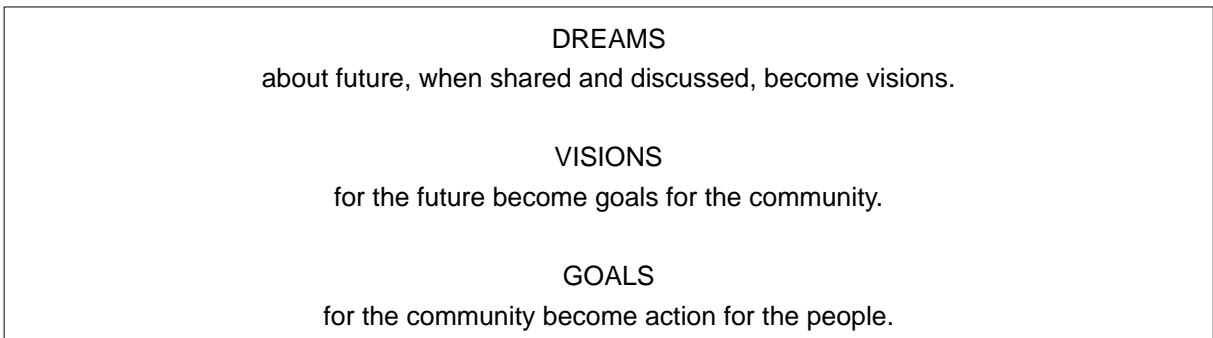


# 5.ORGANISING YOUR WORK

If we are honest, making a start can be the most exciting part of a project. Having a good idea and getting it into shape and making something happen can be very empowering experiences which need to be celebrated. However, after that can come the more low key but perhaps even more vital part of the project's history, which is keeping it going. In this section we look at these issues from constructing an appropriate organisational structure to making an exit or succession strategy. There are a large number of good texts on organisational theory and management practice. This section cannot hope to take their place. Instead we look at theories through the real experiences of projects. Though the case studies are brief, they demonstrate the richness of organisational life and display something of the variety of points of view. Ultimately organisations are about people and this is what makes organisational work stimulating and difficult.

### BUILDING A COMMON VISION

One of the most important mobilising instrument is envisioning. Anne Saeterdal (1991), who has been involving many Norwegian women into local and regional planning has stated in her booklet on Mobilizing women, the following:



A common vision has the dynamising effect of keeping you on the right track, like a star in a dark night. It gives direction to the goals and provides targets for increasing your capacity. Marja-Liisa Viherä, a Finnish futurist has drawn the following diagram on the role of the vision. Here the chosen vision is that of a supportive everyday life (Figure 13).

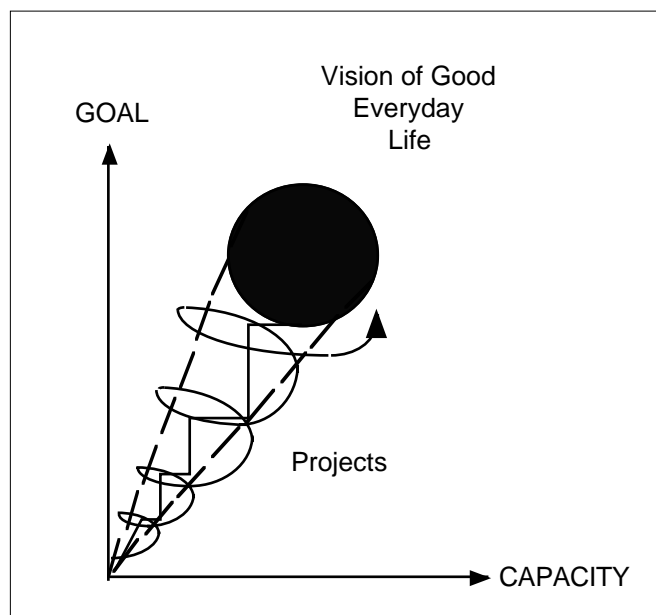


Figure 13. The vision of supportive everyday life gives direction to projects and dynamises the goals and capacity to learn and take action.

There are several methods to assist envisioning. We described the Dream method in the previous section and here we present a creative brainstorming technique called the Futures workshop, which can also be conducted with children and older people. The SWOT-analysis, on the other hand, is a common technique for analysing your context but it includes some envisioning aspects, especially if you change it into SWAP (successes, weaknesses, aims and problems).

References:

A.Saeterdal and E.L.Tackle (1991) Mobilizing women in local planning and decision-making: A guide to why and how. Oslo: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

*For more information contact:*

*Marja-Liisa Viherä, Sonera,  
PB 106, Fin. 00051 Sonera, Finland.  
Tel. 358-020402739*

### **Futures Workshop**

Futures workshop is a popular brainstorming method in Finland which has been used for different kinds of development work within the social and health care sector and communal capacity building. The method itself consists of the following phases:

- 1. Presentation of the chosen Theme**
- 2. The Critique Phase**
- 3. The Fantasy Phase**
- 4. Plan of Action**

The workshop can last for a half a day, for a whole day or even for several days depending on the problem and the participants.

It is important to have a well-contextualised theme which all the participants can appropriate. The critique phase can be conducted in different ways. We usually conduct this phase by having the participants write their problems individually on the flip chart papers which have been stuck to the walls of the room. You can also use 'post its' and glue them to the wall, if you wish. This takes about half an hour after which everybody reads aloud her or his statements. Then everybody rates the statements with a maximum of 7 points. It is possible to give the maximum amount to one problem or to distribute the points between several problems. The ratings are counted by the animator of the workshop during the break. The animators also classify the problems into three to five categories, which are given appropriate titles.

The fantasy phase begins by translating the negative titles into positive and dynamising slogans. These will be used as stimuli for fantasizing solutions to the problems. No negative remarks are allowed but instead the participants are encouraged to produce even silly ideas. This phase might be done collectively so that the animator writes the produced ideas on the flip chart or it may be done in small groups. After half an hour the group presents the ideas or if the ideas are on the wall, the participants read them out loud. The fantasies are classified into four to five themes which serve as the basis for action plans.

The action plan is often produced as an one hour long group work in which 4 to 9 people reflect over the implementation of the idea. We animate the session with a structured questionnaire, which makes the participant state the title of the project, the aims, responsible persons for different types of action, the duration and the financing. The results of the group work are then presented and the final conclusions for the continuation of the work are drawn during the discussion.

The workshop process and results are then written up as a small booklet which is sent later on to the participants.

Some Hämeenlinna women initiated in 1997 a project called **The Mobility and Environment Forum for a supportive everyday life**, in which a Futures workshop was used. The aim of the project was to make the centre of Hämeenlinna a safer and healthier place than at present and to decrease car traffic. After different user groups - children and their parents, older people, politicians and officials - had diagnosed the problems during the Autumn, the Fantasy phase of the Futures workshop was conducted one winter evening. The development targets turned out to be the following:

- more bicycle routes
- removal of obstacles (Kerbs, advertisement on the pavement)
- more pedestrian areas
- children's events in the centre
- a recycling point to the square
- more greenery and lighting

The plan of action was written later on by the project leaders together with one of the key persons of the town. They are also in charge of monitoring the implementation of the project. One of assessment techniques used was a simple evaluation sheet, produced by Oxfam (Figure 14).

