

# POLITICS OF THE POSSIBLE

Gender mainstreaming and organisational change:  
Experiences from the field



Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay  
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# Foreword

In 1995, Novib and a number of its partners initiated a courageous and risky journey; they undertook a collective learning and organisational change process to promote gender equality within their organisations. The programme was called the Gender Focus Programme. The Politics of the Possible is the story of the journey undertaken by seven NGO partners of Novib in South Asia and the Middle East. Today, a decade after the Beijing conference in 1995, it is hard to imagine that the process of gender mainstreaming and organisational change was uncharted territory when the GFP began. Thus the seven participating organisations, whose endeavours are the focus of this book, had to find their way using no more than an organisational development tool adapted for the programme.

In this era of gender mainstreaming check lists, tool kits and 'how to do' guides, it was not our intention to write yet another guide. Nor was the intention to simply valorise the achievements of the organisations whose work is analysed in this book. We have instead tried to write this book to capture the process, the difficult and politically sensitive process of bringing about organisational change to promote gender equality. The analysis of the process has been situated in the specific context of the organisations – their history, culture and the societies to which they belong. It is after all the context that gives meaning to the relationship between the genders and tells us how best gender equality can be promoted in diverse contexts. In so doing we have tried to explain what gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality in organisations implies in concrete situations and to real people.

A key motivation for writing this book was to bring in the experiences and voices from the field to throw light on how abstract issues such as gender equality and gender mainstreaming could be translated into practice and the many difficulties, negotiations and compromises involved in this translation. Thus this book is a representation of the work done by seven organisations and key individuals in these organisations. We sincerely hope that it has done justice to the valuable work undertaken by the partners: GRAM Abhudhyaya Mandali and Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG), India; Prodipan, Bangladesh; The Foundation for Participatory Action and Learning

Methodologies (PALM), Sri Lanka; Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC), Palestinian Territories; Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), Pakistan; and Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), Afghanistan.

During the lifetime of the GFP a collectivity was formed comprising those who were directly connected to the programme in South Asia and the Middle-East: representatives of the partners responsible for the programme in their organisations, the NOVIB officers, and, the consultants advising the organisations and NOVIB. This collectivity met at regular intervals to share experiences, to distil lessons learnt and to build their own capacity to promote gender equality in non-governmental development organisations. This group is the main driving force behind the writing of this book. Many of the individuals in this group, who were the architects of the programme, have left their organisations but the work they contributed to has lived on as we found when re-connecting with the organisations in 2005. We would like to thank Nihaya Hamoudeh and Inas Abu Asab, PARC; Kumuthinie Mahalingam, Sunil Dombepola and Mary Virginia, PALM; Salma Waqfi, CHA; Aliya Sethi, Palwasha Bangash and Dr. Ambreen, SRSP; Preety Jindal and Dr. Shiraz Wajih, GEAG; and N. Samson, GRAM. We would especially like to thank Kausar Khan who besides advising SRSP and CHA was a key resource person for this collectivity and in the GFP conferences. Ellen Sprenger who initiated the GFP in Novib and supported this group deserves a special tribute. This book and the programme on which it is based would not have been possible without the incredible activism of these individuals.

We would like also to thank the South Asia and Middle East region Bureau in Novib for making it possible for this book to see the light of day. By agreeing to fund this endeavour, not giving up on us although the book was three years in the making, and by providing us access to the archives, they have made it possible to write and publish this book. We would like to thank Sabine Bergsten, research assistant in KIT, who worked for a good six months ferreting out information from the archives so that we could substantiate what we were saying. And finally we wish to thank Franz Wong, KIT, for jumping on board and helping with the writing.

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The Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) is an independent knowledge centre for international development and intercultural cooperation. Its aim is to contribute to sustainable development, poverty alleviation and cultural preservation and exchange.

Oxfam Novib is fighting for a just world without poverty. Previously known as Novib, our organization has joined forces with Oxfam International and now goes by the name Oxfam Novib. Together, we have more influence and achieve more in our struggle for a just world without poverty.

# Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CHA	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
GAD	Gender and Development
GCG	Gender Core Group
GEAG	Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group
GFP	Gender Focus Programme
GMO	Gender Monitoring Officer
GRP	Gender Route Project
HRD	Human Resource Development
KIT	Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (Royal Tropical Institute)
MACS	Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies
OD	Organisational Development
PALM	The Foundation for Participatory Action and Learning Methodologies
PARC	Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PMES	Planning Monitoring Evaluation System
MESCA	Novib bureau for Middle East, South and Central Asia
Novib	Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand
NGDO	Non-Government Development Organisation
NWFP	North West Frontier Province, Pakistan
RGG	Regional Gender Groups
RWDS	Rural Women's Development Society
SHG	Self Help Group
SRF	Social Relations Framework
SRSC	Sarhad Rural Support Corporation
SRSP	Sarhad Rural Support Programme
UP	Uttar Pradesh, India
WCO	Women's Community Based Organisations
WID	Women in Development

# Chapter 1

## Situating the Politics of the Possible

### *Introduction*

In 1995, Novib and a number of its partners initiated a courageous and risky journey; they undertook a collective learning and organisational change process to promote gender equality within their organisations. The basic assumption was that it takes a gender sensitive organisation to promote gender equality in development programmes. The Gender Focus Programme (GFP) resulted in a six-year endeavour of organisational analysis, learning and change that included some 35 partners from seven regions around the world as well as Novib itself.

The *Politics of the Possible* is about the paths that seven such NGOs in South Asia and the Middle East undertook to promote gender equality in their organisations and activities. Why did they attempt these ambitious goals? What were they trying to achieve? What were they able to achieve and why?

This book is an exploration of these and related questions based on similar yet different experiences. What these organisations have in common is the pursuit of an almost elusive goal: challenging and changing their organisations to promote gender equality, internally and externally, by working from within their organisations. Such a journey represents a direct challenge to Audre Lourde's belief that 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house' (1984), for it was the organisations themselves, along with their gendered structures, policies, practices, ideas and beliefs, that instigated and took on the challenge to transform themselves. In the context of international development organisations, this is often referred to as 'gender mainstreaming'.

The book is entitled *Politics of the Possible* because the experiences of these organisations illustrate the art of making a principle, in this case gender equality, a practice. This endeavour is ultimately concerned with politics, and power is central to the translation of this principle. In other words, in order to make gender equality come alive in their organisations and their work, partners engaged in implicit power struggles that, during the course of the GFP, became explicit.

The *Politics of the Possible* is described and analysed in four chapters. Chapter one situates the programme within the global experience and theory of development agencies promoting gender equality in their organisations and programmes. It also includes a background to Novib, the GFP and the partners, as well as a description of the writing of this book. Chapter two describes the processes the partners undertook, with an emphasis on their organisational analysis, the setting of objectives and their different approaches to fostering changes, which we have called 'routes'. Chapter three explores how and why change occurred and analyses the different strategies partners used in their organisations and in their programmes. Chapter four provides an update on the partners since the end of the GFP in 2002 and contextualises the GFP experience within the on-going gender mainstreaming debate.

## 1.1 Situating the 'Politics of the Possible'

'Gender mainstreaming' has become part of mainstream development, but this is not indicative of a common understanding of the term itself. March et al. (1999) describe the meaning of 'mainstreaming' and its aim as 'contested' due to different interpretations. It is a term that is often associated with the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing and the Beijing Platform of Action that signalled the UN's first official use of the term. The specific call for 'gender mainstreaming' seems to have been a culmination of two inter-related changes concerning women prior to the Beijing Conference. These include the conceptual 'shifts' from Women in Development (WID) to gender and development (GAD) and from 'integrating women' to 'mainstreaming gender'<sup>1</sup>.

### 1.1.1 WID, GAD and Gender Mainstreaming

#### *WID and GAD*

The shift in thinking from WID to GAD was a response to two main criticisms of WID. First, although WID initiatives resulted in some improvements in women's material conditions, there was little improvement in women's status. Introduced in the early 1970s, WID emphasised the inclusion of women in development, but the nature of women's relational subordination was ignored (Razavi and Miller 1995a) and unequal gender power relations remained unaltered (Goetz 1997a). Second, women remained on the periphery, marginalised from 'mainstream' development, mainly due to how WID was implemented: through the establishment of women's national machineries, separate WID units, and the emphasis on stand alone 'women's projects'.

