of Community Based Movements in Local Governance

Community based organizations play a variety of roles in development and consequently in governance. These include monitoring local services, gender sensitization and mainstreaming gender concerns among others. Local governments are increasingly recognizing the roles played by community-based organizations.

4.2.1. Monitoring:

A certain percentage of funds in local governments in some countries are either allocated to women or to marginalized groups or to low income populations. For example 30% of local government funds in India are supposed to be earmarked for women and in Philippines, 5% are earmarked for women and development. Bantay Banay, Philippines, tries to monitor this 5% wherever it works. It trains women on local government services. An Inter-Agency Coordination Council (IACC) coordinates and collaborates among its members and represents the community. Partners involved include the police, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Health (DOH),

Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), LGUs, NGOs and other private sector actors demonstrating the inclusive nature of women's organizing.

4.2.2. Collaboration Across Sectors and Departments:

The inter relatedness of issues in women's lives have resulted in the need for cross sectoral multi-issues based solutions. Solutions created by them have therefore drawn upon *diverse sectors*. In Bantay Banay, government agencies from different sectors and stake holders (health, social welfare, religious, police, law and private sectors to name a few) collaborated with communities to provide a range of services for victims' families. Through the involvement of other sectors, alternative resources have been tapped to sustain local initiatives. In India, Mahila Samakhya for example has managed to gain the active support of the police at the community level. This builds the buy-in and support to grassroots women from actors in other sectors as well as gets them to appreciate and understand the contributions made by grassroots women.

Mahila Samakhya Mela: Training for Sangha Women and Elected Women Officials

The second impact is overcoming differences and working across government and civil society sectors. The Uganda Women's Caucus represents a unique partnership across sectors, which consists of women from the Constituent Assembly and FIDA (U), a professional association providing technical assistance on the specifics of the

Constitution. Thus a variety of professional partnerships helped produce a tremendous impact on creating gender sensitive governance.

4.2.3. Gender Sensitization, Mainstreaming and Institutionalizing Gender Concerns

Bantay Banay tries to counter family violence by making local governments establish desks in their offices and make a budgetary provision for training and honorarium for volunteers. Gender training seminars conducted by Bantay Banay have overcome the local police and other officials' resistance to training resulting in increased participation and responsiveness to women. *Police officers felt truly enlightened by the training. Now, they volunteer, respond immediately to calls from Bantay Banay groups, establish and attend to the Women's Desks in police stations while maintaining open communication.*"

Institutionalizing and mainstreaming women's concerns has resulted in changing curriculum, increasing budgetary allocations for women's issues, and increasing the number of women on electoral and decision-making bodies.

4.2.4. Channel Into Politics:

Organizations in the south and the north act as feeders for women to participate in the public sphere. Agragamee, LEAD and Mahila Samakhya Karnataka facilitate women's entry into local politics through organizing them into collectives. Mahila Samakhya Karnataka managed to get 210 women elected and LEAD got 42 women elected to local government positions.

In the National Association of Mother Centers (NAMC), USA, *many members report getting involved in community organizations and affairs in ways that they would not have envisioned themselves doing prior to their Mother's Center involvement. Women have run for school boards; organized election campaigns for others running for office; spearheaded projects that have cleaned up dirty, unsafe school properties; run consensus training in schools; established summer programs for local school children.* [12] While the women individually become more active, the centers also help strengthen their collective voice in the community. *Centers have gotten involved in lobbying for local hospitals to allow sibling visitation in the maternity ward; have offered support and mentoring to teen mothers; have provided gifts and support to battered and imprisoned mothers; have established groups for community women struggling with post-partum depression; and lobbied for more child-friendly environments in local business establishments.* [13]

This channel into politics not only engenders local governance but provides a grassroots culture. *The mother centers have introduced grassroots participation in local governance. Mother center participants are represented in many municipalities in local*

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[12] National Association of Mother Centers (NAMC), USA, Submission to the HC Our Best Practices database.

[13] NAMC, USA, Submission to the HC Our Best Practices database.

parliament as well as in municipal councils concerning youth welfare, family policy and urban renewal and development.[14]

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[14] See Article on Mother Centers, The Czech Republic.