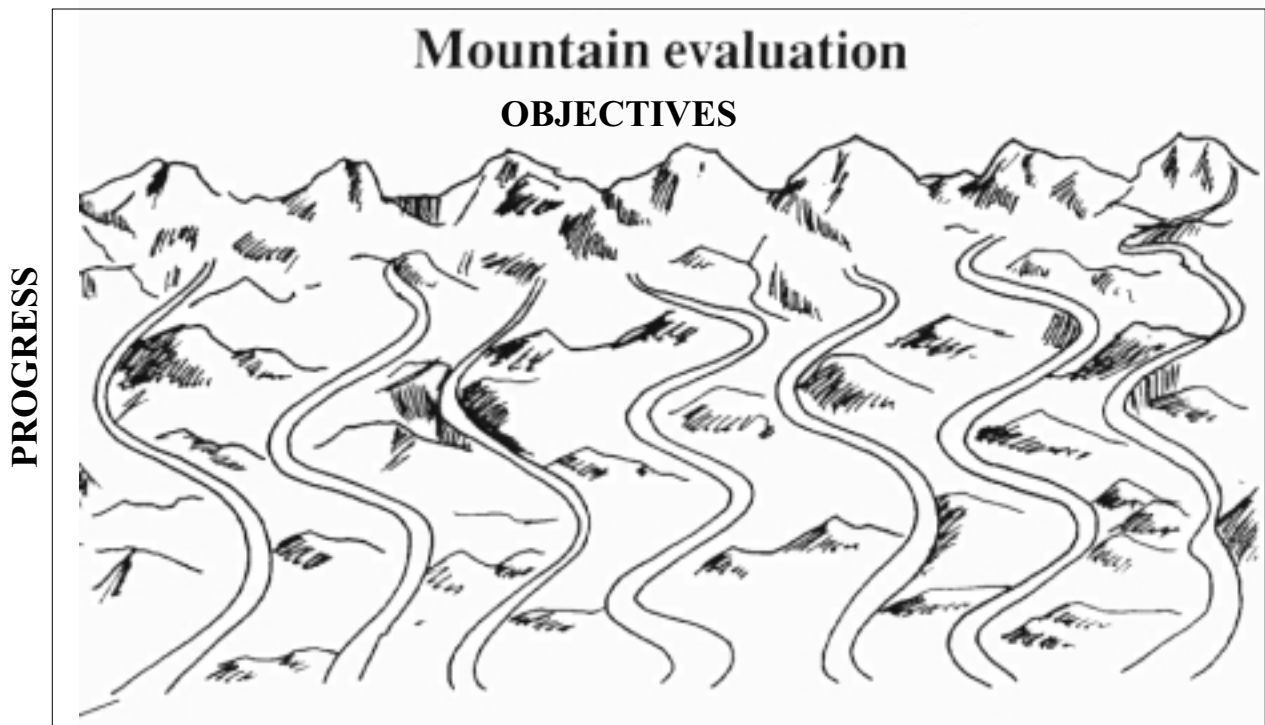


Figure 14. Mountain evaluation (Oxfam, 1995).

References:

Williams, S., Seed, J. and Mwau, A. (1995) The Oxfam Gender Training Manual. Oxford: Oxfam.

*For more information contact:*

*Päivi Sieppi*

*Environmental Department of the Public Health of Hämeenlinna Region*

*PB 560*

*Fin 13111 Hämeenlinna, Finland.*

*Tel. 358-3-6521489. Fax 358-3-6521500.*

## Using SWOT -Analysis Guadeloupe

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis is a well-established and effective means of clarifying ideas. It can be used for preparing a new departure for an organisation or as a base for a business plan. (Look at the note on business plans in this section of the Toolkit). It can also be used to make people aware of change and as the later example from Guadeloupe demonstrates, it can help turn a largely negative and critical discussion into a positive plan of action.

### Why do it?

SWOT can provide

- evidence for change
- a basis for assessing core capabilities and competencies
- good motivation in a group
- the means for getting people to participate

### CURRENT

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <p>Strengths can relate to the organisation, to the environment, to market shares, to people.</p>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <p>This is not an opportunity to blame but should aim to be an honest appraisal of the way things are.</p>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <p>These might include socio-economic trends or political change, greater co-operation with other organisations.</p>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <p>Sometimes the same issues appear as both opportunities and threats.</p>

### FUTURE

### How to do it?

For SWOT to be successful you need to create an atmosphere which stimulates a free flow of information in which people can speak freely without fear of blame. Allow enough time for a flow of ideas, but keep a balance of time between the four elements of the exercise.

### Don't

- try to disguise weakness
- merely list errors and mistakes
- jump to the evaluation stage too early
- lose sight of external influences and trends
- allow the SWOT to become a blame laying exercise

The SWOT exercise in Guadeloupe started spontaneously as a meeting of women entrepreneurs began to express their anger and frustration. A decision was taken by the visiting EuroFEM team to try and shape these feelings through a SWOT-analysis.

Following this exercise, women around the table felt that they had moved on. Their anger had been listened to and literally noted. In addition, they were able to see that all was not bleak. They had capacities and there were opportunities which they could exploit.

## BUILDING AN APPROPRIATE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Questions about how organisations come to arrange or structure their activities in such different ways have fascinated more writers in the management studies field than any other subject. This note cannot and does not try to replicate these theoretical discussions. Instead, it explores a number of structures presented by women's project leaders and considers what each structure has to offer.

In the transnational seminar held by EuroFEM in Kokkola in 1997, project leaders discussed their organisational structures and tried to capture them in a word or a phrase. Later in this section when discussing how organisations cope with change we will come across the **“Model of open interaction”** which is the Kokkola resource centre model characterised by an open network, sustained by good communication and shared ideology but without a formal steering group. Some projects were not in such a harmonious and happy situation with one project leader calling her group **“The Pyramid Revisited”** with conflict always breaking out between the grass roots beneficiaries and the hierarchy of the project. Another woman found herself working in what she described as **“A Windy Situation”** which involved a constant stressful balance between the demands of funders and the needs of users.

Two project organisations are highlighted here. The first is the *Frauenbüro in Vienna*, which is a **“Constant Lobbying Organisation”** with negotiation between experts and institutions and between experts and grass roots women. The diagram, drawn by Ursula Bauer of the Viennese project, shows this flow between all the parties with the Frauenbüro in the middle ensuring a balance of communication flows between parties (Figure 15).