*Both WID and GAD broadly describe a number of approaches to addressing inequity between men and women (Levy 1996; Moser 1993). Both, but GAD in particular, are difficult to define. GAD is used to describe approaches that are an alternative to WID where gender and gender/social relations are a core consideration, and the goals are equal gender/social relations (CCIC et al. 1992).*

GAD offered an alternative to WID with its focus on social gender relations and a critique of dominant development paradigms. Miller and Razavi (1998) trace the conceptual roots of GAD to the work of the Subordination of Women (SOW) Collective in the UK. In a critique of WID, the Collective highlighted the inadequacy of treating women as a homogeneous category and in isolation from the social relations between men and women. GAD advocates also attempted to ‘develop a theory of gender which was integrated into and informed by gender analysis of the world economy’ (Pearson 1981:x cited by Razavi and Miller 1995a: 15). These two themes – gender social relations and a critique of ‘development’

– are also to be found in the concerns of Southern feminists who raised them consistently since the beginning of the Decade of Women (Jahan 1995: 8; Mohanty 1991; Sen and Grown 1985).

*Organisations are the ‘specific structural forms that institutions take’, which include the state, economy, community and family (Kabeer 1994). Similar to institutions, they are governed by and reproduce patriarchal and discriminatory rules that govern societies and cultures, even though they are generally perceived as ideologically neutral.*

The conceptual change from WID to GAD should not, however, be seen as complete, consistent or uniformly applicable to state bureaucracies, development agencies or academic institutions. While the introduction and popularisation of GAD signifies a conceptual change, mainly in academic circles, the degree to which GAD was adopted, in rhetoric or in practice, varies considerably. Some organisations more fully internalised the concept in theory and practice; others did so in name only, whilst others simply adopted the term ‘gender’ without changing their WID focus. As a result, the appearance of ‘gender’ and the disappearance of WID as terms are deceptive, making assessment of what actually changed difficult. As

described later, many of the GFP partners were at the juncture of shifting their thinking and practice from WID to GAD.

The work of the SOW Collective also informed the development of the Social Relations Framework (SRF), one of a number of gender analysis frameworks to have emerged since the 1990s, including the Gender Roles Framework and the University College London, Department of Planning Unit Framework<sup>2</sup>. SRF focuses on social relations and inequities in, and reproduced by, different institutions, or the broader societal ‘framework of rules’ in which

*'Institutionalisation' and 'mainstreaming' are often used interchangeably (for example, see Byrne et al. 1996; Goetz 1997; Moser 1993). 'Mainstreaming', however, seems to be a broader term that implies a process of institutionalisation or making the promotion of gender equality routine.*

differ considerably in theory and approach<sup>3</sup>. Firstly, they differ in their treatment of gender, gender relations, and in particular the degree to which the latter is considered as a power relationship. Secondly, the frameworks differ in their acceptance or rejection of dominant, namely economic market-oriented, development paradigms. Thirdly, they apply to different levels of intervention: most focus on projects and programmes while others are also applicable to sectors and institutions. The degree to which the different frameworks are being adopted by development organisations also varies and depends on a number of factors: their willingness to change their worldviews and their perspectives concerning the subordination of women, power

organisations operate in and are part of (North 1990 cited by Kabeer 1994:68).

'Institutionalisation' and 'mainstreaming' are often used interchangeably (for example, see Byrne et al. 1996; Goetz 1997; Moser 1993). 'Mainstreaming', however, seems to be a broader term that implies a process of institutionalisation or making the promotion of gender equality routine.

Although all three frameworks share common characteristics, namely gender being a core unit of analysis and being associated with GAD, they

relations between men and women, and development more generally.

*The Forward Looking Strategies – produced by the Beijing Conference - define equality as 'a goal and a means whereby individuals are accorded equal treatment under the law and equal opportunities to enjoy their rights and to develop their potential talents and skills so that they can participate in national, political, economic, social and cultural development, both as beneficiaries and as active agents'*

(UN, 1996: 310 cited by Geisler et al. 1999: 11)

### *From gender integration to mainstreaming*

The other and related conceptual change – from 'integration' to 'mainstreaming' or 'institutionalisation' – relates to the second problem associated with WID, the continued marginalisation of women and their interests. WID emphasised gaining more access for women and their inclusion or integration, but women nevertheless remained 'ghettoized'. Instead of pursuing women's concerns through separate bureaux or units, 'mainstreaming' was seen as a way of promoting gender equality in all of the 'organisation's pursuits' (Goetz 1997a: 5). It is in this context that the Gender Focus Programme was developed, with the aim of promoting gender equality in all aspects of the partner organisations.