4.2.5. Creating an Alternative Development Voice:

By creating a dialogue forum and by bringing in other actors into this dialogue grassroots women are able to generate an alternative voice to top down development by providing solutions and alternatives that include a range of perspectives. FSWW supports grassroots women's leadership by advocacy namely by providing input to the local government reform process, the Social Contract Campaign during the local elections, and so on. The Czech mother centers provide a space in which citizens can negotiate with local government, re-educate local authorities and provide an effective alternative to bureaucratic strategies. The Uganda Women's Caucus facilitated a series of gender dialogues, to which they invited men, other non-Caucus members and experts to build a buy into the process of *using gender-neutral terminology throughout the constitution and an explicit constitutional provision declaring equality between women and men under the law.* In addition, the Caucus formed The Gender Information Centre which issued periodical publications of leaflets to all delegates which served as lobbying tools for information and education, the themes for which were derived from current events and issues debated in the Assembly.

4.2.6. Partnerships with Local Government

Today some of the strongest and most innovative partnerships are those between *local authorities and grassroots movements.* At this historical juncture especially, local authorities themselves are undergoing a transformation by decentralization of state power and being strengthened. MS[15] itself represents one of the most innovative government-grassroots women's partnerships being a part of a government program while legally registered like any other NGO, as a society. This identity allows MS women to ally naturally with other local authorities such as police, state banks, education and health departments. Sangha women take the lead in facilitating local government and community interaction by visiting officials and inviting them to their workshops. Government departments have begun to take the initiative to interact with MS women.

The Czech mothers have worked hard at evolving productive partnerships with municipalities, where the centers are seen as an important link to the community. Mothers are invited to take part in various debates, conferences, round tables and consultation processes on a wide range of issues including the role of the family in civil society, educational reform and crime prevention. The Tuelewane group found some common ground on which to collaborate with the police on crime prevention in Kenya. Further, through regular interaction, they have been able to get the local authorities to see them as an essential service provider and as an equal partner. In fact, their success in this area has earned them a place in NGO forums as resource persons on building capacities to evolve appropriate partnerships.

The advantage with such alliances is that public works and services have the input and buy in of the community from the onset. Traditional problems, associated with well-

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[15] Mahila Samakhya, India is an organization that spans eight states in India and has organized women in 8,200 collectives towards the goal of empowerment through education.

intentioned state programs not working and its accompanying infrastructure remaining unused due to the lack of community input in their design, disappear. In Bangladesh, the Environment & Population Research Centre initiated a process which trained government-established Sanitation Committees (that were inactive) on people's needs to promote social mobilization for sanitation. This process of *involving the community* resulted in an increase in hygienic practices tripling the use of latrines.

The Women's Urban Safety Action Committee of CAFSU, Canada managed to convince the local transportation authorities to allow women to get off the bus between two regular stops at night to be nearer their destination in light of safety concerns for women.

Community buy-in and participation is strongest when there is a demonstrated element of *public contribution,* either financial or otherwise, towards projects. In the Philippines, Harnessing Self-reliant Initiatives and Knowledge, (HASIK)'s partnership with community organizations that set up daycare programs is based on the *principle of counter-parting.*

One advantage of alliances with government is *legitimacy and by-passing red-tapism.* In Turkey in the earthquake region, program related partnerships between FSWW and the State Social Services Administration provided legitimacy and quickened bureaucratic procedures.

Partnerships at national and international levels also *shape policies.* The German youth welfare legislation was reformed through the Mother Centers input to include family self help approaches as part of government policy on municipal, state and national level. The Federal Family Ministry funds the National Association of Mother Centers, and together with the mother center movement created sustainability by influencing the legislative frame-work of state welfare programs to support of grassroots work and by introducing new funding regulations on state and municipal levels. Partnerships of groups associated with international networks like GROOTS, The Super-Coalition of Women, Homes and Communities and The Huairou Commission spanned the very local to the international. The advantage is that the deep-rooted knowledge accompanying local organizing that is grounded in experience can be transmitted globally. In fact networking has led to the rapid spread of the Mother Centers movement across national boarders.

National partnerships are also important in *shaping national laws.* In Bosnia, Prijateljice's partnerships include an informally organized reference group established in November 1996 of Bosnia with national and international NGOs focussing on legal frameworks. The group consists of 25 NGOs whose objectives include creating Law Draft on work of humanitarian organizations and citizens associations.

Another role played by national partnerships is *information dissemination* of national policies and other national practices. Union de Vecinos, USA, partners nationally with the Washington DC-based Public Housing Residents National Organizing Campaign councils whose role is to provide them with vital information on national policies as well as information on strategies being adopted by similar groups in other parts of the country.

