

# 4. MAKING A START

Making a start can sometimes be difficult. Where do you begin? How do you begin? What do you need to know? Obviously, there are no easy answers as every project will develop out of its own social and political context. This is not a manual, nor a blue print for action, it merely provides examples and success stories of projects which could give you some valuable pointers. Above all, 'making a start' aims to encourage women to take up the challenge and develop their own regional and local development projects. It gives sources of help and advice, and includes many useful contacts, who may not have all the answers, but could share their experience with you.

Specifically, 'Making a start ' includes sections on:

- understanding your social and political context
- moving from an idea to establishing a goal
- undertaking gender analysis
- identifying stakeholders in your project
- building from the bottom
- building capacity
- mentoring
- working with diversity
- making the project visible

Each of these sections uses several examples taken from over twelve countries in Europe. To help everyone take something useful from this toolkit, it tries to provide a breadth and variety of experience, from southern as well as northern Europe. To use this 'making a start' effectively it might be useful to ask yourself a series of questions:

- What advice or help do you need?
- Which sections will be most useful to progress your ideas?
- Which examples seem most relevant to your context?
- Have any of the examples made you think?
- Who could you contact to discuss your ideas?
- Can you identify specific advice which is useful ?
- What issues do you need to follow up with specific contacts in either the toolkit or in your own networks?
- How can you use the toolkit to make a start on mobilising women in local and regional development in your own context?

We wish you every success in making a start on your project. Following advice from the Diotima women in Greece - *you have nothing to loose and everything to gain*. So begin now! Above all '**Making a Start**' encourages you to *seize the moment*, and take the opportunity to progress your ideas.

**"Carpe Diem!"**

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The EuroFEM research project Infrastructure for Everyday life: an evaluation of EuroFEM projects, which was funded under the EU's 4th Action Programme, found that sensitivity to context was a characteristic common to several successful women's projects. Projects usually reflect the current social, economic and political agendas. That does not mean that women always 'swim with the tide' and develop projects which mainstream policy makers will find acceptable. Understanding the social and political context of their countries often seemed to help women to bend existing agendas or re-conceptualise agendas to promote equal opportunity's issues.

In many cases, understanding the social and political context was a pre-requisite to project development, which could then be used to 'seize the moment - carpe diem'. In several of the evaluated projects, key women instinctively knew the right time for action as well as the right time to promote their ideas and initiate a project. In the final analysis, it comes down to using the opportunity to promote your ideas, but this is not without risk and could obviously fail, but nevertheless we would argue that it is worth trying.

In this section three projects are used as examples, two of which are EuroFEM projects and the third, is a major international initiative which provides a model for transnational collaboration, transfer of experience and best practice. 'Testing the Living Environment' in the Netherlands grew out of global work on Agenda 21 and used the environmental debate to develop local initiatives across the Netherlands. 'Testing the Living Environment' helps local people, particularly women, to improve the quality of their living environment.

In Italy, the problems with the delivery of public services was used to reorganise time and reconcile home, family and work. The concept of 'time planning' has been adopted by many major Italian cities and regions and has had an important impact on women's role in society. Lastly, 'Project Parity' has provided training for women to enter public political life in six former communist states in eastern Europe. The training has been delivered by Eyecatcher Associates, who have successfully trained women to enter parliament in the UK.

### Testing the Living Environment The Netherlands

In 1994, the project "Women Testing the Living Environment" was started by the Ministry for Public Housing, Physical Planning and Environment in the Netherlands. Its objective was to develop working material which would stimulate women into influencing the living environment. Several organisations have been involved including the Institute for Public and Politics in Amsterdam, whose work involves mobilising all groups of people to become involved in national and local politics in the Netherlands. The impetus for setting up this project came from world-wide conferences on the environment and Local Agenda 21. The project group believed that the time was right for the joining together the environmentally friendly individuals. The slogan was: 'A good environment begins with yourself'. It was also evident that structural changes in the environmental policies of the government and the business community were needed. At the same time, the concept of sustainable development was gradually becoming common place.

*"In 1992, government officials of 178 countries gathered in Rio de Janeiro for a conference on Environment and Development organised by the United Nations. The decision was made to develop a strategic programme in order to achieve global sustainable development, better known as Local Agenda 21. Local Agenda 21 bestows an important role to women and youth in the attainment of a sustainable society.....Sustainable development is not only about preserving nature and the environment as the basis of our existence; it is also about social justice, employment opportunities and fighting poverty".*

Municipalities have been given a large role in this process to set out their agenda for the 21st century. The project has now mainstreamed gender issues and it is called "Testing the Living Environment". This project is using the current political climate, both at a global and local level. It is using the new interest in "Social and administrative renewal" in the Netherlands which is facilitating citizens and social organisations to take responsibility for the quality of their living environment. There is also an emergence of a new style public official who is much more a facilitator, advisor and enabler for democratic choice. The project appraises the implications for the business sector, which increasingly places greater emphasis on environmental considerations. From a business perspective, there are good arguments supporting business' implementation of an active environmental policy. "Testing the Living Environment" project groups address local businesses regarding their possibilities and provide them with new ideas.

*"We are seeing the political climate change. The winds of change are blowing locally now. It is now the local government who is looking for ways to stimulate citizens' initiatives for improving the living environment. Social organisations are now supporting their members and advocates by dealing with bottlenecks which are important to them. Local business communities are taking responsibility for a better environment, willing or not. All these actors are in joint collaboration on their way towards a sustainable society" (Khuun, 1997).*

"Testing the Living Environment" provides written material to help mobilise local groups to work with their living environment and thus improve and influence the quality of their everyday life.

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## **Time Planning in Italy**

In most countries working parents, particularly mothers, find themselves frustrated by the match between their needs, access to services and the time they have available. This is often seen as a physical problem of the essential parts of everyday life being separated from each other, causing a waste of time as women move between the home, the school, their work, the shops, the medical services, etc. In Italy, however, this is seen as a problem of time imbalance and to a certain extent can be tackled by time planning.

This happens on a number of levels:

First, while more women than ever enter the labour market, there is still an expectation that women will continue to undertake all the roles of carer and daily household organiser that they did before. Specifically, Italian women see this as a time imbalance between men and women.

On another level there is a time mismatch between the working day of citizens and other sorts of working days. For example, school days are shorter than the average working day and therefore, cause great problems for parents who work full time. There are now possibilities within Italian cities for change to occur. An Article in a Law of 1990 refers to the duties of the Mayor:

*'It is also the duty of the Mayor, as part of the regional regulations and on the basis of the lines expressed by the Town Council, to co-ordinate the hours of shops and public services, as well as opening hours of outlying offices of the public administration, in order to "harmonize" the offer of services into line with the general and overall needs of consumers' (Belloni, 1996).*

Let us consider why this approach was taken and what we can learn from it:

Italian citizens have had a long standing frustration with the delivery of public services and the service they receive from their public bureaucracy. To carry out some tasks, such as getting a passport, a person needs to go to different offices located in different places, some of which only open in the morning, while others only open in the afternoon. The concerns of Italian women to reconcile home, family and working life and develop an approach which attempts to reorganise time, is therefore built on a great deal of public support.

The current period of rapid change in Italian politics has given rise to shifts of power from the centre to local authorities and has presented, therefore, an opportunity for quicker responses. Making changes to the school day, or opening up after school clubs, can be dealt with much easier than changes to the physical infrastructure. So while time may seem more nebulous it is, in fact, easier to change. Time planning offers an interesting and different approach to the organisation and development of infrastructure for everyday life. Importantly, the impetus for time planning as a policy initiative, used the social and political context of Italy to push such an approach forward.

Reference:

Belloni, C. (1996) Time Planning, in EuroFEM proceedings 1995-1996. Helsinki: The Finnish Ministry of the Environment

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## **Project Parity - Seizing the Moment** Eyecatcher Associates, UK

Eyecatcher Associates is a small organisation, set up by two journalists, Lesley Abdela and Tim Symmonds, around twenty years ago. The organisation was established to work around equal opportunities issues and principally to promote women in public life. During the 1980's they worked with the '300 group' to train women to enter the UK parliament. The '300 group' is an organisation which aimed to increase the number of women MPs in the UK parliament to 300, which was approximately 50% of all the MP's. Eyecatcher provided practical training programmes for women who wanted to enter politics. The training developed very much out of Lesley Abdela's own experience standing as a parliamentary candidate. As a result, the 1997 UK national government election saw a substantial increase in the number of women MPs, totalling around 100.

As a result of their involvement with the training for the 300 group, Eyecatcher has been providing training for 'Project Parity' in Eastern European countries. When the Berlin Wall came down, Harvard University co-funded 'Project Liberty' to help former communist countries make the transition to democracy. It quickly became clear through 'Project Liberty' that women were being excluded from the new politics in these countries. At the time, Baroness Shirley Williams, a former high profile UK MP was a Professor at Harvard. She had been heavily involved with the '300 group' and the training programmes provided by Eyecatcher. Consequently, she saw the opportunity to set up a sister project specifically aimed at women. 'Project Parity' was initiated following a major conference in Vienna in 1991. The conference brought together key women in politics from both western democracies and six former communist countries in eastern Europe.