## Gender mainstreaming and transformatory change

*Transformation' and 'change' can be confusing terms. The former seems to imply deep and significant change. This does not exclude the possibility that 'change' can be deep and significant, but it is not necessarily so, whereas it is with 'transformation'.*

If 'gender mainstreaming' finds its roots in GAD and in the attempt to address the marginalisation of women resulting from WID<sup>4</sup>, what is its aim? What does it imply? The Beijing Platform of Action views it as a means to achieving gender equality by putting women and 'gender' at the centerstage of development organisations' priorities.

Once 'center stage', what was the envisioned process that would lead to gender equality<sup>5</sup>? How is mainstreaming gender concerns different from integrating WID? For many gender mainstreaming

advocates, the notion of gender mainstreaming is related to transformation; but what is to be transformed and where such transformations are to occur are unclear. In the broadest sense, some feminists understand gender mainstreaming in terms of the transformation of dominant development paradigms that are considered inimical to women in particular. Others associate gender mainstreaming with the transformation of social gender relations. Still others relate gender mainstreaming to the transformation of 'institutional structures of government and the state' (Byrne et al. 1996: i)<sup>6</sup>.

Jahan (1995: 13) differentiates between two gender mainstreaming approaches: one that integrates gender concerns within existing development approaches (integrationist) and one that transforms 'the existing development agenda with a gender perspective' (agenda-setting). Jahan's typology is useful in revealing how organisations actually understand gender mainstreaming<sup>7</sup>, especially as most have not conceived it as a agenda-setting<sup>8</sup>. Only a handful view it as requiring a transformation of both their organisations as well as the societies in which they work<sup>9</sup>. As the Politics of the Possible describes, the GFP partners' perception of gender and organisational change moved from an integrationist to a transformatory perspective.

Understanding gender mainstreaming as both an internal and an external process represents a difference between how it was initially conceived and how it was later understood. Mainstreaming is not only about institutionalising gender concerns in policies and programmes, but also requires addressing gender issues within organisations themselves<sup>10</sup>.

There is an acknowledgement that organisations themselves are gendered, and that this is related to their outcomes, which are also gendered. For Plowman, this represents another shift within the move to GAD already

described; namely from ‘a focus on external programme policy and planning ... to getting one’s own house in order’ (2000: 190). It was this understanding – that only gender sensitive organisations can undertake gender sensitive programmes – with which the GFP was conceived.

This understanding that NGOs themselves are gendered was not intuitive; initially such organisations generally were thought to have a ‘presumed comparative advantage’ that made them immune to gender biases and discrimination (Goetz 1997a). That NGOs both reflected societal gender roles and relations and reproduced them in their projects and programmes seems to have come as a surprise<sup>11</sup>. As described later, the GFP partners are no exception. Herein lies what MacDonald et al. (1997: 27) contend is the ‘complex and internally contradictory’ nature of NGOs. Given their awareness of social inequity and missions to promote global social equality and development, they assumed their organisations would reflect such values. This proved incorrect; but their commitment to partnership, transparency and accountability is what allowed them to realise this fallacy (Macdonald et al. 1997; Pappa 1994; Porter et al. 1999). The acceptance by some NGOs to ‘fundamentally change’ approaches (Wallace et al. 1997: 55) distinguishes them from other development actors. As the experience of the GFP suggests, this misconception and the unique qualities of NGOs are not limited to northern-based organisations; Novib partners too suffered from such false impressions around which their gender routes manoeuvred.

### 1.1.2 Gender Equality and Organisational Change

Northern development NGOs, in particular, acknowledged the absolute need to address gender issues both internally in their organisations as well as externally in their programmes. This seems to have come from three inter-related forces: a recognition of feminist analysis that organisations themselves are gendered and are therefore an object for change; pressure exerted by southern partners; and internal advocacy by gender activists. This was also the case for Novib and its partners who were particularly pushed by women and feminist organisations from the South. Demanding gender aware programming whilst not addressing gender inequity within their own organisations created a certain hypocrisy among donors like Novib that did not escape southern partners.