Thus these new partnerships are multi-pronged, exist at multiple levels and across a wide range of stake-holders working towards multiple goals. What characterizes and distinguishes these partnerships is that the community particularly grassroots women retain ownership and definition of the terms on which the partnerships are entered into. More important is the learning by groups on maintaining one's integrity while negotiating such alliances.

4.2.7. Building Women's Capacities to Govern:

By taking on the issues of literacy and governance, MSK, not only brought women into politics but gave them the tools by which they could access essential information to govern. Successful women elected representatives credit their new-found literacy for their ability to handle their responsibilities in local government and credit MSK for their overall success. The Uganda Women's Caucus has achieved impressive results at every level in helping women participate in the political running of Uganda. Through promoting an *affirmative action policy, the following achievements have been realised:*[16]
- *The percentage of women in the Local Government Councils is 45% presently, involving approximately 6,607 women representatives, and in Parliament there is 18% representation of women.*
- *Appointment of a woman Vice President.*
- *Appointment of six (12%) women ministers out of 50*
- *Appointment of women Permanent Secretaries representing about 19%.*
- *Women are represented on the eight constitutional commissions.*

4.2.8. Upscaling through Government

The Tuelewane group was invited to the Best Practices Exhibition on sustainable local initiatives for a better environment organised by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing. Here the Minister requested the group to present a proposal to the City Council for rehabilitating toilets in the Central Business District, which Tuelewane did. This offers the possibility of the group to expand and up-scale its work to the entire city level.

4.2.9. Engendering Democracy and Civil Society

Post-socialist societies and societies with histories of military rule, typically have weak civil societies. Part of reweaving a new civil society fabric is to imbibe values and practices of tolerance, trust, acceptance of difference, celebration of diversity and cooperation among its members. The Czech mother centers have created a channel for people in former communist countries to relearn democratic behavior and to engender democratic processes. They represent a new type of civil society, which is community-based and women-led. It provides women a forum to express themselves in the public arena, take responsibility and lead. Involving children at a very young age teaches them to participate and learn the value of a rich civil society. It simultaneously enables women

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[16] Uganda Women's Caucus, Submission to the HC Our Best Practices database.

and the larger community to unlearn totalitarian practices of previous regimes helping them overcome internalized fears and assert themselves. These are training grounds to learn to dialogue across different opinions and deal with local authorities.

Even in historically democratic countries like Germany, the Mother Centers play a similar role teaching historically excluded populations to participate in public spheres. For instance, in a survey on the German Mother Centers 70% learned more tolerance, 58% learned to take leadership, 56% learned to participate and raise their voices, 55% learned to say "no" and 52% learned to state what they needed. These values are constantly being learned and constitute what are basic elements of democratic participation of a citizenry.

4.2.10 Engendering Leadership

Grassroots women have changed the very definition of leadership and therefore of governance. New elements of leadership from grassroots women perspective include:
- Center staging women
- Multi-faceted leadership
- Leadership as a Learned not Innate Trait
- Leadership for Empowerment
- Women Leaders Facilitating Other Women's Leadership:
- Non-Partisan leadership
- Leaders taking care of everyone
- Collective Leadership
- Self-defined and recognized
- Issue based leadership

Center-Staging Women's Leadership: Initiatives that center stage women's leadership help women own their participation in development. Women's inclusive style of work brings different stakeholders and their perspectives into the process fostering more flexibility and creativity. According to the League for Education and Development (LEAD), India, *Women should be at the center of any effort to improve their lot. Unless they are enabled to take charge of their lives, the programmes are of little significance.*[17] Bosnian women in Prijateljice who lost their husbands and fathers in the war are now the cornerstones of their families. Here as leaders, women are expected to be responsible for everything despite being physically or mentally abused themselves. *They need to keep households, raise children without their fathers, take care of other household members and learn to run their lives providing material and financial means. At the same time women are taught how to be leaders to their families, how to overcome difficulties they face, etc.* [18] The need to reconstruct communities and take the lead in peace efforts calls for a different type of leadership where women in fact excel. Women lead the women clubs and have organized political events and demonstrations for missing people. *Here*

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[17] League for Education and Development (LEAD), India, Submission to the HC Our Best Practices database.