Following the conference, Lesley Abdela, together with an American colleague, spent eighteen months visiting women in these countries to identify, what it was that women needed to be able to participate in the political life of their country. Building on their training programmes, Eyecatcher trained women in the six states. Although the training provided basic information on political democracy, primarily it has been for women to build on this training and develop their own strategies and organisations to increase women's role in the public political life of their country.

In June, 1998, women from these countries came together in the UK for the final part of the training. Women shared their experience, identified what had been achieved so far, and what remained to be done. They also met with key women actors from other countries, as well as donor resource agencies. Most importantly, they prepared a strategy for action for the next political elections in their own countries.

It is interesting that 'project parity' grew out of the social and political context of the late 1980's and key women actors in both the east and west seized the moment to initiate a project to promote women in political life. In turn women from the former communist countries in eastern Europe have seized the opportunity to participate in training and build strategies for change. This is an exciting project which could truly be described as '**Seizing the Moment - Carpe Diem**'.

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## MOVING FROM AN IDEA TO A GOAL

Developing ideas and making them a reality is not always easy and can often prove problematic. Many good ideas fail to get off the ground because individuals and groups lack critical friends, political support, funding or indeed the skills, knowledge, expertise and confidence to take the idea to the next stage. This section on moving from an idea to a goal could provide some useful pointers to help you along your way.

The two examples are taken from the Nordic countries and describe a concrete project as well as a method. They are particularly useful examples, because they have been developed in rural and sparsely populated areas, where travel and communication is both difficult and expensive. Therefore, to make something happen requires considerable determination, resourcefulness and vision.

The first example describes the development of a project in Northern Norway above the Arctic Circle, in Steigen. Here, two women who had been involved in equal opportunities had a vision to develop a **Feminst University** in their region. The initiators of the project not only had vision, but also a persistence and commitment to realise their idea. They used critical friends in the administration, who could lend support, lobby on their behalf and help to prioritise this project on the political agenda. During the pre-project phase the two women engaged in extensive lobbying and networking to build support at many levels in both the political arena and with grassroots women. It is also interesting that they were sensitive to their social and political contexts and used the emerging regional policy debates on outmigration to develop links between their ideas and policy development.

The second example involves the use of the '**Dream Method**' by women in Kokkola, Finland. These Finnish women have used the method extensively to develop ideas and realise projects. Using this method the women's house in Kokkola initially started with just 3 projects and within 3 years had established some 30 projects.

### The Northern Feminist University Norway

The **Northern Feminist University (NFU)** was established as a private foundation in October, 1991, by Nordland County, local municipalities and private individuals in northern Norway.

The university is unique in that it lies in a remote and sparsely populated region of northern Norway, above the 'Arctic Circle', where transport and travel is often difficult, lengthy and expensive. The University is much more than the provision of courses, it is a centre of knowledge where women's experiences and knowledge is made visible, recognised, valued and developed. It is a meeting place between theoretical and practical, formal and informal knowledge. It also provides possibilities for developing networks, educational opportunities and work strategies.

The project was initiated by two women, Marit Stemland and Berit Woie Berg, who lived in Steigen in Nordland County. Both women were heavily engaged in equal opportunities work in the municipality. The idea emerged out of a meeting with the founder of the first feminist university in southern Norway and a professor at the University of Oslo. During the pre-project phase the key activists worked hard lobbying and making contacts with the county and all municipalities in the county. Contacts were also made with educational institutions outside of the county, to examine the needs of a feminist university and most importantly, find critical friends in key organisations. During the pre-project phase the emphasis was also on getting funding, establishing the university, developing courses, establishing networks, gathering information and setting up an organisational structure.

The initial aim of the project was to establish an educational centre, but this aim changed during the planning and development phase. The University was to become much more than a course centre, it was to become a centre giving priority to collecting all types of experience and knowledge from women and about women, including practical as well as theoretical knowledge.

The idea for the feminist university was timely, as prior to the 1980's, Norwegian regional policy toward women tended to place them in the limited functions of taking care of children and the aged and household work. At the beginning of the 1980's it was realised on the national level that the focus must be directed towards the productive role of women in the regional sphere. It was acknowledged that women represent a big potential for growth in economic life and for society at large, both as a work force and as an increasing body of competence. Developing women as active participants in regional policy provided an important platform from which to launch the idea and establish the University.

The project was funded through the municipalities and county. The county saw it as an opportunity to support an institution which could gather and present the experience and knowledge gained from women's projects initiated and supported by the county at the time. The project received support from professionals at the highest level in the county and municipalities; politicians, through the municipal mayor and municipal and county committees; and by a supportive group of grassroots women in the municipality.

The project is now run by a steering group who set work priorities and a project leader, administrator and manager who implement the priorities. The employees of the project work through a cooperative structure. The culture is described as open and democratic.

To summarise, moving from the initial idea to making the university a reality required:

- 'burning souls'
- persistence
- critical friends in the administration
- priority on the political agenda
- using emerging agendas
- policy commitment
- political and administrative support
- extensive lobbying during the pre-project phase
- extensive networking at a variety of levels

However, like all projects it has not been without difficulties particularly being a private foundation in the field of education as well as being located in an area of Norway where there are extreme distances and expensive communication. In the face of these difficulties the University has continued to thrive and now receives 30% of its funding from the state. It also offers courses on leadership, language, adult education and entrepreneurial training with further initiatives planned. Their role as a centre of women's knowledge has enabled them to be involved in a variety of networks and projects at the local, regional, national and international level.

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## **The Dream Method Finland**

The Kokkola Women's Resource Centre, in Finland, has experimented with several innovative methods for involving women in the economic, social and political life of their region. In order to enhance the production of implementable ideas they have created something they call the Dream Method. In fact, it is a two night training course with practical homework in between.

The aim of the training is to:

- activate women so that they will value their own know-how
- increase their awareness of the specific strengths of women
- collaborate in a creative way
- participate in the development of their living environment
- take advantage of available resources

The target group consists of women who want to develop themselves and the well-being of their region. The method is based on experiential learning in which the participants are urged to define their personal and collective objectives on the basis of practical rehearsals.

The programme of the first evening might look like this:

### **Women's Evening in Development I**

- 19.00 Purpose of the evening
- 19.10 Concentration and Relaxation
- 19.35 Women of the Region in the year 2010
- 20.45 Discussion with questions and contracts
- 21.30 Good Night and a safe journey home

The task to reflect over during the following two weeks could be:

1. How does women's life differ in 2010 from the present life? What would be the developmental tasks? Where do I want to begin? What would I like to learn more of?
2. Agreement of future networking. How, where and how often will the women of the municipality meet in the future? How will the collaboration be organised?

### **Women's Evening in Development II**

- 19.00 Purpose of the Evening
- 19.10 Women's Objectives
- 19.30 Ideas, projects and funding
- 20.30 How do we network in the future? How do we inform the audience and market our projects?

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## UNDERTAKING GENDER ANALYSIS

Gender analysis means evaluating or analysing an issue, programme or project from the gender perspective. Canadians have produced a useful document called 'Gender-based analysis'. It sets out a process that assesses the differential impact of proposed and/or existing policies, programmes and legislation on women and men. Thus it is close to the gender impact analysis. We have deliberately chosen to use gender analysis to refer to the diagnosis of the context and impact from the point of view of women and men and their interests (see the last section of the toolkit).

Gender analysis thus consists of an array of different kind of foci for diagnosis, such as the statistical analysis of the region; assessment of the texts for policy proposals, often called gender proofing; the gender balance and representation; and gender awareness exercises.

Five discrete examples have been used, first, the Swedish example engendering statistics which provides a visual guidance on how to produce statistics in a gender-friendly way. It also indicates useful source material. The Finnish example shows that even children can take part in gender analysis. Third, a Belgium example has been included which demonstrates that gender awareness exercises can be fun and can provide a starting point for discussion. Lastly, policy impact appraisal in Ireland, known as gender proofing, clearly sets out how the Irish government has developed this tool. Ireland also provides an example of gender balance in terms of quotas on representation and composition in decision-making bodies. This is a commonly used tool throughout Europe and other examples can be found in countries such as Finland, Spain and Austria. There are many techniques that could have been included, but these are just a few to illustrate the variety of tools available for Gender Analysis.

### Engendering statistics Sweden

Analytic description of the area plays a central role in local and regional development. In the ideal case this implies a large involvement and participation of female and male users in collaboration with the expert producers of statistics. The Swedes have worked for many years to transform the traditional expert system of producing statistics from above. Statistics should indicate both absolute and relative differences between women and men as well as temporal changes, if possible. Figure 5 shows the schema for producing statistics in a user and gender-sensitive way.