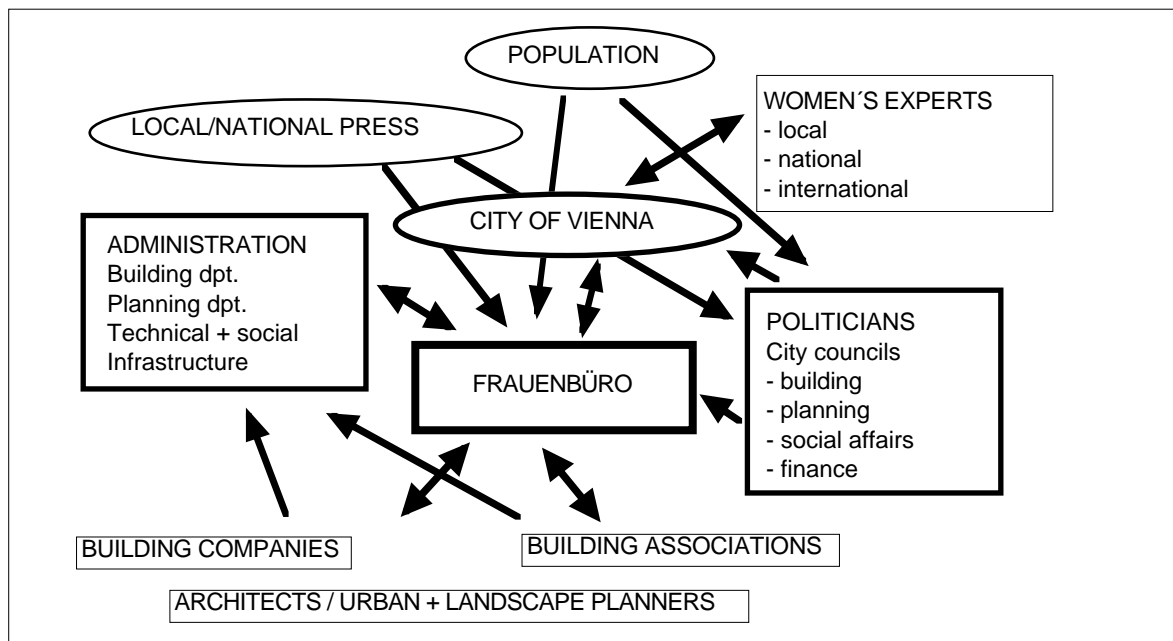


Figure 15. The organisation of the Viennese Frauenbüro

The second diagram, drawn by Sue Cavanagh of the *Women's Design Service* in London is described as **“From targeting to process creation”**. It emphasises the process of facilitating to eventually help others to take over the project themselves and eliminate the need for experts or leaders. The diagram shows the process of growth, such that existing groups seed new groups (Figure 16).

From our discussion we were able to reach good practices and principles which we felt an effective organisation would embody:

- Feedback from different parts of the organisation including the beneficiaries was vital to be a catalyst for change.
- Project leaders ought not to work alone because of problems of exhaustion and stress.

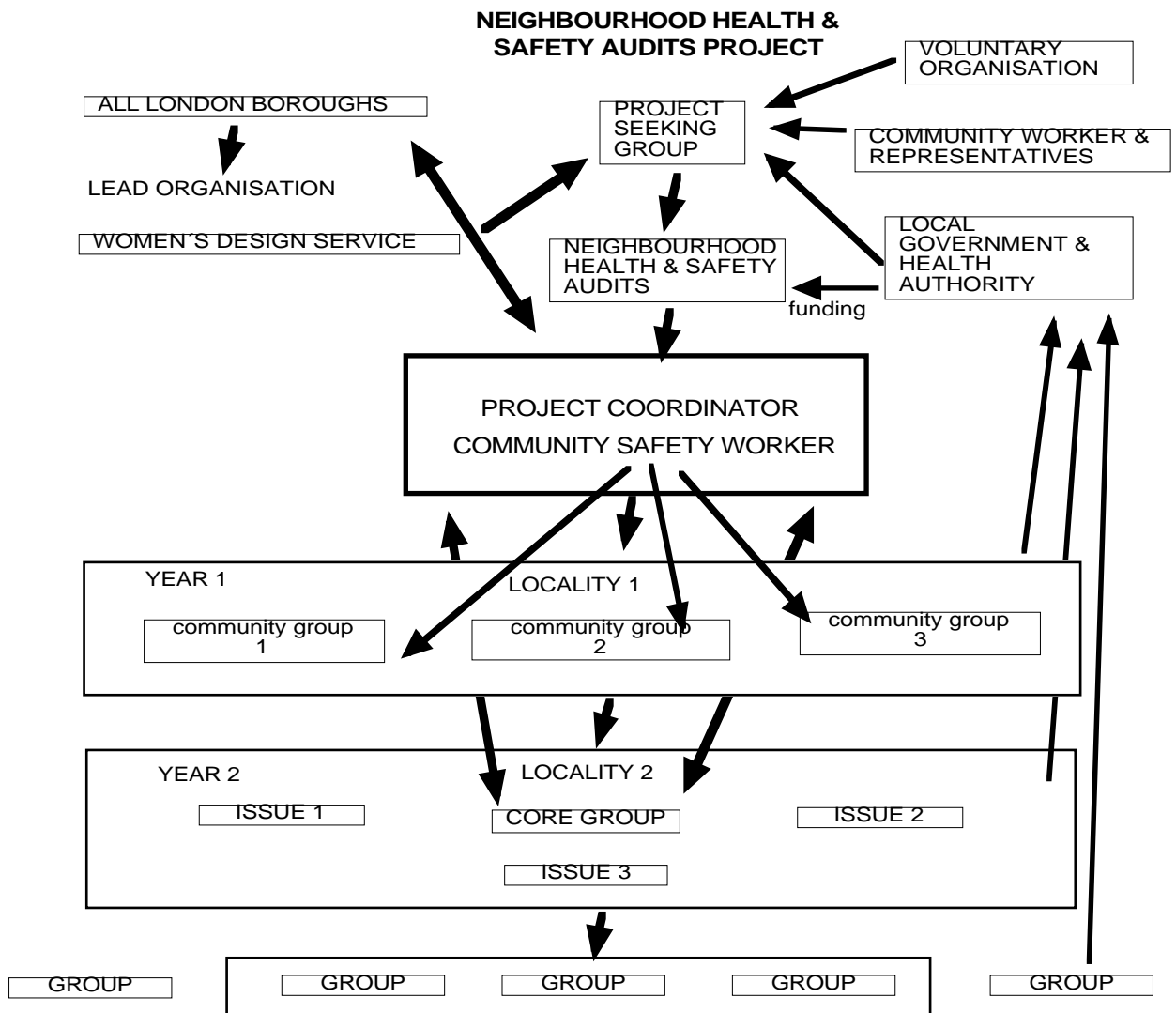


Figure 16. Organisation of the Women’s Design Center

- There should be overlapping work groups
- Organisations should develop new methods of generating ideas and creating ownership of ideas.
- There should be good links to the outside world in the form of critical friends and grass roots groups.
- There should be no monopoly on information.

Some of the key questions around women's organising seem to be:

- How does the structure and the nature of the organisation of women's projects enhance interior and exterior functions?
- Do women or men have an opportunity to influence the organisational context of their project?
- Can organisations learn to learn and if so, how?