Some NGOs, such as Novib, turned to organisation development (OD) to better understand their organisations and to affect change. This is not to

suggest that OD, albeit gender unaware, was new to NGOs. They had already been exploring OD approaches since the early 1990s with an interest in organisation and human resource management after years of a focus on training that bore meagre improvements in organisational effectiveness (Plowman 2000).

Organisation development has its roots in the private sector and earlier efforts to apply 'scientific' approaches to better understand businesses and enhance their efficiency. While its emphasis on this sector and on increased efficiency has not changed, the theory and practice has. For example, from initial approaches, which date back to the turn of the 20th century, evolved the work of Kurt Lewin and the Tavistock Institute that focused on social democracy and organisation change. Others emphasised human relations and from this came a focus on participation, the notion of learning organisations and new research approaches such as Action Learning. More recent methodologies of how organisations change have embraced more systemic notions of learning. For example, the idea of single, double and triple loop learning reflects an understanding of the wider context within which organisations exist and how they are influenced by and can have an impact beyond their immediate confines. While OD encompasses a broad range of methodologies for understanding and changing organisations, much has not only been gender unaware, but also generally silent on issues of social change. Kelleher (2002: 4) notes that organisational learning, an off-shoot of OD, 'has never claimed to be about transforming power or gender relations ... it leaves the authority structure intact'.

### *Gender aware organisational change or organisational change to promote gender equality?*

To address the historical gender unawareness of OD, a number of academics and practitioners have taken a closer look at the nature of gender and organisational change. These efforts, however, address the issue from a variety of perspectives and rationales which include differences in the aims of gender and organisational development initiatives<sup>12</sup>. Some work emphasises increased organisational efficiency and effectiveness, while other work prioritises the promotion of gender equality – although, as we will see later, these are not always distinct.

Much of the thinking on gender and organisational development to increase efficiency and effectiveness comes from the private sector. Such a 'business case' is proposed both as a way of overcoming the limits of traditional, gender

unaware OD efforts as well as a strategy to persuade decision-makers who would not be convinced by equity arguments. This rationale is premised on the argument that gender inequity works against what an organisation wants to achieve; and inequities prohibit organisations from capturing what their entire workforce, particularly women, can offer. This concerns not just getting more women into management and non-traditional positions – particularly decision-making; it also includes valuing, making room for and acknowledging different ways of organising, working and thinking that are associated with women. Inequities cause inefficiencies as time and energy are consumed by experiencing, addressing and redressing blatant forms of discrimination, such as sexual harassment, as well as by juggling roles and responsibilities at home and at work. Much of this thinking is particularly grounded in an attempt to explain failures of efforts to ‘advance women’, despite equity initiatives such as positive discrimination and family friendly work measures (e.g. flexi-time, job sharing and home offices). Overall, it is argued that by taking advantage of what women can offer, by valuing their particular strengths in all aspects of the organisation, an organisation can be that much more effective and efficient where ‘advancing gender equity objectives can often serve the organisation’s instrumental goals’ (Ely and Meyerson 2000b: 22). This argument will prove to be an important strategy for arguing the case and gaining acceptance for the GFP.

Gender equality as an organisational change aim itself also has a number of interpretations. For some, the emphasis is on gender equality in the organisation: ‘to make the workplace a fairer and more hospitable place for women’ (Ely and Meyerson 2000a: 589). Efforts with this aim have a long history in the private and public sectors where emphasis is placed on establishing more equitable workplace practices<sup>13</sup>. For Kolb et al. (1998), this ultimately requires addressing the systemic causes of gender inequity in the organisation itself. For others, the aim of organisational change is to produce gender equality outcomes. Some proponents, mainly from the development sector, are interested in how organisations can promote gender equality in their work (Macdonald et al. 1997: 8) where the explicit assumption is that organisations need to be gender aware in order to do so. This book explores this relationship in particular.