[18] Prijateljice, Bosnia, Submission to the HC Our Best Practices database.

they show the ability for reconciliation and show, that women are more able to go over borders in peace and to start to work together. [19]

Multiple and rotating leadership characterizes women-led organizations. In League for Education and Development (LEAD), India, three leaders represent one collective at monthly meetings by rotation. In Nicaragua as well leaders on the cooperative boards of directors is rotated (every two weeks) so members can obtain hand-on experience in leadership, and successes and failures are evaluated.

Leadership as a Learned not Innate Trait: This is based on the notion that leadership is a learned trait, can be fostered in everyone and that all people need the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and capacities. Female leadership is intrinsically non-hierarchical and diametrically opposed to the idea that there can be only one leader and everyone else must act as followers. Leadership is seen as a process whose elements are *support, training and nurturing* of women's myriad capacities. Bringing women into local government especially requires a variety of inputs. In Kenya, Tuelewane members participated in various workshops on leadership. This resulted in their voting for a woman, something they admitted would not have happened earlier but also in their campaigning and financing a woman candidate to attend a management course.

Leadership for Empowerment: Leadership is also linked to women's *empowerment*. To build women's capacities as leaders in business and government, women's organizations train and support women to take on these challenges. In Kenya, women are empowered through workshops on leadership to stand up for their rights in the face of unlawful evictions. FSWW supports grassroots women's leadership and visibility through media/press coverage on issues important to them, advocacy and by initiating innovative programs (such as micro-credit and neighborhood mothers program).

Leadership empowers women by validating existing strengths from their *daily experiences* as seen in the mothers centers. "*Mother centers claim public attention and space for the interests of neighborhood women and their families and create new channels for grassroots female leadership and participation in the communities, that value everyday life experience as expertise and qualification.*"[20] Here women's leadership is made visible in *new areas* not seen as arenas for leadership such as within public spaces i.e. in schools, homes and local bodies.

Multi-faceted leadership: HSIK trains women to become daycare teachers and set up a community-based daycare center, where each woman is now *an administrator, teacher, community organizer rolled into one. None of them can be described as fragile and insecure ever again.*[21] Recognizing the myriad roles women leaders are capable of playing nurturing their practical organizational skills, placing them in their roles as leaders in the community as well as knowledge-givers are all seen as part of nurturing

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[19] Prijateljice, Bosnia, Submission to the HC Our Best Practices database.

[20] Mother centers, Germany, Submission to the HC Our Best Practices database.

[21] Harnessing Self-reliant Initiatives and Knowledge, Philippines, Submission to the HC Our Best Practices database.

leadership. In the German Mother Centers, women's leadership is manifested strongly in making care work visible. In the USA, women leaders play a strong role in standing up for the rights of tenants in public housing communities and in holding families together and fighting crime and violence in their communities. In the Mukuru recycling project, Kenya, women's leadership helped scavengers regain their self-respect and re-integrate into society as role models for communities facing similar problems. Nonetheless, while women's leadership addresses different functions in different cultural contexts, building their leadership is a corner stone of the organizing process.

Women Leaders Facilitating Other Women's Leadership: Contrary to the myth that women are women's worst enemies and unlike men who compete there are many examples of women leaders promoting other women's leadership. The Uganda Women's Caucus, is an outstanding example of this type of transmission of opportunities for women. The Caucus consists of 51 women members of the Constituent Assembly who allied with other groups (youth, disability) to lobby for women's issues and for other minority groups. The Caucus successfully lobbied to guarantee one-third of local government council seats to women. This sets an important precedent where women in power at higher levels have facilitated political access for women at other levels.

Non-Partisan leadership: The Uganda Women's Caucus is non-partisan. Often women in politics at all levels try to lobby for issues circumventing partisan politics. In MSK India also, women contesting for local government often run as independent candidates.

Taking Care of Others: Leadership qualities among grassroots women include not just taking care of their constituency, kin or party but *taking care of everyone*. This concept according to Monika Jaeckel comes from the experience of motherhood. A leadership talent also rooted in competencies developed by motherhood relates to making sure that everyone in the community has the chance to contribute. Mothers encourage the best in all their children and bring out their individual strengths. Leadership of this kind is not polarizing nor is it about building enemies. It is about *building alliances across differences* and celebrating a community's diversity and strengths associated with that diversity. *Collaborative not confrontational* leadership characterizes these movements.