For more information contact:

Sue Cavanagh,  
 Women's Design Service,  
 52/54 Featherstone Street  
 London, EC1Y 8RY UK  
 Fax; +44 171 490 5212

## **BENDING AGENDAS**

One of the good principles revealed by the EuroFEM work was the concept of bending agendas. A good project can be made more attractive to funders or to the public, if it is able to make connections with a current idea. The German example demonstrates that women's concern about transport and traffic were able to make alliances with green issues groups for their mutual benefit. The Austrian project was able to capitalise on concerns about the design of housing to promote women architects. As you read these two examples consider, how you might make a connection with the fashionable debates in your locality.

### **Integrating Feminist and Ecological Approaches to Traffic Avoidance Germany**

Feminist approaches to structural traffic avoidance is a particular aim within the Department of Transport in the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy. The main objective of this work is to integrate feminist and ecological approaches to traffic avoidance and to mainstream transport policy and research. This area of work has grown out of debates by the network Frauen in Bewegung ( Women in motion), a network of German women experts drawn from science, planning and politics. The network is a part of a sub-group on traffic in the Green Party.

Researchers at the Wuppertal Institute have begun to draw together interests and issues in the women's movement and the ecological movement. They felt that the two movements have largely the same interests in bringing about change to transport policy and without this co-operation, collaboration and integration the two sides could easily be played off against each other by establishing lobbyists. This broad project is concerned to prioritise gender issues within the environmental movement in order to bring about lasting change to transport policy in Germany.

The working area has a series of self-initiated projects, parts of projects within the Institute, as well as connections with other institutes and organisations. Their work has already begun to impact on the discussion of traffic at the national level, for example:

- the Commission " women in the city", a congress of German Municipal Authorities, which works on concrete proposals for local activities
- a research study for (and financed by the State Rheinland Pfalz) entitled " better chances of mobility and participation of women"
- ecologically oriented proposals for law initiatives by the Bundesland.

This latter study analysed the way state laws and programmes in spatial planning, transport and mobility, and village restoration ignore the everyday life of women. Each law has been investigated to examine the regulatory content, change relevant to women, gender justice, necessary amendments to laws from gender perspective, and appropriate forms of participation for women in the decision making process.

Within environmentally oriented transport organisations, women experts working within the Institute have begun to pursue gender interests, for example the traffic club Germany (VCD), the bicycle club (ADFC), and the women's section of Friends of the Earth.

Structural avoidance of traffic aims at preserving and increasing the mobility of both women and men in a way which is both ecologically and socially acceptable, in the interests of providing options in life style design and self-determination affecting primarily their day to day activities.

*For more information contact:*

*Mieke Spitzner  
Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy  
Doppersberg 19,  
D 42103 Wuppertal, Germany.  
Fax: + 49 202 2492 108.  
E mail MeikeSpitzner@mail.wupperinst.org*

## Viennese Housing Projects by and for Women

The design and structure of the urban environment has a decisive influence on the way people lead their lives in the city as well as on their quality of life. Traditionally, it has almost exclusively been men who have created and constructed cities as planners, architects, builders, land owners and contractors. When we look at the structures of our cities it is the everyday experience of the working man which has found expression while women's needs have largely been ignored. Specifically, the criticism of conventional housing projects, voiced by many women, is that there has been scant attention paid to the requirements of house work and family.

An architectural competition took place in Vienna in 1993, and the winning design was chosen in 1994. The jury was mainly composed of women architects and landscape architects. The winning entry was made by a woman architect, who incorporated a variety of dwellings and sensitive solutions for open space, including courtyards, a central square, a village common, play streets and a play meadow. The work began on site in 1995 and was completed in 1997.

The model project "Frauen-Werkstadt" aims at increasing the share of women experts in the urban design and construction process in order to ensure that women will have their say in the further development of the City of Vienna.

The project demonstrates that the criteria for women-adapted housing are not a mere manifesto but can be realised as a multi-storey, subsidised housing project. In the long run, the manifold facets of women's everyday life have to be an essential criterion of design in urban planning and housing construction.

The Women's Office elaborated a guide focusing on criteria for housing projects and urban environments adapted to women's needs and everyday life, which have been mentioned in several later competition papers.

According to the guide-book, women-friendly urban planning and housing means taking the complex daily routines of women into account, which is reflected in the following characteristics of the dwelling complex:

- Urbanistic fit for everyday life reflected on the development of "social spaces" and outdoor spaces which can be generally used for multiple purposes,
- Flats are practical and take particular account of the requirements of home-makers and families,
- Flats are appropriate for different phases of life and offer rooms of equal quality. The number of square metres is not as crucial as the flexible use of space,
- Gentle transitions from indoor to outdoor areas. The flats are closely linked to the outside.
- The various needs of old and young, men and women, accounted by a variety of spaces (divided into smaller units) are recognised,
- Spaces for playing are available in adequate sizes and diversity,
- Spaces for encounters support the development of neighbourly relations,
- Stairwells and entrance areas are generous and invite people to take a break,
- The housing development is practical. Pram and bike storerooms and community laundry rooms are situated on the roof, big enough and within convenient reach,
- Children can safely play outside and the housing development is safe,
- Distances are short and routes are open to everyone's view, as are entrances and stairwells,
- Careful planning in garages prevents anxiety spaces.

It is interesting to note that until mid 1993 there was not a single woman among architects invited to advise on city development, as an expert, or indeed enter architectural competitions. One of the key objectives of this model project was that it stimulated public interest in gender-sensitive design and increased the visibility of women professionals in the built environment field.

The women's bureau in Vienna wanted to increase the participation of women experts in planning and construction projects and at the same time to assert the needs of women users of the city. The head of Vienna's women's bureau was a member of the jury for the competition. Later, she has acted as a consultant in several other competitions, to check if projects have taken account of gender-sensitive design.

The housing project has raised high interest in Austria and abroad. Several Women's Offices are launching similar projects by taking the "Frauen-Werk-Stadt" and the competition papers as an example.

*For more information contact:*

*Eva Kail*

*Frauenburo of Vienna*

*Friedrich-Schmidt Platz 3*

*A-1082 Wien, Austria*

*Tel: +43-1-4000 83519, Fax: +43-1-4000 9983515*

*E-mail [bar@m57.magwien.gv.at](mailto:bar@m57.magwien.gv.at)*

## **COPING WITH CHANGE**

1990's have meant turbulent times for many organisations. Idealism has been forced to follow the rules of the market game, as is described in the story of the BOW co-operative. There are, however, exceptions, like the Kokkola women's co-operative in Finland and the Diotima Research Centre in Greece.

### **Co-Operative Ideals Within Market Forces United Kingdom**

This extract is taken from a paper by L.A. Walsh and R. Armson talking about how a housing co-operative which had conducted its affairs in a non-hierarchical way had to change, if the organisation was to survive. The extract gives some insight into the painful decisions that sometimes have to be made.

The vision of Banks of the Wear Co-operative (BOW) was simple: to help and encourage tenants and residents to improve their homes. The co-operative's mission was to facilitate people working together to articulate and achieve their aims. Its culture was firmly entrenched in tenant participation, which enabled residents to have control over their homes and the improvements made to them.