### *Gender equality and institutional transformation*

Others, however, set their sights higher. Goetz (1997: 2) notes that the aim is ‘to routinize gender equitable forms of social interaction and to challenge the legitimacy of forms of social organisation which discriminate against

women.’ Some explicitly link organisational change to organisational transformation with the wider goal of societal transformation (Rao and Friedman 2000). Incorporating such social agendas is not necessarily restricted to academics and practitioners primarily concerned with development organisations. Kolb et al. (2003) refer to the potential of private sector firms impacting on society as a whole. Itzen (1995) also envisions the potential of organisational change within the public sector to impact on society.

In the language of the Social Relations Framework, this means working at the level of institutional norms. For Rao (2002), working at this level is key. Gender mainstreaming put structures in place but ‘failed to ... advance women’s interests’ (n.r.) Organisational change efforts tended to get bogged down in initiatives that, in the end, did not impact women’s lives. Working at the level of institutions means to ‘challenge gender-biased norms and values throughout society and within organisations’ (ibid) so as to improve women’s position as well as condition.

There remain different interpretations as to whether organisational change leads to institutional change or vice versa. Rao and Friedman (2000) view organisational transformation as contributing to societal transformation. Others see changes – in the ways companies (cf. Kolb et al. 2003) and public sector organisations (cf. Itzin 1995) value men and women staff, view work and its relation to people’s lives – as having a positive impact on society as a whole. In contrast, Plowman (2000: 193) contends that starting with an analysis of the ‘broader political social, and economic spheres immediately raises consciousness about the institutionalized and structured nature of unequal gender relations’. From there, an analysis of the organisation is then understood within the rules of society that shape it. For Kelleher (1996 cited in Rao and Friedman 2000: 71), it is the societal rules and ideologies which ‘influence organisational structures, values and behaviours’ that must change in order for organisations to change.

For gender and organisational change advocates, one of the main concerns is the persistent, debilitating and inequitable dichotomy between the public/professional sphere and the private/domestic sphere, with the resulting privileging of the economic/capitalist sphere that is exclusively defined by the former (Acker 1998; Bailyn et al. 1996). As a result, organisations and their intra-relations, which reproduce this institutional bias, are ultimately viewed as being incompatible with and as undervaluing the private sphere and its ‘reproduction economy’ (Acker 1998: 199-202).

Tackling the broader institutional level is thus seen as a way of transforming the rules related to policies, practices, ideas and behaviours that determine what types of work are done by women and men and what is valued and privileged.

### *Organisational effectiveness and gender equality: a dual agenda?*

Finally, other gender and organisational change proponents view goals of organisational effectiveness and gender equality as compatible as well as possible. According to Lewis (1997), the initial rationale of family-friendly work policies was three-fold: to achieve better work-life balance, promote gender equality and further business goals. For Ely and Meyerson (2000a: 591), a 'dual agenda' is possible as 'very often the same processes that create gender inequities also undermine an organisation's instrumental objectives'. Plowman (2000) also sees a number of parallels between gender equality and organisational change, such as similar goals of organisational effectiveness, values, approaches and commitments to individual learning needs.

For others, organisational change and the promotion of gender equality are inextricably linked. As such, organisations will not achieve their fullest potential unless all forms of discrimination are eliminated. A gender approach to OD is more than a matter of equity, it is getting 'right to the heart of what is fundamentally wrong, namely that power is unequal and remains firmly in the hands of men' (Plowman 2000: 202). Abrahamsson's (2002:549) review of organisational change experiences seems to bear this out: she found that 'gender segregating and stereotypic gender-coding of workplaces and work tasks were strong restoring mechanisms and obstacles to strategic organisational changes', and concluded that unless gender power relations are addressed, real organisational change cannot be achieved.

Empirical evidence, however, does not seem to support the realisation of such 'dual' agendas: despite their apparent inter-relationship, gender equality goals must be privileged. Research by Bailyn et al. (1996) reveals that gender-related organisational changes resulted in addressing both work-family issues and furthering business goals. They also note, however, that such efforts did not address 'true gender equity' as this required changes at the family level, which was beyond the scope of the research. So while initiatives helped people 'lead more integrated lives' (Bailyn et al. 1996: 8), the wider impact on gender relations was difficult to assess. For Ely and Meyerson (2000a), the gender agenda was 'lost' in their action research project to promote gender equality and organisational change, even though it was part of the initial

organisational change strategy and seemed to resonate with company staff. Keeping it on the agenda implied continuous effort.