Reference:  
 Status of Women Canada (1996) Gender-Based Analysis. A guide for policy-making. Ottawa.  
 B. Hedman, F. Perucci and P. Sundström (1996) Engendering Statistics. A Tool for Change. Stockholm: Statistics Sweden.

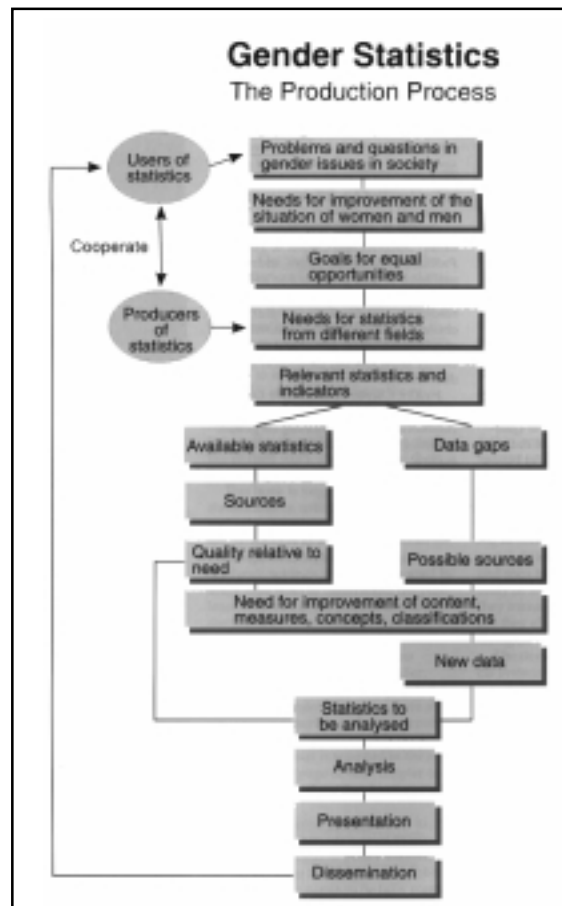


Figure 5. The logistics for producing statistics in a user and gender-friendly way (Hedman et al. 1996).

## Girls and Boys Analysing their Living Environment Finland

There is a decade long tradition of experiments with girls and boys participating in the neighbourhood improvement in Finland. An action research study called "Children and young people as Ecoagents of their Environment" has come out with several enabling methods which facilitate the communication of children with their settings and with the officials of the municipality.

One of the diagnostic-expressive methods is called "Analysis of Coloured Labels". Children analyse the environment by marking the neighbourhood with coloured labels containing explanatory comments. White means dangerous, scary places, yellow beautiful places, black ugly places and red nice, important places. Figure 6 displays what children find meaningful in their schoolyard. There are some gender-based differences among girls and boys. Girls tend to prefer quiet and socially meaningful places where as boys prefer action and opportunities for games and moving around. Both groups love nature although boys seem to have a more ecological and girls an aesthetic approach to nature.

Reference:

Horelli, L. (1997) A methodological Approach to Children's participation in urban Planning. *Scandinavian Housing & Planning Research*, 14:105-115.

Horelli, L. (1998) Creating Childfriendly Environments - Case studies on children's participation in three European countries. *Childhood*, 5(2):225-239.

Kyttä, M. - Horelli, L. (1997) Children's participation in planning and neighbourhood improvement a methodological challenge. Paper presented at the Urban Childhood-conference, Trondheim 9-12.6.1997.

Kaaja, M. - Horelli, L. (1997) Boys and girls as ecological agents of their living environment. Paper presented at the Nordic Workshop: Gender i Stadens Rum, Norplan, Stockholm, 17-19.4.1997.

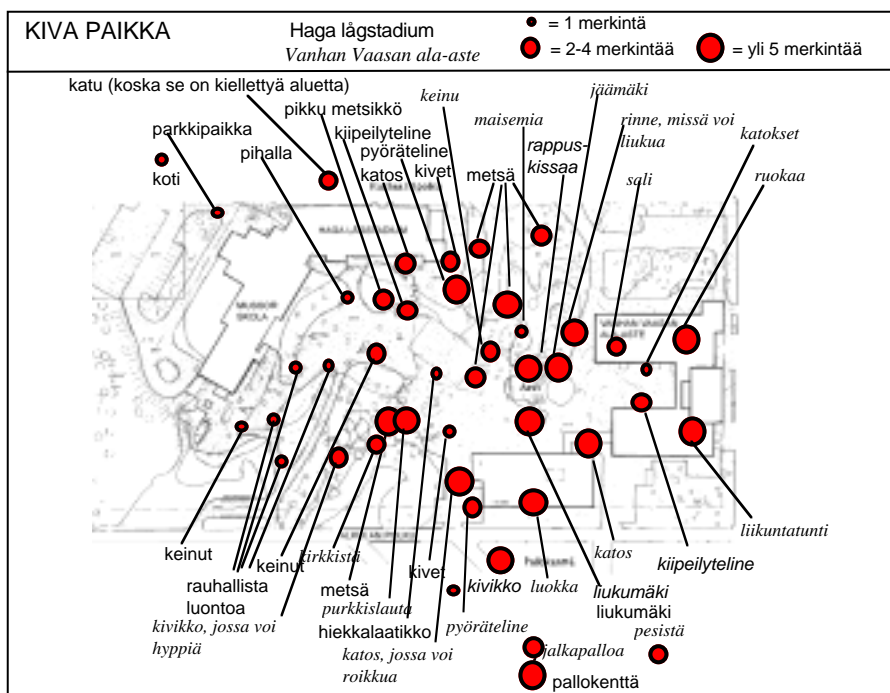


Figure 6. Coloured labels.

## Gender Awareness Exercises Belgium

Gender awareness exercises can be fun. A Belgium example “Our family is a team” uses a variant on the Happy Families card game to analyse how ordinary household tasks are shared between family members. The game is a grid with eight tasks along the top of the page: playing with the children, doing the shopping, bathing the children, household jobs, such as decorating, cleaning, ironing, doing the dishes and working in the garden. Along the side are the name of the days of the week. Against each task on each day participants stick a card which depicts which family member carries out the task. Cards represent mother, father and a card for each child. At the end of the game there is a simple but effective picture of workload in a family. This gives a starting point for discussion. The game can be easily replicated using cut out pictures of men, women and children, or cartoon characters or simply writing in the name of the person.

The same exercise kit from Belgium gives another method of helping participants analyse their home situation. This presents everyday scenarios and asks how your family copes. An example of this is reproduced here.

Everyone is ready to leave for school or for the office but Nicholas has a high temperature. Who is going to stay with him?

- ME**
- a) When one of the children is ill, I prefer to stay with them myself
  - b) I'll stay if I am told how to nurse this illness
  - c) Sick children, I'm the expert!
- NOT ME**
- d) My partner tells me that I don't have the right to touch, when it comes to nursing, a sick child
  - e) I am not allowed to take any leave without prior notice
  - f) I cannot keep up the necessary cheerful manner when I'm talking with a sick child
- US**
- g) We talk the problem through and determine who will suffer the least by taking the day off to be with Nicholas

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Figure 7. Nicolas has fever. Who is going to stay home with him?

## Gender Proofing Ireland

Gender proofing is a tool which can work to ensure that neither direct, nor indirect, discrimination occurs on the basis of gender. Furthermore, gender proofing can also be used to identify policies which actively promote gender equality. In practice, it is about examining the impact of new policy, or changes to existing policies, to ensure that: first, policies are not introduced which work directly or indirectly against women or some groups of women; and second, policies are developed which work positively for all groups of women.

Across Europe gender proofing as an equality tool has been widely used by local, regional and national governments. For example, gender proofing was introduced at the state level by the Irish government in 1993. 'By a decision of 9 February 1993 (ref S 12113P), the government decided that all proposals by departments for change in existing government policies should give an indication of the probable impact on women of such proposals' (ADM 1996). In other words, the Irish government required all government departments to consider policy impacts on women.

The principle of gender proofing went further and was reiterated in Ireland's National Development Plan 1994-99, which made an explicit commitment to gender proofing, particularly in relation to structural funds. The National Development Plan states:-

*'The concept of gender proofing is accepted in principle as a socially desirable objective aimed at the elimination of indirect discrimination against women and in particular women's exclusion (whether intentional or not) from many aspects of economic and social life. The principle of gender proofing, therefore, is an important step towards the achievement of full equality of opportunity between men and women'*

In the context of structural funds it is the responsibility of departments and agencies involved in drawing up structural fund programmes to ensure that not only will there be no direct or indirect discrimination, but also that structural fund measures will actively promote equal opportunities.

The information on gender proofing in Ireland was obtained from a publication entitled 'Towards Gender Equality in integrated local Development' Area development Management Ltd. (1996).