BOW started with three workers who worked out in the community with local people making them aware of housing improvement opportunities. As time went on workers began to become involved in a range of initiatives to improve the area and provide employment. To control BOW and to develop policy, a management committee was formed. Members were local residents who had become involved in the housing co-operatives. Workers and committee members worked together to introduce radical new forms of management and were passionately committed to challenging housing practices and norms. As part of that commitment BOW itself operated in a non-hierarchical way. There was no director or co-ordinator. Each worker was a specialist in his or her own field. Policy making was a task for everyone and fortnightly workers' meetings were held to make decisions. Most issues were discussed including strategies, day to day issues and the feelings of workers and tenants.

The benefit of this way of working were that each worker contributed to developing and maintaining the co-operative and the work of their own team. An equal salaries policy was in place and thought fair for those who worked within a co-operative philosophy. Staff also believed that it allowed all staff to develop equally.

However, there was a down side to this style of management. For example, the process of trying to get to consensus on decisions did not encourage BOW to face unpleasant issues or to develop strategic plans. Early in 1988, it was clear that the architectural services were operating at a loss. The search for consensus meant that it was impossible to close the section. It was also clear that some people were working below the market rate while others were paid more than an equivalent post elsewhere. Over time this had the effect of trapping support workers who could not afford to move on and creating turnover of highly qualified people who could not afford to stay.

Changes were finally brought about by changes in the UK housing sectors in 1988 which emphasised market-led philosophies and changed the rules and environment for social housing. In order to survive BOW had to make itself into a Housing association (a social landlord and, in this case, a provider of services such as training for tenants participation to social landlords and their tenants). This change of status brought with it the need to fit into a whole new administrative and legal framework. The need to be more competitive made changes to salary inevitable. New pay structures were set up, some staff were made redundant and everyone was persuaded to take a pay cut.

The problems of transforming the organisation were acute. Many staff had been committed to the co-operative ideals of BOW and there was deep regret for the lost ideals of non-hierarchical working. Some experienced this as a painful personal loss. The director and the new management executive felt an

uncomfortable road between the ideals of staff and the pressures of a restructured housing market. However, they now had clear objectives specified by the management committee. The culture was very different from the nonhierarchical and informal style of the earlier days when idealists and activists achieved so much. Success, growth and the changed and somewhat hostile environment had seen the adoption of a business culture. Changes had to be made for the organisation to survive. Once BOW had been an innovative and fun place to work with a great deal of success measured in terms of community development. Workers could see the improvements to houses and the infrastructure of the area and now they grieved for the loss of the old camaraderie. However, the organisation had survived and had maintained the main original objectives of BOW in its new goals and aims.

Reference:

L.A. Walsh and R. Armson (1994) "Banks of the Wear". In Rosalind Armson and Rob Paton (Eds.) *Organisations: cases, issues and concepts*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

### **The Kokkola experience Finland**

The previous page has documented the way in which a loosely organised group of workers had to make the painful change to a more formally structured way of working. This may lead you to think that loose ways of structuring inevitably have to become more conformist, but this is not the case. The example we turn to is the Kokkola women's resource centre. The network of women began with a few women mobilising others and then the idea that women could provide a resource for themselves snowballed. One of the first ventures of the Kokkola women was the setting up of the co-operative house which has grown and diversified. It provides an employment agency; advice to would be small business people, a shop selling the co-operative's products and a cafeteria, which serves as a meeting place and information centre. In addition, it is an incubation of varying kinds of projects.

In the early days of the co-operative a committee was in control of the range of projects. They met regularly to discuss new ventures. However, over time, as a true entrepreneurial and dynamic culture has evolved, the formal committee structure has been abandoned as no longer fitting. Instead, the projects now work together in a loose, almost neural network of women who are bound together by the culture of the co-operative. When a new project idea emerges the individuals concerned come together and form an organisation for the purposes of applying for funding. The different projects have regular network meetings, but the "women's commission" has no real formal power of execution. Figure 17 (next page) shows the Kokkola organisation in diagrammatic form.

*For more information contact:*

*Mrs Margita Lukkarinen  
Women's Co-operative  
Kauppatori 2, 67100, Kokkola, Finland.  
Tel: +358-6-831 7355, Fax: +358-6-831 2446  
E-mail: [margita.lukkarinen@kokkola.kpnet.fi](mailto:margita.lukkarinen@kokkola.kpnet.fi)*

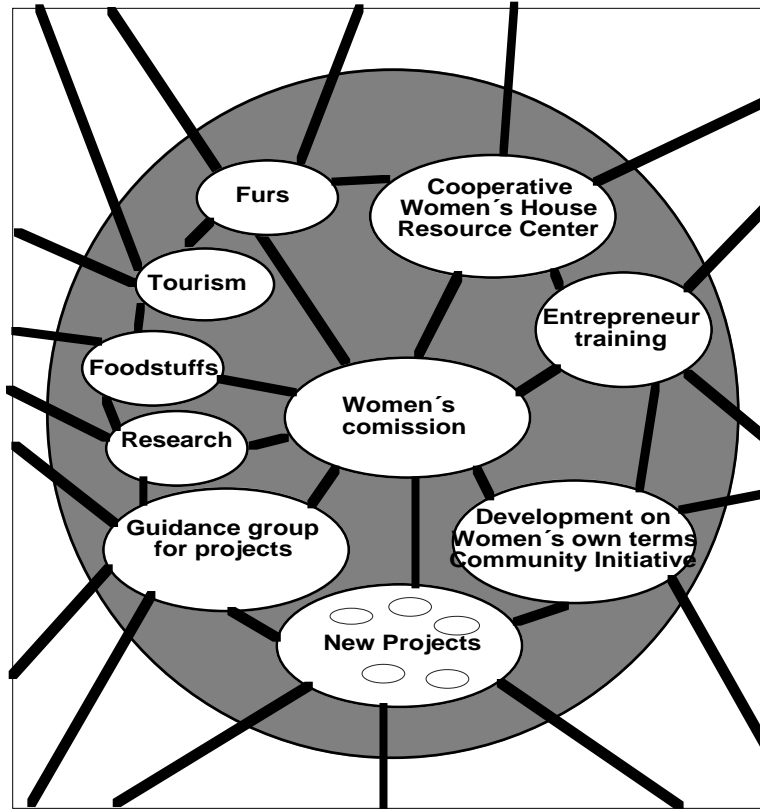


Figure 17. The Kokkola open network model of organisation

## Surviving Political Change Diotima, Greece

Diotima was established in 1989 by seven women, who had known each other from being young women in the Greek feminist movement. They were all well-established in good and diverse professions. Their commitment to the socio-political advancement of women led to their setting up Diotima. Because these women were feminists, they were very much associated with leftist politics though they were very clear sighted about not taking funding, which would align them with one political party or another. However, through the years of right wing government in Greece, Diotima were to a degree isolated and given very few research or training projects by the central government. In spite of this, through that period they kept working and building their reputation as a group of experts who could offer quality training on issues of equality. Their decisions to steer clear of obvious left wing alignment and their quiet determination to keep going through leaner times has left them well respected as an expert resource who can be called upon by organisations who may win funding and who then need other partners to help them deliver their programme objectives.