### *The need for gender equality to prevail*

The need to maintain a focus on the gender equality agenda also comes from the very nature of the issue being addressed through organisational change efforts. For example, 'increasing organisational effectiveness' or even profitability certainly would not be resisted by organisation leaders, decision-makers or staff, particularly when these do not require fundamental changes to organisational policies, practices, ideas or behaviours. For organisations, being more effective is almost instinctive. A 'gender equality agenda', on the other hand, is not as intuitive nor would it command the same level of broad-based support. Gender biases and inequity seem to be so ingrained and inextricably linked to deep 'structures' that they are not always obvious. So it is not surprising that company staff with whom Ely and Meyerson (2000a: 600) were working 'forgot' the gender agenda as they proceeded with their organisational change initiative, despite their initial support for the agenda. It is unlikely the agenda was internalised, particularly as many of the concepts used by Ely and Meyerson were too abstract.

Moreover, gender biases are so entrenched and pervasive that an 'organisational change' approach seems to be a contradiction. Changes at this depth, short of revolution or hostile take over, are internally driven. And no matter how much support and leadership comes from 'the top', change has its limits, particularly when it has to occur at the level where support is being derived, namely with the leaders and decision-makers themselves. This seems particularly true where gender equality is concerned with practices, ideas or behaviours that perpetuate gender inequity as they are especially resistant and resilient. Pursuing a 'dual agenda' may be strategic as the 'business case' will appeal to organisational leaders and managers, but as Maddock (1999: 1) contends, patriarchy prevails. For even when it makes good business sense to promote gender equality, such opportunities will be forgone to maintain the status quo, 'in spite of the logic of economics'.

### *Gender, organisational development and the development sector*

As previously indicated, OD is primarily a Western construct stemming from the private sector<sup>14</sup>. At its basis are assumptions about the nature of organisations, organisational culture and the purpose of organisations. Ideal organisations are seen as rational and efficient entities devoid of values and

inefficiencies. Organisational culture is to be simplified, created and shared in an attempt to create a uniform, unchanging 'organisational culture'<sup>15</sup>. The aim of organisations is simply maximising profit.

For gender equality and OD practitioners in the development sector, these historical roots of OD theory and practice pose a number of challenges. How compatible is OD with the not-for-profit sector with a social development agenda working in a multi-cultural milieu in both the North and South (Acker 1998; Plowman 2000)? This is not to say that NGOs are any less concerned with being efficient or effective nor, as indicated previously, are they immune to bias and discrimination. But what does increased effectiveness and efficiency mean for such organisations? Is it conceptually different compared to for-profit organisations? Is it measured differently? How are the values of non-profits and for-profits different? What are the implications for OD? As argued previously, it was the nature of the relationship between some northern NGOs and their southern partners that forced the former to examine gender inequality and their internal organisational issues. The commitment to transparency, accountability and partnership that this demonstrates goes beyond notions of customer service and loyalty common to for-profit organisations. Further, it is not uncommon for NGOs to have some form of a gender equality policy that, usually, states its broader vision of society in terms of relations between men and women and, often, the realisation of their human rights. Such policies will also describe the organisation's values, principles and strategies that contribute to promoting gender equality that apply internally as well as externally. While companies may have employment and pay equity policies and perhaps policies concerning sexual harassment, it is rare, except perhaps for socially responsible businesses, for them to adopt overarching gender policies such as these. It is also difficult to imagine why they would do so without the social development mandate of many development NGOs.

Development organisations pursuing a gender equality and organisational development agenda are noteworthy in at least three respects: the conceptualisation of organisational culture, diagnosis of organisations and the role of individuals.

First, gender equality OD practitioners understand organisational culture as contested terrain created and fragmented by conflict, despite the sometimes homogeneous appearance of a 'company culture'. Acknowledging the relative privileging of public and private spheres and their inter-relationships, such advocates look for ways in which societal values and beliefs are reproduced in organisations and reflected in their programmes. As opposed to harmonising

and attempting to create homogeneous culture, OD practitioners concerned with gender equality spend much more time examining organisational culture in search of a better understanding of internal gender politics and how they are played out.