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## **Gender Balance and Representation**

Experience across Europe clearly demonstrates that women are often under represented in decision - making bodies, groups or organisations concerned with local and regional development. Area Management Development Ltd (ADM) an organisation in Ireland, which is responsible for co-ordinating a programme of integrated local development, has formally adopted a policy on gender balance in the composition of its boards.

*'Board membership should reflect government policy on gender balance, which is that boards will consist of a minimum of 40% of either gender'.*

ADM has incorporated government policy, introduced in 1993, which clearly established a requirement for balanced gender representation on boards of state-appointed bodies. This led to an undertaking by the government that there would be a minimum of 40% of either sex represented on such boards. If this requirement could not be met immediately, then the minister responsible should set out his or her plans for achieving the target within four years.

Gender balance on the ADM boards of partnership not only reflects government policy but also sets out guidelines for its implementation. Gender balance and composition is just one of ADM's gender guidelines for integrated local development. *'These guidelines on gender balance help create processes which facilitate rather than block women's participation'.*

A requirement for gender balance of women and men on decision-making bodies is a simple, yet highly effective tool in terms of achieving changes in organisational structures and cultures. It can also be viewed as a positive mechanism within mainstreaming gender equality.

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## IDENTIFYING STAKES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholder is another name for those people, groups or institutions with an interest or a stake in a project or a programme. In the past the term was used in a financial sense to describe those who had a financial stake in a project, but is now used more broadly to describe anyone who has a connection with a project or programme. The stake may also refer to a specific issue of interest. The stakeholders are often subdivided into two groups: firstly, the primary stakeholders who are directly affected in a positive or negative way, for example householders whose properties may be demolished, households whose children might benefit from new play areas. Secondly, the secondary stakeholders who are responsible municipalities and any funding bodies.

### Charting the Stakeholders

Once the range of stakeholders has been identified various simple analyses can be undertaken. The diagram that follows outlines a **stakeholder chart**. This lists all the stakeholders, notes their interests in relation to this issue, suggest whether the project/programme will have a positive or negative impact on their interests and tries to give an indication of the relative priority which should be given to each stakeholder in meeting their interests (Figure 8).

Stakeholders	Interests of stakeholders	Potential project impact	Relative priorities of interest

Figure 8. An example of a stakeholder chart

There are further ways of analysing the stakeholders, for example by considering how they are involved in the main phases of the project and what type of agency the stakeholders represent.

Reference:

Richard Newton, Shaun Parker and David Spencer (1995) "Towards an Institutional audit", Department of Town and Country Planning, University of Newcastle, Newcastle, UK, NE1 7RU

## EuroFEM Actor Analysis

We have applied in the EuroFEM project right from the beginning a form of actor analysis in which we map the different project members of the network and their possible affiliation with other projects of the EU Fourth Action Programme. During the two years of the project's existence we have also put down as actors the other networks, such as Women around the Baltic, Femina Borealis, The European Women's Lobby, AFEM, ASTER, etc. whom we have been liaising with. Thus we can keep a track of our partnerships and transnational relationships. One step further in the analysis can be the assessment of the nature and type of transactions between the different partners.

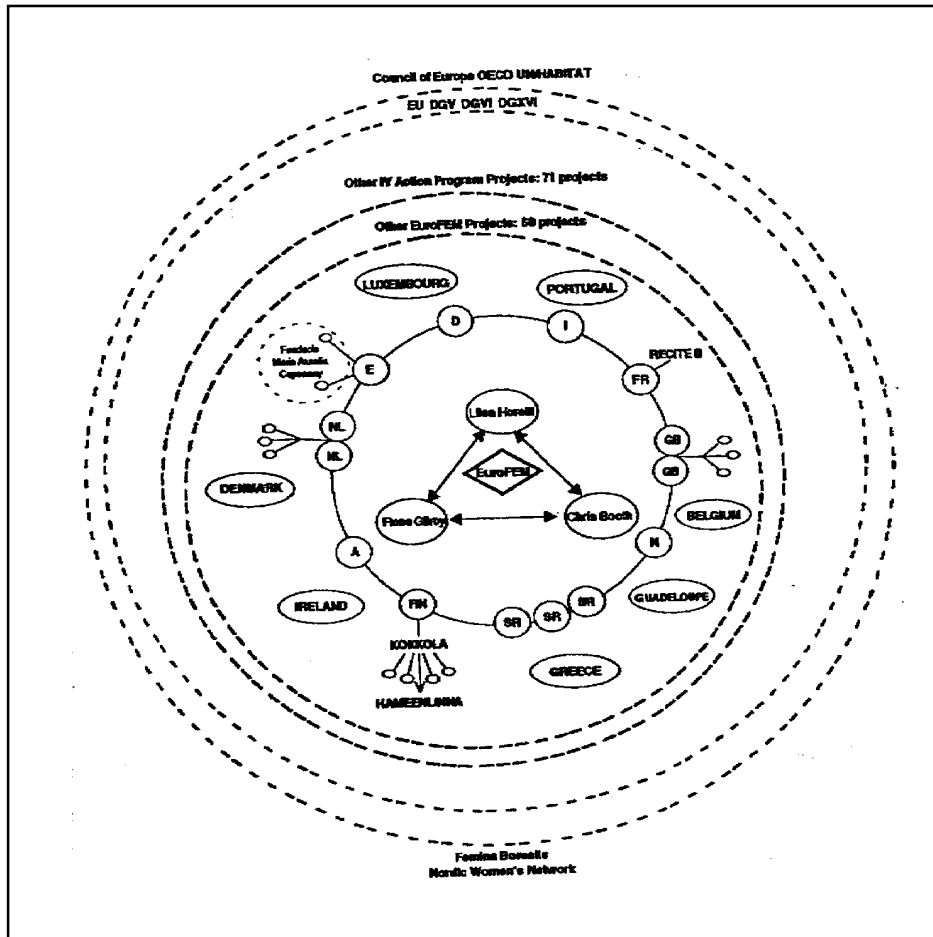


Figure 9. An expanded actor network in the EuroFEM project

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## The Web of Institutionalisation

Stakeholder or actor analyses can also be used for the purpose of achieving change. The basic question in gender work is how to institutionalise or sustain change related to the gender perspective. Caren Levy (1996) defines institutionalisation as "the process whereby social practices become sufficiently regular and continuous to be described as institutions (they are sanctioned and maintained by social norms)".

Levy is not only interested in the analysis of the context but also in changing it. Central principles in the change process are:

1. gender diagnosis
2. gender consultation
3. organisational development
4. monitoring the iterative nature of implementation

The diagnostic and operational work go hand in hand and they are assisted by a chart called **the Web of institutionalisation** (Figure 10). The web consists of 13 context dependent and interactive elements, such as women's and men's experiences, representative political structures, methodology etc.

Thus, the web can be used both as a diagnostic and an operational tool which can guide the direction of actions for reshaping the elements. The diagnostics is based on the key questions to assess policies, programmes and projects from the gender perspective:

*"To what extent do the different roles, different access to and control over, and different interests of women and men have implications for the definition and analysis of problems, choice of objectives and strategies, and the way projects are implemented, monitored and evaluated".*

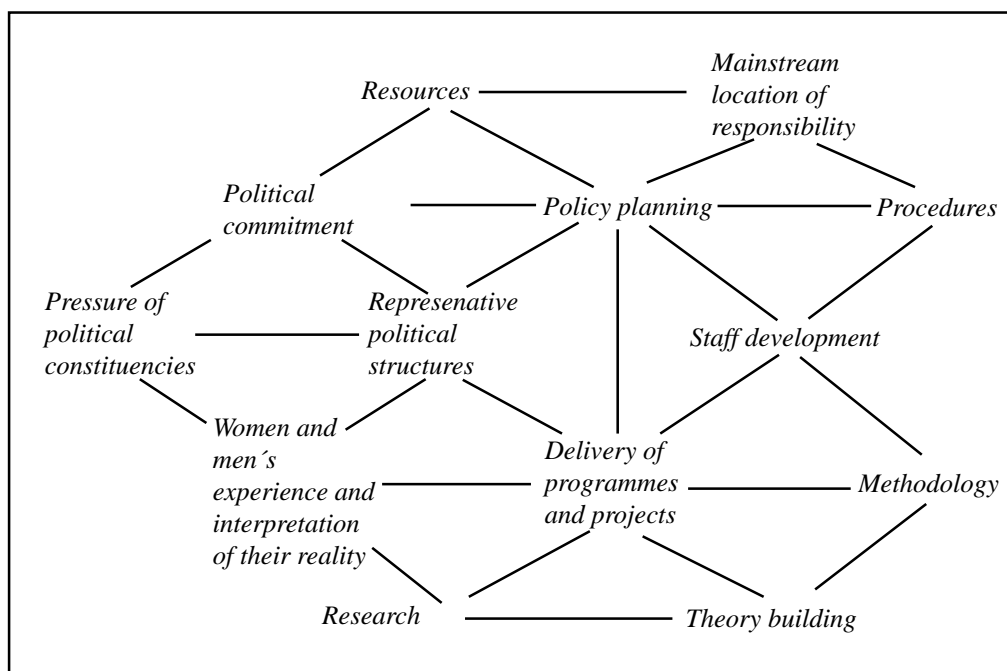


Figure 10. The web of elements in the institutionalisation process (Levy, 1966, 11)

References:

C. Levy (1996) The Process of Institutionalising Gender in Policy and Planning. The WEB of Institutionalisation. London: University College London, DPU. Working Paper No 74.