*For more information contact:*  
 Maria Liapi, Diotima  
 2 Kekropos Str, 10558 Athens, Greece  
 Fax +30 132 27 706.  
 E mail: diotima@otenet.gr

## BUILDING A NETWORK

Network building is, like Aino Saarinen writes, at the core of the Fourth wave of women's movement, which mostly takes place virtually, in and through the Internet. Networking is especially important for women who find themselves on the geographical fringes of Europe, like the Northern Feminist University and the Greek Diotima, but even for Barcelona women who lie close to more central zones of the continent. Networking can also lead to a specific kind of organisation which can cope effectively with change for the benefit of the whole locality or region.

### Survival Through Networking Greece

Diotima, a Greek women's project, was clear that, as Maria Liapi puts it "***the only way to survive is to engage***".

*"We have always tried to create as big a network as possible and to be open to all women. Always we are looking for more women to talk with and who can engage in research which will help push us all ahead. For example, we wanted to increase women's knowledge of informatics because through the use of such global networks as the Internet, we can promote women's agendas. We knew there must be a woman or women who were working in this field and who could teach these skills to our volunteers so we advertised and there they were.*

*In the same vein we have helped other women's projects get started and have been open about sharing our knowledge and research with others. This has been part of our philosophy of spreading the word."*

*For more information contact:*

*Maria Liapi  
Diotima  
2 Kekropos Str  
105 58, Athens, Greece.  
Fax + 30 1 3227706.  
E mail diotima@otenet.gr.*

### Networking in Barcelona

The Fundacio in Barcelona is an organisation promoted by the Women's section of a Catalonian trade union, which focuses primarily on women and work. The Fundacio has several EU-projects in which it has used partnerships and networks as a source of strength upon which to build a power base. For example, the project called "Women in the city" has created a network of civil servants and key players at the regional and local level. In turn, each of these participants is connected to his/her own network. Each region has a department of women's affairs which is connected to a wide range of women's initiatives. Through this network a rich web of contacts has been created with grass roots women, women professionals and politicians who can spread the word about urban women and their needs and, in turn, make the Fundacio aware of emerging issues. Representatives from the regional municipalities have been invited to sit on the project's co-ordinating group which in turn has provided access to important centres of power. Figure 18 shows the networking model of the Fundacio-project. It is called "***Expanding outwards through local forums***".

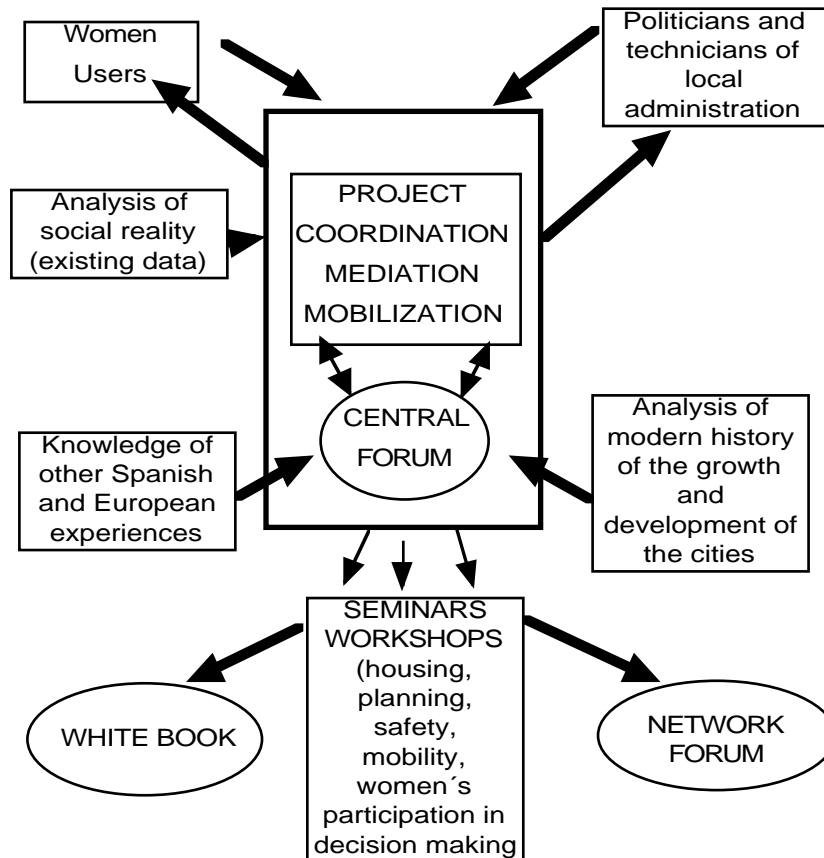


Figure 18. The organisational model of the network of the Fundacio-project “Women in the city”, is called “Expanding outwards through local forums”.

For more information contact:

Isabel Segura  
Fundacio Maria Aurelia  
Ramblas 81,  
Barcelona, Spain  
Tel: +34-3-301 1195, Fax: +34-3-301 1195

## Developing Network Organisations

We all live in network societies, where people, organisations, and nations are joined together by complex webs of relationships. A network is a set of autonomous organisations that come together to reach goals that none of them can reach separately. Rupert C. Chisholm (1998) has written an inspiring book which deals with networks as complex everchanging systems, designed to help different parties to have control over multifaceted issues (messes). He specifically addresses the question ***How to manage networks of organisations which tend to be loosely structured, non-hierarchically controlled and difficult to sustain.***

The Network might become a medium for changing information, for finding resources and support, for collective problem solving and for influencing decision making and development trends of the region. However, the network doesn't give all these “goodies” without proper management.

Chisholm, whose main examples are drawn from decaying industrial localities, which would have disappeared without effective efforts through networking development, leans heavily on the following approach:

1. **Using network concepts is crucial** to the development process. Networks exist at the system level, which is a level above interorganisational relationships. Members come together voluntarily

to deal with complex metaproblems that require collaborative work by many organisations. A shared vision and common purpose are the orienting forces of the network. Members control the network and take the responsibility for the development of a shared understanding of the problem area and the required action. For this purpose appropriate models of development, which are sensitive to the different levels of action, should be constructed.

2. **Using action research is essential.** Action research is used to create and maintain networks as learning systems. This means that a process of proactive engagement, not just reactive adjustment, can be achieved. Action research also provides systematic guidance and nurturance to the development process.
3. **Effective design work is important.** Constant attention should be devoted to the designing of events and activities. Besides major events, such as search conferences, seminars and workshops, even ordinary events should be carefully designed. This allows learning to take place. Key design dimensions include: determining the strategic purpose of the event, defining goals, determining the location and its design, selecting the convenor, structuring the meeting, selecting the specific development interventions, and defining time dimensions.
4. **Integration of development work with normal network activities.** Even action research - the planning of interventions, their implementation and evaluation - should be part of the normal network activities.
5. **Building and maintaining grassroots support is crucial.** Establishing strong ties to the community is essential to developing interorganisational networks. Simultaneously, there should also be translocal connections.
6. **Constructing appropriate forms of organisation.** Each situation is different and therefore context-sensitive forms of organisation, which are consistent with the features of the interorganisational network and which reflect the unique requirements for tackling the problems and objectives of the case, should be looked for. These might include traditional organisational elements, such as the steering committee, task forces, coordinators etc. but the combination of the elements should vary according to the circumstances.
7. **The process of developing networks is disorderly and nonlinear.** Irrespective of the usefulness of rational plans and designing of events, the development process in reality is not neat and tidy but disorderly, informal, circular, and serendipitous.
8. **It takes a system to change a system.** Network development requires a team of active members to assist in constructing the collective vision and strategies and to keep the network on the appropriate track. All this endeavour also requires resources.