Collective Leadership is a tool of empowerment where grassroots women emerge as leaders through collective sharing and action. *The ability to take collective action, support each other in development action as also for assertion of rights is the most empowering element. The groups draw strength from the support network they form, as also inspiration from each other's efforts, experiences and work*.[22] Building the strength of a circle of women leaders, the Center for Natural Birth has been able to operate in a male dominated area. *Women get in touch with their own power best by getting in touch with their own bodies and sharing the experience with other women. That's the way they gather courage and determination, in which they become aware of their potentials and increase their sense of self-confidence and self worth*.[23]

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[22] Agragamee, India, Submission to the HC Our Best Practices database.
[23] Center for Natural Birth and Community Services, Germany, Submission to the HC Our Best Practices database.

<u>Self-defined:</u> Leadership styles in the Czech Mother Centers for instance are *open and non-hierarchical, contributing to the development of leadership skills on a self-selection basis.* [24] Women learn to identify their own strengths and voices and choose for themselves areas where they wish to take leadership.

<u>Issue based leadership</u> is a new direction being forged by Mahila Samakhya Karnataka (MSK), India. Here two sangha[25] women participate in different committees (health, environment, literacy committees and so on). This ensures that women are involved in different arenas as well as encourages many women to take up leadership roles.

What is engendered leadership? Engendered leadership thus is not about public spokesmanship and charisma but about honesty, patience and accountability, qualities to be nurtured in leaders. It is about spending funds for their designated purpose, helping everyone get an equal chance to access funds and information and taking care of everyone's needs. It is acknowledging that every individual has strengths and in that capacity can be a leader. In essence, leadership redefined is about the larger collective good, about fairness and about opportunity. Leadership is thus seen as a process whose elements include support, training and nurturing of women's myriad capacities.

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[24] Jaeckel, Monika, See Czech Republic article.
[25] Sangha means collective

4.3. Towards A New Framework for Engendered Urban Governance: Indicators

Table 1. Indicators of Improved and Engendered Governance	
Improved Governance	Engendered Governance
Transparency	Engendered Transparency
Accountability	Engendered Accountability
Equity for rich and poor	Equity for poor women
Sustainability	Sustainability for women
Community participation	Participation of women

4.4.1. Measures of Indicators of Governance:

Increased transparency	Extent to which budgets and decisions are made public. Number of public assemblies held per year. Extent to which people participate in assemblies Extent to which elected officials are accessible to people Extent to which programmes are explained to people
Engendered transparency	Extent to which women participate in the assemblies Extent to which elected officials are accessible to women Extent to which programmes are explained to women Extent to which information is accessible to women
Increased accountability	Nature of communication between elected officials and the community
Engendered Accountability	Communication between elected officials and women
Equity	Increased access to resources of the voting constituency Improved standard of living
Equity for women	Increased access to resources for women Improved standard of living for women
Sustainability	Lasting changes for the community Environmental management that improve natural resources and the environment
Sustainability for women	Enduring changes for women Environmental management that improve natural resources, the environment and improve living standards of women
Community Participation	Increased participation of the community in decision-making processes
Participation of women	Increased participation of women in decision making Increased participation of the women's collectives at meetings of local government Extent to which the local governments consults collectives

While more success has been seen in rural governance, corruption, large contracts and existing networks make urban governance far more difficult to transform. However urban governance needs to be examined using similar frameworks from other research on governance for it to be critically rethought and challenged.

Thus the indicators and measures that have emerged for improved and engendered governance need to be tested in the urban scenario for their validity.

For this there needs to be more broad based and in depth research on best practices evolved by women in the urban context and the testing of these indicators and measures.

4.4. Impact on Governance

What has been the impact of women's participation on governance?
- For one women's participation in the community has resulted in creating channels and training grounds for women's participation in local government both within and outside it.
- Attitudes of local officials have changed.
- When women are in a position to do so, they have impacted on the political agenda bringing in women's concerns and priorities thus shaping the planning processes from below.
- Shaping programs and policies have been another focus on women's participation
- Creating a new paradigm and understanding of leadership

V. Enabling Policies: Lessons from Grassroots Women's Best Practices

5.1. What constitutes good urban policies and enabling legislation?

One central element is that they be gender sensitive. Many international debates, reports and agencies have acknowledged that women´s participation and leadership are at the cutting edge of sustainable development (i.e. Urban 21, Global report on Human Settlements 2001,World Bank). UNCHS (Habitat) in its strategic vision paper has made the empowerment of women the primary indicator of the success of its interventions. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) in her opening remarks at the Grassroots Women´s International Academy during Istanbul plus 5 in New York stressed that women´s concerns are the central concerns of Habitat and of the Habitat Agenda.