## BUILDING FROM THE BOTTOM

Participatory, bottom up models of consultation with women help involve women on their own terms and in their own environment. Techniques can involve facilitators, focus groups, advisory groups, questionnaires, workshops, outreach work, a forum and so on. Above all, effective consultation employs techniques that do not rely on 'formal' structures and institutional settings, but draw women in to establish dialogue in a non-confrontational manner' (Booth,1996).

Bottom up, participatory approaches to consultation use women's everyday life experience to construct both a critique of local and regional development as well as helping formulate new policy initiatives. Building from the bottom legitimates women's knowledge of their environment, and also provides a valuable means of establishing the needs of women in the community. It has often been women's projects that have pioneered innovative, bottom up approaches to consultation. Some useful examples from Ireland, Spain and the UK are included in this section.

These examples provide a powerful case for building from the bottom. Katherine Zappone, of the National Women's Council of Ireland, argues strongly for project leaders to remain in contact with grassroots women and ensure those connections are not severed, but strengthened. The 'Fundacio' in Spain offer ways of working with women using imaginative participatory techniques to enable women to develop a critique of planning for women in the city. Lastly, an 'urban renewal project' in the UK provides an example of the measures which can be taken to regenerate the physical, social and economic fabric of a community, working particularly with women.

However, building from the bottom involves a redistribution of power in the decision-making process to enable women to influence policy decisions. It also involves a re-evaluation of the traditional role of expert power in the consultation process. There is a need to develop the empowering professional, who can establish dialogue with women and more importantly can enable women to participate with self confidence and on equal terms with the expert. Building from the bottom will necessitate the experts giving away power, to enable women to take power for themselves. Chris Booth sums this up in her work on women and consultation.

*'Involving women and other groups in the planning and housing process requires a redistribution of power to enable them to influence policy decisions on the management of their environment. The consultation process should seek to empower women and other marginalised groups who historically have had little influence on the decision-making process' (Booth,1996, 164).*

Reference:

Booth,C (1996) Women and Consultation. In C. Booth, J. Darke and S. Yeandle (Eds.) Changing Places, Women's Lives in the city, London: Paul Chapman Publishing

### **How far Down is the Bottom?** National Women's Council, Ireland

Katherine Zappone, Chief Executive Officer of the National Women's Council, sets out her views on both building from the bottom and remaining in touch with local women and their everyday lives. She recognises the power of the 'bottom up' approach and argues fiercely for its role in policy making. Here is an extract of her views taken from 'In Focus', Issue 8, National Women's Council, 1997.

*"There is a lot of talk today about the 'bottom up' approach to local and national development. I think we need to acknowledge the potential power of the bottom up approach to political change and to the development of social and economic policy and practice. But, **how far down is the bottom?** The*

*bottom - or the local, or the personal - is where we pay attention to our bodies, feelings, thoughts, ideas, relationships and actions. That's how far down we should go, I think.*

*But it is sometimes hard to remember what is learned at the bottom, or in the sphere of the personal and the local once one begins to operate in the public arena. And so, as I think about one of the Council's central goals - that of representing the concerns of women in the public arena - I believe that we must find ways to design mechanisms for representation which enable those of us in the public sphere to stay close to the local, the personal, the particular, the everyday stories of women's lives. We need to find ways to be attentive to our own and other's needs for intimacy, healing, political skills, intellectual hunger and entrepreneurial ambitions. We cannot let those connections be severed".*

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## **Working with Women Spain**

The Fundacio Maria Aurelia Capmany is an organisation based in Barcelona. The organisation takes its name from a famous Spanish socialist heroine, who fought for liberation and women's rights under the former dictatorship. The Fundacio has developed from the Spanish Worker's Trade Union and is headed by the trade union's Women's officer. One of the Fundacio's key projects is 'Women in the City'. The project is funded under the EU's 4th Action Programme and aims to examine women's experience of the city, as well as their needs. Ultimately, the organisation plans to produce a 'white book' on planning for women in the city.

The Fundacio has worked extensively with women in the community using a variety of techniques. Initially, the Fundacio developed 'critical friends' and contacts in the City Hall. Women's officers in the administration helped build relationships with key women and women's organisations in the community. Meetings were held and brochures produced to publicise and inform people of the project, which was then followed by a series of two day seminars with key women in local neighbourhoods. Women participants were diverse.

The seminars used women's everyday life experience of the city and validated this qualitative knowledge and expertise. The seminars involved 4 exercises:

**Step One:** Women examined the psychological/interior space relating personal histories of how they lived, as well as developing a visual representation of their lives and how they wanted to live. The visual representation could either be symbolic or realistic.

**Step Two:** Women constructed a model/or plan of their house or dwelling. The model/plan described their living space; areas where women felt comfortable; and areas which were problematic. This exercise used personal feelings to construct a private spatial analysis of their living space.

**Step Three:** Women built a similar model of public space; how they used space; and their feelings toward public space, identifying both negative and positive feelings.

**Step Four:** Women brainstormed the key issues for 'Women in the City' and then prioritised the issues together with possible improvements.

Using women's experiences of the city the Fundacio developed their theoretical and conceptual approach of planning for 'Women in the City'. The findings were presented to City Officials, administrators, politicians and seminar participants, women's organisations and key women in the community. The Fundacio have built their theoretical approach from the bottom, using women's everyday knowledge and experience.

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### **Waltham Forest Housing Action Trust, Urban Renewal Project, UK**

Waltham Forest Housing Action Trust is a 10 year urban renewal project in London. It has a publicly funded budget of £227 million over 10 years. The project aims to improve the housing, environmental, social and economic conditions of people living in this neighbourhood. There are high levels of poverty, unemployment and deprivation. When the project started 40% of the population were women, many of whom were living alone with children. For the project to succeed, it had to target women, particularly women with child-care responsibilities. By 1997, several bottom-up strategies had been put in place to help build the confidence and capacity of women in the community. Measures included:

- a fixed proportion of the budget allocated for child-care provision
- child-care provision for after school children as well as under 5's
- child-care provision delivered and managed by the local community
- the provision of training programmes in construction and child-care
- established contracts compliance to ensure that local people were employed on projects funded under the urban renewal project
- the provision of pre-skill training to help build confidence which would encourage women to enter training programmes
- training programmes were developed in areas where women felt confident.
- provision of training for women community activists to help them participate in the process i.e. chairing meetings and decision making

*"The project has made a big impact on women's lives. Before the programme many women just stayed indoors, but now there is a sense of community life and greater safety on the streets. Dreadful relationships have broken up as women have discovered their own abilities. Many men have felt quite threatened by the process".*

Reference:

Material taken from a presentation given by Waltham Forest Housing Action Trust at a seminar held by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Gender and Urban Regeneration, York, June, 1997.

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## BUILDING CAPACITY

Building capacity is usually associated with consultation, but in reality it is quite specific in its focus. Building capacity is concerned with developing skills and confidence of both individuals and organisations. It is much more fundamental than developing specific employment skills. Capacity building, as it is sometimes known, can be undertaken by professionals, grassroots women or community organisations. It could be argued that women in the community – ‘Women of wisdom’ - are best placed to share their experience and provide skills development and confidence building programmes.

Many of the examples throughout the toolkit refer to the importance of confidence building programmes when working with women. Some even describe the techniques they have used, particularly in the section entitled ‘building from the bottom’. Women can often feel intimidated and lack confidence when dealing with experts and professionals. Furthermore, they will also need some education with regard to local and regional development programmes and European funding mechanisms. Chris Booth found in her work on consultation in three UK northern cities that,

*‘consultation will involve elements of education, training and confidence building to enable women effectively to participate in the planning and housing process and to counter criticisms of tokenism.....The consultation process should seek to empower women....’ (Booth, 1996)*

Capacity building is an empowering process and the examples used in this section offer a variety of techniques and approaches adopted by three different countries. Diotima, provides gender-sensitive training for professional women workers in Greece. SEIS, a training cooperative in Portugal work with women on an informal and formal basis to find a women’s way of doing. A personal story from one woman in the UK reveals the poignancy and sheer power of capacity building to change women’s lives. Finally, the development of Credit Unions show us an effective mechanism for building capacity in the community.

Without exception, all of the examples emphasise increasing self-esteem, improving self-image, valuing women as citizens and workers as well as carers and, mothers and above all, building the personal confidence of women to enable them to play an active role in their communities, their organisations and the wider society.