The negative consequences of globalisation might also be fought against through networking. Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1995) asserts that "the American and European dominance of the world economy is passing rapidly. In its place, a global century has begun. Having the capacity to be "world class" is the basic requirement for participating successfully in the new age. World class status demands the following intangible assets:

1. **Concepts:** the best and latest knowledge and ideas.
2. **Competence:** the ability to meet the highest operating standards that exist anywhere in the world.
3. **Connections:** effective linkages to individuals, organisations and institutions around the globe.

Reference:

- R.F. Chisholm (1998) *Developing Network Organizations: Learning from Practice and Theory*. New York: Addison Wesley.  
R. M. Kanter (1995) *World Class*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

## IDENTIFYING TRAINING ISSUES

Successful projects are usually designed as learning systems for their participants. Therefore, training forms an important part of developing and implementing your project. Training is, however, a vast concept which may comprise varying sorts of activities. In fact, it is a speciality in itself and we are only trying to give a couple of glimpses of this great diversity.

Training for women often consists of a set of modules which the participants can choose from. For example, the structure of training modules used at the Professional competence-project in Finland comprise the personal portfolio, mapping of competences, development discussions, a diversity of orientation modules, the modules of basic know-how, the modules of specific know-how, and the modules of complementary and in-depth studies.

The French Centre of training and information CNDIFF has produced a diversity of innovative methods for the integration of women into economic life. The Italian Istituto di Formazione (IFOLD) in Sardinia also offers a vast palette of training for different purposes.

The Norwegians have specialised themselves in supporting women to start their own enterprises. Business advisors for women have turned out to be a great success also in Sweden.

An other type of training, which is often necessary in mainstreaming projects, is gender training. The latter may deal with the use of language, or create new ways of working, like in Denmark, and it can start at a very early age, as in the case of Luxembourg.

References:

Heidi Magnusen et al. (1997) *Fra dröm til virksomhet (From a dream to activity)*. Otta: Tano Aschehoug.

*For more information contact:*

*Business Advisors for Women. NUTEK.  
Liljeholmsv. 32.  
S-11786 Stockholm, Sweden.  
Tel. 46-8-6819100. Fax. 46-8-196826.*

## Innovative Training Methods at the CNDIFF France

Le Centre National d'Information et de Documentation des Femmes et les Familles (CNDIFF) is a kind of national resource centre for the over hundred associations around France which provide consultancy, support to women seeking employment and train trainers to assist women in both personal, family and professional problems. The purpose of CNDIFF is to coordinate a network of 128 associations, 500 subunits and 22 regional federations which comprise more than 600 professionals (lawyers, advisers, psychologists, etc.) and to inform and consult women and families as well as provide training.

Some of the most innovative tools consists of a **portfolio of competences** which is a personal toolkit with pertinent questions to be answered and then discussed both face to face with experts as well as in training groups.

**“Detach yourself in order to obtain”** (S'en détacher pour l'obtenir”) is a special method to break the isolation, monotony and anxiety created by long term unemployment. It allows a group of women to

- enter the labour market by reflecting over other possible interests besides employment,
- to participate in the development of a network of social and cultural interests which will assist in detaching oneself from an obsessional way of seeking employment,

- to exchange information and experiences with a group of people who is working towards self-autonomy,
- to benefit from the spaces, experts and logistics of CNDIFF,
- start with own projects.

The training for the skills of Detachment deals with external contacts provided by the extra-professionals of the Centre (sports, cultural events, research). The training for the skills of Obtaining comprises the application of the portfolio of competences which allows to analyse the richness of both personal and professional talents.

The set of sessions aims at producing both personal and professional projects.

*For more information contact:*

*CNDIFF, 7  
Rue de Jura  
75013 Paris, France.  
Tel. 33-1-42171234. Fax. 33-1-47077528.*

### **The Work Training Institute IFOLD Sardinia**

The Sardinian Work Training Institute for Women offers a vast palette of activities and training courses and undertakes research both on and with women. *The basic philosophy and frame of reference for training women is based on the French psychosocial method of training, called Retravailler.* The latter is a combination of psychological self-analysis and socio-pedagogical appropriation of the economic and social context (labour market). The aim of the self-analysis is to teach the trainee, how to reflect over ones motivations and aspirations. One of the most difficult problems with working with women is their envy of each other. This issue has to be dealt with collectively in order to get out the positive forces of the group.

Only after the work with oneself can the trainee continue to work with projects which then the group and the Centre gives support and assistance to.

*For more information contact:*

*IFOLD  
Via Satta, 104  
09128 Cagliari, Italy.  
Tel. 39-70-499813. Fax. 39.70-490406.*

### **Gender Training**

There are different kinds of gender training depending on the context, the purpose and the target group. All training deals with language but not all training demonstrates the power language carries along. Professor Berit Ås, a Norwegian pioneer of both feminist theory and action, asserts that male domination is expressed in words, body language and symbolic images. According to Ås there are *five master suppression techniques*, which can be observed in everyday life:

1. Making someone invisible
2. Ridicule
3. Withholding information
4. No way to win

5. Heaping blame and putting to shame.

The dominance becomes visible in concrete daily situations. By recognising the five techniques, women's self-awareness is enhanced, making them realise they are not incompetent but that someone makes them feel incompetent. A video has been produced demonstrating, how the suppression techniques work in practice.

*For more information contact:*  
 Växjö Municipal Committee for Equality.  
 Växjö kommun  
 Box 1222, 35112 Växjö, Sweden.  
 Tel. 46-47041374. Fax. 46-47041519.

**Gender training** can also deal with **reorganisation of work** and assessing its impact on women and men. Lotte Valbjörn, who runs her own business Athene in Copenhagen, has compared the current experiences of women and men in terms of innovative ways of organising work. With new methods it is possible to remove existing inequalities and prevent gendered praxes in the future.

*For more information contact:*  
 Lotte Valbjörn  
 Athene  
 Rosenborggade 2,  
 DK-1130 Copenhagen. Denmark.  
 Tel. 45-35337633. Fax. 45-35337393.

Gender is learnt through a process of socialisation and through the culture of the particular society concerned. In many cultures boys are encouraged to display male traits and girls vice versa. This takes place through the toys given to children ( guns for boys, dolls for girls), the kind of discipline meted out, the jobs or careers to which they might aspire, and the portrayal of men and women in the media. Children learn their gender from birth. They learn how they should behave in order to be perceived by others, and themselves, as either masculine or feminine. Throughout their life this is reinforced by parents, teachers, peers, their culture and society.

A Luxembourg project, called **Let's Share Equality** aims to break this pattern by working with children's parents and preschool teachers to question the messages that young children get. One of the exercises involves simple word association and then questioning why "gentleness" for example should be seen as a female trait more than a male.