Good urban policies and enabling legislation therefore need to be at the forefront of gender mainstreaming strategies. This involves confronting some common myths about gender mainstreaming:

Confronting Myth No. 1:
Contrary to common misunderstandings gender mainstreaming does not mean giving up women specific spaces, practices, research, projects or groups. A focus on women specific approaches needs to be maintained as the source of innovation, the fountain from which the parallel process of engaging institutional actors in taking responsibility for gender equity and gender mainstreaming is fed.

Confronting Myth No 2:
Contrary to common misunderstandings gender mainstreaming does not exhaust itself in increasing the number of women in decision-making bodies. Gender mainstreaming involves a shift in leadership roles of both women and men and a shift in gender relations around leadership. Women need to be supported in taking leadership roles and men need to be supported in learning to be comfortable with taking support roles.

Confronting Myth No 3:
Gender mainstreaming does not center around women as target groups for capacity building. It centers around making visible and building on the capacities women have already developed in their activities on the ground in sustaining human settlements and urban development. Gender mainstreaming centers around capacity building for institutional actors, educating them to be able to perceive and link to the perspectives and solutions of women coming from the ground.

Confronting Myth No 4:
Gender mainstreaming does not mean targeting women as beneficiaries of programmes. It means empowering women to actively take the lead in changing the status quo of gender relations involving i.e. changes and transformation of the culture of policy debate and public procedures and decision making, of public priorities and resource allocation.

Good urban policies and enabling legislation need to answer to questions like:

- Do they support women specific practices, spaces, research, groups and projects?
- Do they support a shift in gender relations around leadership roles?
- Do they support capacity building efforts to educate mainstream partners in gender and grassroots responsiveness and to enable them to be equitable partners to women led initiatives?
- Do they transform the culture of public decision making to include women's perspectives, life styles, priorities and ways of doing things?
- Do they contribute to a reallocation of resources to the grassroots level?
- Do they make visible and validate the everyday life expertise and the care work of women as well as men in neighbourhoods and communities?

5.2. Gender Sensitive Policy Directives Stemming from Lessons

The following section will examine the generic lessons from the Best Practices of Grassroots women and look to see what policy implications lie embedded within these local practices.

5.2.1. Overarching Goal: The Empowerment of Women

One common goal that cuts across all community based organizations is the empowerment of women. Several activities revolve around this over arching goal. However two important tenets to increasing women's access to economic and public spheres of life include developing their skill sets and providing them the needed support services, including child care and transportation.

For a policy to be gender sensitive one explicit goal should be the empowerment of women.

5.2.2. Environmental Management:

In trying to build a better lifestyle for their communities, women simultaneously tend to preserve their society's natural resources. In doing so, women have redefined sustainability from a gender perspective linking it strongly to livelihood issues.

Women should be central to planning, monitoring and implementation of urban environmental management strategies.

5.2.3. Building Collectives: A Space for Women

Be it the sanghas or the containers, or the mothers centers, or the cooperatives, a space and a time is being created for women by women. Once created, these groups take on myriad functions in the community. These collectives create a space which first and foremost ends the isolation mothers experience and second, provides a supportive

environment where they can discover and learn new skills and talents, find opportunities to earn incomes, link with the public sphere and overall increase their confidence.

Hence all policies and programmes linked to communities should begin with building women's collectives or nurture and center stage existing women's collectives for programme planning, monitoring and implementation.

5.2.4. Increasing Access to Resources:

Access to information and resources have helped women acquire land, credit, shelter and assets. In the north, this access has increased presence of women in public spaces, monitoring of public goods and has increased employment opportunities. Assets like land, credit and infrastructure have nurtured women as producers and secure tenure provides women in urban areas the essential security needed to leverage other basic services.

Policies should channel resources to women and create assets in the names of women, especially with the goal of ensuring secure tenure in urban areas.

5.2.5. Building Alternative Economic Institutions

In India and Bangladesh savings and credit activities have provided alternative credit sources that safeguard women's assets by ending their indebtedness. The savings groups represent an alternative parallel banking system that provides women flexible credit for consumption and production giving them a credit history and legitimacy to leverage credit from formal banking systems.

Economic policies should therefore encourage the formation of thrift groups or for existing self help groups to begin savings and credit activities.