Reference:

Booth,C (1996) Women and Consultation. In C. Booth, J. Darke and S. Yeandle (Eds.) Changing Places, Women’s Lives in the city, London: Paul Chapman Publishing

### Supporting Women Diotima, Greece

Diotima is a collective of women, who work together to raise awareness of women’s issues. In particular they have offered gender sensitivity training to professional women working in the field of equal opportunities and other women related issues. The Greek Diotima centre incorporates in its training programmes what they term “accompanying measures which support women” in their professional arena. These measures are intended to bolster women’s confidence in themselves as workers, and as workers with women. The accompanying measures include:

- theoretical and experiential approach of women’s status and gender discrimination
- self awareness and self image development
- personal and professional orientation
- job searching and negotiating techniques
- personal plan of professional integration

- professional career development and promotion into greater responsibility and decision making work positions
- management and reconciliation of women's multiple roles, mainly between work and family life

The integration, re-integration and appointment of women at work, meets a series of obstacles related not only to the difficult and competitive reality of the labour market, but also to gender stereotypes.

The accompanying measures are aimed at women themselves questioning the traditional attitudes and perceptions about women's work, that hinder their professional integration, re-integration and distinction in the labour market.

The training modules incorporate both a theoretical and experiential approach, group dynamics, and individualised operation in the group. This framework is adapted according to the target group. Whatever the group or the content of the training the core value is that it is based on the active participation of women themselves. It exploits their experiences and creates the preconditions for raising awareness.

Diotima feels that the training programme empowers women through the introduction to feminist theory. The theory helps women build theoretical concepts that clarify issues of which they have been half aware and encapsulate aspects or relationships that might otherwise have been overlooked.

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### **'Finding a Woman's Way of Doing' SEIES, Portugal**

SEIES, Sociedade de Estudos e Intervenção em Engenharia Social, is a Portuguese co-operative established in 1980, specialising in social and economic development and local dynamics. SEIES operates as an enterprise providing an umbrella organisation for other co-operatives and associations in this field. The organisation also runs projects and has field workers who work with women with low levels of education, poor qualifications, a lack of schooling, long term unemployed, as well as ethnic minority women.

SEIES shares its experience on projects with other projects and has developed considerable expertise in consultation. Fieldwork on projects involves an instructor working with target groups of women to help women look for their own job creation or the creation of micro enterprises. The instructors adopt a step by step approach to the social and professional development and integration of women.

Women's training for employment involves a mixture of formal and informal training. SEIES adopts a listening position. The instructors listen to women and value women's life experiences. The training approach attempts to get women to value their own life experience asking: "*so what can I do with what I know?*"

Techniques may include getting women to price every job they do in the domestic sphere and informal economy as a way of getting women to acknowledge their skills and worth. The informal training of listening and talking focuses on improving the woman's self-image in her family and society. SEIS sees the path to women's empowerment as improving self-esteem.

This informal training is complemented with classroom learning and making contact with educational institutions, who could offer them courses and receive them as valued citizens. Ultimately, SEIES aims to find a women's way of doing and valuing each woman's way.

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### **A Personal Story of Developing Confidence United Kingdom**

For some women, the beginning of belief in themselves can come from a supportive environment created by one person with a vision. Jane, a woman living in a poor neighbourhood in a northern UK city, talks movingly of her awakening.

*"I got involved through the nursery. There was a new head and she was interested in the whole family. It was a really nice atmosphere when she came - you felt welcomed as if you had something of value to give to your children. Before that you kept yourself to yourself, you were nobody; you were a scrounger; you weren't intelligent - basically at the time I was like that ... It was the first time in my life that someone took an interest in me and hadn't disregarded me - I had some value to give. We got a room and we started to organise events and activities - we ran a sort of canteen, I can't begin to say everything we did - all sorts of things and if we were bothered about something such as health or the children we'd get a speaker to come in. These sessions were really informal, there was no one saying you were at fault, there were no barriers created. When someone tells me that I think "You don't have my life, you don't know how I have to live" ... We started a women's group and then an adult literacy group and began writing stories about our lives in Cruddas Park. It helped to review your life. You make a lot of mistakes but you're in an environment that you can't see them."*

Jane went on to find paid work in helping other people who had lost belief in themselves get on the road to employment.

Reference:

Personal interview undertaken as part of a research project on Urban Regeneration.

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## **Empowering Effects of Credit Unions United Kingdom**

A Credit Union is a financial co-operative, a group of people who are joined together by a “common bond” which might be living in the same neighbourhood, or belonging to the same church, or having children attend the same school. These people save and then borrow from the pooled savings. The most basic function of a Credit Union is to provide low interest loans to people who have not been able to obtain loans. Currently, in the USA, 54 million people belong to a credit union while in Canada 1 in 4 people belong.

In one British Credit Union, a regional training officer was called upon to train new women members. The training officer found that she did not have to develop new skills, but could build upon existing skills, networking abilities and strengths that women already had. Seven months into this project, 66 new members had joined the Credit Union of which 75 per cent were women. Towards the end of the project, two black women were elected onto the Board of Directors of the Credit Union, which had previously consisted of white men.

*“We would never have stood up in front of a crowd and spoken before. Now we do it and it doesn’t really bother us that much. It develops your character as well as all the latent gifts that come out of people ...”*

*“... they sat the three of us at a table on the stage and I was petrified, but I must admit I’ve never felt so important in my life”*

*“I can’t explain things very well, but before I joined the Credit Union I was miserable as sin because I had a few problems. I used to sit at home all day feeling sorry for myself and fat and ugly. Now I’ve got something to look forward to ... I’m needed here and I’m good at the work I do. Nobody has ever said that before.”*

Reference:

Annette Rimmer (1997), “Poverty and dignity: women, poverty and Credit Unions”, in Caroline Sweetman (ed) Gender and Poverty in the North, Oxford, Oxfam.

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## MENTORING AS A SUPPORT MECHANISM

*'Women in leading positions are still a rarity. Numerous barriers prevent women from making it to the top, and only seldom do they find support along the paths of their careers'.*

Women do not lack formal qualifications for career advancement, but experience shows us that organisational structures and cultures make it difficult for women to progress in their careers, achieve promotion and thus make it to the top.

However, mentoring can be used as a way of helping to break down old, male dominated structures and to open up new career paths for women. Mentoring is by no means a new concept. What is new, however, is its application in the career advancement of women.

Until now, it has often been men that have benefitted from informal mentoring relationships both inside and outside of their work. Increasingly, however, mentoring programmes can be developed for *'to enable women to translate their competence and skills into action, and to be at the right place at the right time'*.

The concept of 'mentoring' could also prove a useful tool for projects to help transfer good practice, offer useful advice, as well as playing the role of the critical friend. Project leaders could act as mentors for other project leaders wishing to develop their project or discuss problem solving or crisis management. Often women who lead women's projects can become marginalised and mentoring could provide an all important support mechanism when leaders feel isolated and frustrated. Women are very good at networking and these networking skills could be used to good effect through a more formal system of mentoring.

To some extent EuroFEM performs an informal mentoring role between projects but there is enormous scope for this to be developed both at a personal and organisational level.

### **'Mentoring for Women in Europe A Strategy for Professional Support of Women, Germany**

#### **What is mentoring?**

The key element of the mentoring process is the one to one relationship. In a mentoring process one person the mentor, will support, guide, advise and assist another person, the mentee, in her career development. This relationship is normally outside the superior - subordinate relationship .

*'One of the chief advantages of a mentoring relationship for the mentee is being able to talk with someone about her own professional development, with someone who has decided to invest time in this and who does not have a hierarchial relationship with her mentee'.*

The key roles involved in mentoring are:

- **coaching** - developing appropriate skills and attitudes
- **advising** - helping solve problems and make decisions
- **assisting** - providing contacts and introductions
- **networking** - teaching how to use informal contacts and networks outside of own professional context

### **Different approaches**

Mentoring relationships can be organised in many different ways. Some programmes support the development of women exclusively, while others support the development of women and men equally. Programmes that are organised within an organisation or company, are called internal mentoring programmes. They are best suited to large organisations with considerable resources at their disposal. In contrast, external mentoring are implemented by independent outside bodies, who bring together suitable mentors and mentees working in different organisations.

### **Mentoring in Europe**

The Department of Women's Studies of the German Youth Institute (Deutsches Jugend-Institut) has been conducting a research project 'Mentoring for Women in Europe'. The project forms part of the EU' 4th Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for women and men. It is sponsored by the Federal Ministry for Family , Senior Citizens, Women and Youth Affairs and the European Commission. The project has recently prepared a brochure, which aims to explain the concept of mentoring and how it works. The brochure provides an overview of mentoring and also includes short descriptions of mentoring programmes in seven different countries.