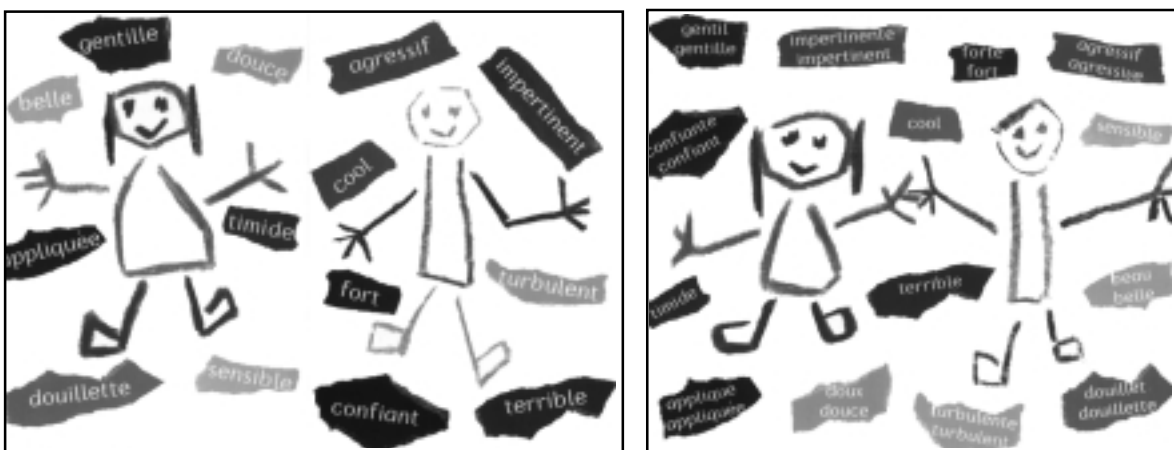


Figure 19. Let's share Equality training material.

*For more information contact:*  
 Maddy Mulhaus  
 Ministère de la Promotion Feminine.  
 33, Bd. Prince Henri. L-2921 Luxembourg.  
 Tel. +352-478-5810. Fax. +352-241886.

## **FINDING A CRITICAL FRIEND IN THE ORGANISATION**

In the EuroFEM seminar held in March 1997 in Kokkola, Finland, a number of workshops were held in which women project leaders analysed their experiences and shared perspectives on similar problems. One of the ideas that found immediate consensus was that of the “critical friend”, that is finding and nurturing a relationship with key individuals who can smooth the way for you; can help you find funding; can get you the right political ear or whatever. Sometimes finding the “critical friend” can begin to unlock many problems, like the examples from Guadeloupe and Finland demonstrate.

### **The Critical Friend in Guadeloupe: Rose-Lee Raqui**

When the EuroFEM team visited Guadeloupe in January 1998 we met many interesting women who were bursting with ideas. They could see what was wrong and had ideas about what they wanted instead. Their problem was the gap between: how to make it happen. Women complained that there were no robust networks to assist women, there were poor information flows so it was difficult to find out how to apply for money and to whom and what they would support. Problems began to unlock when women met with a key official in the Regional Council in a meeting set up for the EuroFEM team. This was the first meeting between this official and the “women of enterprise” on the island. At first there were some heated remarks from the women who had a lot of anger and frustration to express. This was healthy and needed to be worked through to get to more positive thinking. After a relatively short time it was clear that this official was committed to working with these women and she has been instrumental in helping them to apply for EU fourth action framework money. Whether this project is successful or not, the women of Guadeloupe now have a powerful friend who is well placed in the administration and who can help them judge the political climate and the opportunities for funding.

### **The Critical Friend in Action: Sirpa Pietikainen**

When Sirpa Pietikainen became Minister of the Environment it was an opportunity for her to make an impact on the improvement of women’s everyday lives - an issue which she had long been interested in. Sirpa started to create a network of Finnish women concerned with planning. There were several meetings in different regions of Finland and over two hundred women were brought into the network. Sirpa approached the issue from a number of angles: she mobilised women at the regional level, gave development money to several local projects and at the legislative level brought about amendments of the building act to include women’s ideas. Outside of her own country, Ms Pietikainen promoted Finnish women at international conferences and got agreement to her suggestion made at an OECD conference in Paris that Finland could co-ordinate EuroFEM.

As proof of her commitment to EuroFEM she gave money to the early meetings of the network. Through the commitment of Sirpa Pietikainen, EuroFEM found the political and financial support to seed and grow its own network.

## **BUILDING A SUCCESSION STRATEGY**

It may sound a little depressing but when a project is fortunate enough to win a large funding contribution, it must also start thinking about an exit strategy. The simple aim of this is to ensure that something will be left when the funding has dried up. The two examples beneath demonstrate some of the harsh decisions that need to be made. An organisation must be very clear at the outset, what its aims are and be aware that funding comes with “strings” attached that may pull it in different directions. The implications of new projects need to be carefully examined and rejected if necessary.

### **Options of a Voluntary Organisation United Kingdom**

WECW is a registered charity organisation in the North of England, established about 15 years ago to work through volunteers to offer support to older people who wanted to remain living in their own homes in spite of their physical frailty. The support has always been offered to both white people and those from the minority ethnic communities, though the take up by citizens from minority groups has always been low. An opportunity came in 1996, when the WECW captured more than £ 30 000 of National Lottery funding. The charity wanted to have money for a black worker to build up the work with minority communities. The local municipality encouraged this but wanted the charity to work with adults with learning disabilities. Finally a bid was made which included both of these elements. At a review meeting twelve months into the funding, the beginning of an exit strategy was put in place. It was agreed that:

The work with older people from the minority communities was an essential part of the WECW service and fund-raising would need to be increased to continue support to the increased number of wardens and clients. It was also agreed that funding might not be available to continue the worker but this also would be examined.

The work with adults with learning disabilities was destabilising to the organisation. There being no possibility of increasing the number of paid workers to fund someone to work with this group, it was agreed to cut away this part of the service at the end of the Lottery funding and to present a case to the municipality to increase their own financing and support to isolated adults with learning disabilities living in the city.

*For more information contact:*

*Rose Gilroy*

*Department of Town and Country Planning, University of Newcastle,  
Newcastle, NE1 7RU, UK.*

*Fax + 44 191 2228811. E mail r.c.gilroy@ncl.ac.uk*

### **Where will EuroFEM go next?**

EuroFEM itself has reached a point where we need to reflect on its future. A number of possibilities exist which need to be explored for their financial viability and their ability to develop the EuroFEM network if development is considered the best solution.

1. A bid could be made for EU money to support an organisation which would support the network.
2. Two regional councils preferably one from a northern country and one from a southern country could fund a regular transnational exchange (perhaps an annual workshop) between EuroFEM project leaders.
3. Perhaps the organisation of EuroFEM could be split with a southern European project mobilising southern NGO's while a northern project took over the same role with northern groups. This solution might lead to further participation by southern European projects though hopefully there would still be some means of ensuring dialogue between the groups.
4. Another solution might be that EuroFEM has played its part and now should dissolve allowing some other kind of organisation to move the agenda along for women in issues of local and regional development.