5.2.6. Training:

Poverty is a function of lack of access to resources and information. Training for women corrects this gap. For poor women to develop economic alternatives, a range of training is needed on community mobilization, self help concepts, savings and credit, linkages with government, banks and mainstream institutions, income generation, skills for production specific to the economic activity, accounting, marketing and negotiations skills. Knowledge on production techniques, administration and marketing equalizes work responsibilities and know how between men and women. For political empowerment, women need training on elections, campaigning and then in their capacity as elected representatives. For social empowerment of women, they need training on legal literacy, information on resources and support services.

Training for women should be an intrinsic part of any policy, economic, social and political.

5.2.7. Providing Support Services:

It is not enough for organizations to simply provide women with opportunities to earn more income. In order for them to fully utilize these opportunities, other basic needs must be taken care. Support services such as child care, transportation, nutrition, peer counseling, health care among other services.

Policies that ensure child care and other support services for women are essential for their full participation in economic and community development.

5.2.8. Other Policy Concerns:

The OBP Campaign and case studies point towards promoting practices that:

Center stage women's leadership: Having women in the center allows the needs of communities to be taken care and for development to be more holistic and comprehensive. It allows for the empowerment of women who in turn will provide other actors the opportunity and space to participate in development without compromising on sustainable human development.

Promote Learning Exchanges: Peer exchanges and sharing stories have been found to be the easiest way of learning. Therefore creating a resource pool and foundation that promotes learning exchanges can facilitate a horizontal spread of grassroots women's innovations. It can also prevent resource wastage by not having each community re-invent the wheel.

Make Visible Grassroots Women's Principles: Grassroots women's values of cooperation, holistic development, non-hierarchy, inclusion and creating a nurturing climate can provide a real challenge to dominant development priorities and principles that emphasize individualism, consumerism and profit.

Mainstream/Institutionalize Grassroots Women's Perspectives: The creation of institutional structures and funding streams that prioritize grassroots women's needs would force larger institutional actors to re-evaluate their own development priorities and processes. Further it would allow a space for women to be part of decision making for all development processes.

Dialogue forums: Interaction fora between grassroots women and other institutional actors can help educate these actors as well as provide a forum for women to articulate their needs and negotiate for their communities and families. It can allow different actors to buy into a consensual process that allows future cooperation facilitating partnerships where grassroots women determine the priorities and agenda for action.

The Huairou Commission can be commissioned to set up a set of criteria to identify and evaluate good urban gender mainstreaming policies and enabling legislation.

5.3. What are good examples?

Recognizing the women's voice as being essential to the global conversation on Habitat, the then Secretary General of UNCHS Habitat II, Dr. Wally N'Dow, called for the establishment of the Huairou Commission (HC). Its purpose is to advance the capacity of grassroots women worldwide to create and strengthen sustainable communities by forging strategic partnerships. Representatives of grassroots women's global networks, collectively referred to as the WHCSC, make up the core of the Huairou Commission and determine the goals of its partnership entity, the Huairou Commission. The Commission partners with other NGOs (WEDO and Women & Cities International Network), United Nations organizations (UNIFEM, UNCHS/WHP, CSOPP, UNDP), local government organizations (WACLAC, IULA and LAC), Global Parliamentarians and research institutes (CERFE).

The Huairou Commission has identified a range of gender sensitive urban policies in its Our Best Practices Campaign and subsequent Grassroots Women´s International Academies (GWIA). The Huairou Commission can be commissioned to identify good examples of enabling legislation and urban policies that support gender mainstreaming.

5.4. How to document?

We suggest to hire expertise to extract the policy implications and existing "enabling legislation" from the Best Practices on the Data Base.

The Huairou Commission can be commissioned to do this for policy implications and enabling legislation concerning grassroots practices and gender mainstreaming.

We suggest that policy and legislation implications be made an explicit criteria in the documentation guidelines for new submissions of Best Practices.
We suggest a stricter implementation of gender responsiveness as a central criteria for qualifying as a Best Practice.

5.5. How to support dissemination?

We suggest creating learning fora and events where the policy implications of Best Practices are the focus of debate. These fora and events should be drawn from a wider group of participants than "laureates" seminars and not only be based on the award winning practices but include a broader range of Best Practices. Gender sensitivity and mainstreaming should be explicit criteria and an area of focus for such learning events.

The Huairou Commission can be commissioned for designing and conducting such learning events.

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