Reference:

' Mentoring for Women in Europe: A Strategy for the Professional Support of Women'. München, Deutsches Jugendinstitut

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## WORKING WITH DIVERSITY

*'Consultation with women must acknowledge the social and cultural diversity of women. Women are not an homogenous group: we must recognise individual difference as well as those created by social position, cultural heritage, ethnicity, income and disability. Consultation must respect and work with these differences to gain a complete picture of how each of us experiences and perceives the environment .....The organisation and implementation of the consultation process must be sensitive to women's needs, the various roles they play in juggling the requirements of home, children, work and a family. There must be sensitivity in the organisation of venues, locations, times, dates, childcare provision and access, as well as the use of different techniques to suit different groups of women' (Booth, 1996, 165).*

Undoubtedly, working with women needs to respect the differences between women, as well as the differences between women and men. Working effectively with diversity means valuing the different experiences and different needs of different groups of women. Using the variety of women's experience, and drawing in diverse groups of women, helps provide detailed knowledge of the daily pattern of women's, men's and children's lives, which in turn, can help produce more gender sensitive policies and gender sensitive local and regional development.

This section provides two examples. First, the **Womens Design Service** in the UK offers a technique for working with minority ethnic women. Second, material taken from an article by **David and Craig** (1997) offers insights into understanding diversity in communities, as well as developing an approach known as **Participatory Appraisal**. Examples of working with diversity can also be found in other sections of the toolkit, including building from the bottom and building capacity. Furthermore, the EuroFEM evaluation project identified the need for a broad basis of support as one of the key characteristics of good practice in effective project development. Working with diversity can provide an approach to building a broad basis of support for your project.

Reference:

Booth, C (1996) Women and Consultation, In C. Booth, J. Darke and S. Yeandle (Eds.) Changing Places, women's lives in the city, London: Paul Chapman Publishing

### Health and Safety Audit with Minority Ethnic Groups Women's Design Service, UK

The Women's Design Service is a well established organisation working in London, which aims to raise awareness of the needs of women with those responsible for the built environment. They also aim to involve the voices of women themselves, and to involve women in the community, in identifying problems and helping work toward solutions. One of their current projects has been to work interactively with women from minority ethnic community groups to identify, through conducting safety audits, how design and planning elements within their neighbourhoods impact on their health and safety. Sue Cavanagh, one of the project workers takes up the story:

*'What is unique about the project is the methods it has adopted to consult with Bangladeshi women about health and safety issues in their neighbourhood. The process can be applied to other community groups throughout Camden, and enables people who do not speak English as a first language, and who belong to a minority ethnic group or a refugee community, to participate in putting forward their views on the environment and to be part of the process of change'.*

Although there are many ways of conducting such audits, this one used seven main activities which are set out on the next page.

Another point to consider when working with groups who do not have the majority language is that a facilitator/interpreter must be used. In essence this looks fairly simple; you advertise and interview for

someone who has dual language skills. However, there are deeper issues of whether the interpreter is in tune with the aims of the organisation and with what the women are striving to accomplish. The organisation must trust the interpreter is correctly giving the message from the group. A poor relationship between the interpreter and the group, or between the interpreter and the organisation, can undermine the whole project. Figure 11 depicts the process of conducting safety audits.



**1. Discussion**

Considering some of the ways that the design of the local area can impact on women’s health and experiences of personal safety.

Introductory sessions were held with the groups that raised neighbourhood health and safety issues and facilitated group discussions about safety in the neighbourhood.

**2. Mapping**

Identifying a particular place, building, route or area on which to focus the audit.

The audit groups used a scale model to identify their neighbourhood.



**3. Observation**

Visiting an area to access what is there and what is needed but is missing.

The audit made detailed observations at points within the selected area and considered if the elements, design, social activity or lack of it, had an impact on personal safety.

**4. Recording**

Using checklists, photography, video, information questionnaires and interviews.

**5. Analysis**

Looking at the audit information and deciding on priorities. Once the information had been collected, group discussions took place.

**6. Presentation**

Creating a public display or exhibition of audit findings.

**7. Implementation**

Supporting groups to get political priorities changed and take part in decision-making process relating to their neighbourhoods.

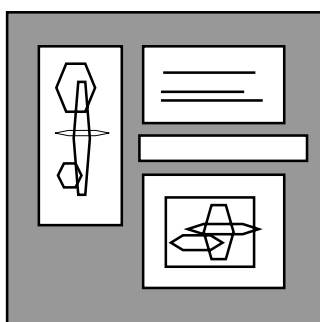


Figure 11. An example of conducting safety audits.

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## **Dilemmas of Participatory Appraisal**

### **Adapting participatory development approaches from Southern contexts**

There are two different aspects of working with diversity. The first is the recognition that a very ordinary sort of place, which might to the outside observer appear to be homogenous, has deep differences which need to be acknowledged (David and Craig, 1995):

*‘It became clear, over time, that the Great Hollands estate is divided both geographically and socially. Those who live in Great Hollands south often protest at their address being given as Great Hollands, preferring to call their area by its street name of Staplehurst. Well-being ranking carried out during the assessment illustrated a huge social and economic gulf between different sectors of the estate. A ‘high well being’ ranking for some implies a good (professional) job, owner-occupied house, and plenty of surplus income. For others, this ranking signified at least one adult in employment (probably as an unskilled worker), a council flat, and eligibility for state benefits’.*

This is not an uncommon observation of the dynamics of community life, where seemingly homogenous communities are multi-layered and display difference, diversity and divisions that need to be recognised, understood and worked with.

Therefore, how do we retain the voices of the many in summarising what the community is trying to say? The second aspect deals with the involvement of groups of people and to acknowledge different ways of knowing, but how can this richness and spread of views be captured in any final reports? There are no easy answers to this question. Perhaps the only rule is to involve as representative a group as possible in the drawing together of any summary documents rather than leaving it to a group of outside experts, who may consciously or unconsciously fall back on stereotypes or on what they think is best.

*‘The project in Great Hollands was based on ‘Participatory Appraisal’ (PA) in which efforts were made to involve a cross section of people: young mothers, single mothers, mothers of children with disabilities, teenage girls, teenage boys, minority groups, working men, unemployed men, single women, and older people. In total, over 250 people had participated and at least one person from every street had been involved. While participatory approaches encourage the exploration of social diversity and conflicting perspectives the analysis all too often masks heterogeneity. A huge amount of information, and a variety of perspectives, were aired and discussed during the course of the assessment. However, in the final analysis, this information was distilled into five perspectives (mothers/women; men/fathers; older people; younger people; and professionals). The aim of this assessment was to produce an action plan, and this was achieved. Producing a summary is inherent in every planning process; it is a pre-requisite to practical application. However, there will always remain a tension between retaining a sense of community diversity and producing summary reports for action.’*

Reference:

Ros David and Yvonne Craig (1998) Participation begins at home; adapting participatory development approaches from southern contexts’. In Caroline Sweetman (Eds.) Gender and Poverty in the North, Oxford: Oxfam.

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## MAKING YOUR PROJECT VISIBLE

Making your project visible is an important aspect at every stage of a project's life, from conception to development. The preparation of a diffusion plan can from the outset help build a comprehensive and coherent strategy for publicity, consultation, lobbying and the dissemination of information and results as well as using the media proactively.

A diffusion plan is an essential element which is often neglected and dealt with on an adhoc basis. A diffusion plan can help get your project funded, bend existing agendas, promote ideas, undertake consultation, mobilise a broad basis of support and also get your message across to a wide audience as well as to critical friends. Importantly, women need to bring their achievements into the public domain and in so doing, share their experience with others.

This section offers practical examples which you may find useful in the development of your own project. First, we deal with advice on lobbying from the Institute of Public and Politics in the Netherlands. This is followed by a pro-active strategy adopted by Diotima in Greece. Advice on using the media and the five - W's is provided by the Institute of Public and Politics in the Netherlands. The Movement for Rural Solidarity (MSR) describes their use of a newsletter and intervention poetry for working with poor women in rural areas of Portugal. Lastly, we include an example of a diffusion plan, which the EuroFEM research team implemented as part of the development of the EuroFEM toolkit.

### **Lobbying** Institute for Public and Politics, Netherlands

Lobbying is about influencing the policy process and it can be a powerful tool. You can do this during three key stages:

- policy preparation
- policy formulation/decision making
- policy implementation

The Institute for Public and Politics in the Netherlands is an NGO, which aims to encourage and facilitate all groups and individuals to participate in national and local politics. The institute often works with those groups who have been excluded from the decision making process, traditionally young people, immigrants, women and low income groups. They provide useful advice on lobbying for groups involved in "Testing the Living Environment", a LA21 project which the Institute has spear-headed across the Netherlands. Extracts of their advice are set out below:

In order to lobby well, it is necessary for you to:

- have good contacts with public servants, politicians or other actors
- know how to place your interests within a broader framework, for instance the environmental one
- do it at the right moment
- be able to barter and include in your story something that is, for instance, interesting to others, such as information, arguments or research data
- have knowledge of the background and contents of the policy you want to influence
- be able to put yourself in your dialogue partner's position and try to take into account their problems and possibilities, for instance by thinking along with them and bringing up alternatives if your proposal isn't taken
- practice talking and arguing through role play
- when decisions are being taken undertake activities which could steer the decision making process your way
- keep a watchful eye on implementation and make sure you receive minutes and proceedings on meetings; get yourself on a project implementation group; keep regular contact with public officials;

- - hire an external expert to be involved in the implementation process.

