

# 2. HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

## How to use the Toolkit

Globalisation of the economy has brought with it global social change. In every country there are challenges to established family life and to the roles of men and women. We could see this as a time of threat but it is also a window of opportunity for women to assert a new set of priorities based on a different way of working, particularly through their involvement in local and regional development.

This Toolkit aims to provide a source of help in these critical times. Our research has demonstrated that in every sector of local and regional development there is good, often innovative work being done by women's groups - but who has heard of it? The lack of visibility means that each group has to find solutions to common problems. We hope that the toolkit will disseminate the good practice of women so that more "women of wisdom" can mobilise with confidence.

Through the use of stories and examples, the Toolkit offers practical advice to facilitators of women's groups. The stories are all taken from real projects and the methods have all been tested and evaluated. What we offer is a manual of good practice but not a blue print for action. We don't say follow these examples and you will have no problems. We suggest that some ideas and methods could be used straight from the Toolkit while others may inspire you to create a local solution in keeping with your unique context.

The Toolkit is divided into a number of sections most of which deal with practical problems such as getting a project off the ground through to more complex concerns about managing your project and finding funding to begin and to grow. The final section looks at methods of evaluation which might be used at different stages of the project: providing evidence for funders that your project is worthwhile, measuring the impact of your work on the target group. The Toolkit opens with some discussion of current ideas and theories that inform women's thinking in planning and regional development. You may wish to quote sections in any applications you make for finance or recognition.

Finally, good luck in your venture!