These are just a few suggestions to provide helpful and friendly advice, which are taken from a paper written by Jaqueline Khuun, of the Institute for Public and Politics, in the Netherlands, on 'Testing the Living Environment'.

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### **Pro-Active Strategy** Diotima, Greece

Diotima is a collective of women who work together to raise awareness of women's issues in Greece. In particular, they have offered gender sensitivity training to professional women working in the field of equal opportunities and other women's issues. In a recent interview with Maria Liapi, the Director of Diotima, she tried to describe the pro-active approach taken by her organisation to make the Diotima project visible .

*'Whenever we have achieved some goal - whether it is the completion of some research, or the winning of some funding to undertake a project, we take this news to the President or a Minister of Government to discuss this. Over time we have found that they will find the time to listen to us. We have nothing to lose by asking and they have nothing to lose by listening'*

This is, indeed, a very pro-active stance taken by the Diotima women of Athens. They go straight to the people with power and influence. They have the advantage in that they are located in their country's capitol and they are obviously well networked with critical friends in key positions. However, we can all learn from their confident approach and adapt it to suit our own circumstances and our own social and political context. Sometimes we don't make our project visible because we assume that no one wants to hear about it. *Have confidence! As Diotima say, 'what do you have to lose by trying?'*

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## Using the Media

### Institute for Public and Politics, Netherlands

Calling in the media is an issue in itself. A provocative article can help increase a project's visibility, but you run the risk of political or other actors becoming irritated by feeling the media is too biased, and will therefore not co-operate. It is a question of balance, and you will have to decide at which point you want to involve the media and what tone is necessary in order to get your point into the political agenda. The tone of the article is often the determining factor.

The best thing you can do is to draw up a publicity plan. Consider *The five W's : Who, What, Where, Why and When*. Also, these five W's always form the core of the press release or message. You must ensure that these five W's are clearly put across in the first two sentences of the press release. Journalists get lots of messages everyday and are therefore selective. They read the first few lines of a message and then take a look at the sender. Is it interesting? Only then will they do something with it.

- Spreading information*: which media are suitable? Only the local media or also regional and national media? And which one do you choose - newspaper, television, or radio? A message on the Internet can also be effective.
- Ensure a constant information flow*. Supply particularly interested journalists with enough messages on your activities and existence.
- Half of your success lies in *making your activities visible* and insightful to the media.

These are just a few suggestions offered by Jaqueline Khuun, at the Institute of Public and Politics, in the Netherlands. She put forward these ideas in her article on 'Testing the Living Environment', but it is sound advice for us all to follow.

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## Newsletter and Intervention Poetry

### Solidariedade Rural, Portugal

The Movimento de Solidariedade Rural (MSR) is a Portuguese NGO, which was founded in the early 1980s. It developed from the Catholic movement, which wanted to focus attention on rural areas previously ignored in local development. However, today it has no links with the church. The specific focus of activity for MSR is rural poverty and in particular they target women because they believe that women in Portugal, as in many other countries, bear the burden of poverty.

The MSR has three key areas of activity:

- a monthly newsletter, which provides a mechanism to spread information
- networking with other projects in Portugal, Europe and other Portuguese speaking countries
- the animation of cultural projects in local development to help tackle local poverty.

The newsletter is a particularly important medium for spreading their information, raising awareness and publicising their work to people in rural areas. They publish the newsletter every month and for a small charge make copies available to members in local organisations, who in turn, distribute the newsletter through their organisation. The organisations they use include, local government, rural libraries, professional schools with a link to rural planning, and churches.

The newsletter covers articles of topical interest, which include regular updates on the law entitled - 'Know your law' . It also includes information on national, regional and local events; on major problems, such as drugs and the family; and letters from readers. The articles are intended to make people think, for example, a recent issue covered the debate on the future of Portuguese agriculture in the year 2000. It also included an article on 'What parents must know' which provided information and discussion on drugs. Many of the articles are targeted at women and written by women. The newsletter also contains publicity on folklore events and *intervention poetry*, a popular medium for getting social and political messages across, in Portugal.

*POESIA NECESSARIA*  
*Náo è ilusáo nem è mito*  
*Tem raiz no Infinito*  
*E náo ignora ninguém*  
*Vem de longe, de muito longe*  
*O Anseio sentido hoje*  
*De um mundo de Paz e Bem*

*NECESSARY POETRY*  
*It is not an illusion, nor a myth*  
*It has its root in the Infinite*  
*And it doesn't ignore anyone*  
*it comes from far away, very far away*  
*The longing felt today*  
*for a good and peaceful world.*

The newsletter is a very practical example of reaching out to poor rural women, but MSR is clear that all of its work must be underpinned by feminist theoretical analysis. For the organisation, the newsletter provides a concrete example of feminism in action.

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### The EuroFEM Diffusion Plan

One way of making your project visible is to make a diffusion plan. The EuroFEM diffusion plan consists of an integration of all the planned activities of the project, such as transfer of experience in seminars, information dissemination through articles, publicity and lobbying by meeting politicians and officials, and building broad basis of support through meeting the grass roots, politicians, project leaders, etc.

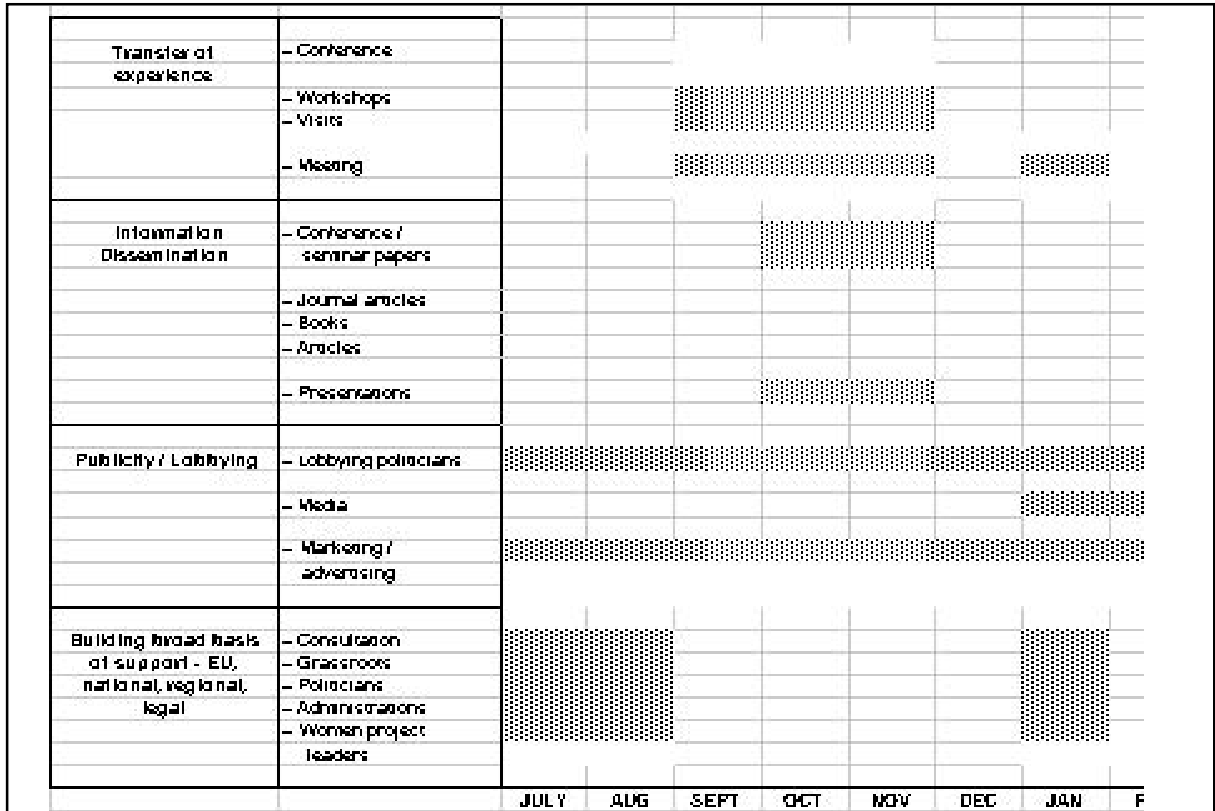


Figure 12. The diagrammatic Presentation of the Diffusion Plan for the EuroFEM-Project