Second, when analysing organisations, organisational culture is viewed as one of a number of organisational dimensions. For Rao et al. (1999: 2), these so-called 'deep structures' of organisations are a 'collection of values, history, culture and practices'. These structures are at the basis of what is considered the norm and remain unquestioned. In particular, there are four aspects to this deep structure that perpetuate gender inequality: privileging ways of working associated with men; ignoring the split between work and family; promoting exclusionary power; and discouraging diversity. Sweetman (1997: 3) considers three interdependent elements: 'the substantive (laws or organisational policies); the structural (procedures and mechanisms to enforce the substantive level); and the cultural (beliefs and attitudes held by wider society, including the women and men who work in the organisation)'. Goetz (1997), in her gendered archaeology of organisations, identifies eight elements: institutional and organisational history; gendered knowledge systems; gendered organisational culture; gendered participants; gendered space and time; the sexuality of organisations; gendered authority structures; and gendered incentive and accountability structures. The Tichy framework, from which the GFP approach was derived, adopts three perspectives – the technical, political and cultural – each of which are viewed from three additional cross-cutting organisational dimensions: its mission/mandate, structure and human resources (see "the nine-box tool" in section 1.2.2 and Annex 1 for a fuller explanation of the Tichy framework).

Third, literature on gender mainstreaming consistently highlights the role that individuals play where progress seems to be due to a few committed and particularly sensitive individuals (Goetz 1995) and personal choice (Geisler et al. 1999) as opposed to institutionalised commitment<sup>16</sup>. Different researchers have focused on individual stakeholders and their respective roles in implementing gender policies. Field workers, in particular, play an important role (Harrison 1997). Goetz (1997: 63) contends that they are 'critical in determining whether dominant relations will be sustained or challenged' and also found that the gender of the field worker was significant. While hiring female staff does not ensure automatic support for women, they seemed more likely to use personal discretion more positively than men. Certainly the experiences of the Gender Focus Programme bear out the critical role individuals can play at both head office and field office levels.

Yet despite the recognition of the contested nature of organisational culture, one dimension – or rather relationship – is lacking in the gender and OD literature. Not one organisational framework considers and examines the relationship organisations have with their programmes. This is particularly important with development organisations for they are defined by what they do and by their vision for a better world. It seems that gender equality and organisational change initiatives focus exclusively on internal issues, almost as if organisations exist in a world separate from the one in which they work. As the Politics of the Possible explores, the GFP set out to be no exception.

## Summary of key points

- Gender mainstreaming is often associated with the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing and the Beijing Platform of Action. The specific call for ‘gender mainstreaming’ seems to have been a culmination of two inter-related changes concerning women prior to the Beijing Conference. These include the ‘shift’ from Women in Development (WID) to gender and development (GAD) and from ‘integrating women’ to ‘mainstreaming gender’. Gender mainstreaming can be differentiated between two approaches, integrationist and transformatory, where the latter is interpreted as transforming organisations as well as societies.
- Northern development NGOs, in particular, acknowledged the need to address gender issues both internally in their organisations as well as externally in their programmes, which is often conceived as an organisational change process, drawing from organisation development.
- Organisation development (OD) has its roots in the private sector. While it encompasses a broad range of methodologies for understanding and changing organisations, much work has not only been gender unaware, by ignoring the gendered nature of organisations and OD itself, but also generally silent on issues of social change.
- To address the historical gender unawareness of OD, a number of academics and practitioners have taken to looking closer into the nature of gender and organisational change from different perspectives. Some are concerned about gender aware OD: whether to address the gender-unawareness of mainstream OD practice or render more effective OD practice; others are

also and primarily concerned with OD that leads to greater gender awareness and the promotion of gender equality. Still others see the aim of gender and organisational change as affecting wider society.

- While organisational ineffectiveness and gender inequity may result from similar processes, which suggests that pursuing a dual agenda of organisational effectiveness and gender equality is possible, evidence suggests the contrary. Promoting gender equality, as an aim, must be privileged because of the nature of gender inequity in organisations.
- Applying OD tools to NGOs is problematic for a number of reasons including the nature of their relationships and the principles – transparency, accountability and partnership – they value. Also, development organisations pursuing a gender equality and organisational development agenda are noteworthy in at least three respects: their conceptualisation of organisational culture; the diagnosis of organisations; and the role of individuals. Lastly, the gender and OD literature is generally silent on the relationship organisations have with their programmes. This is particularly important with development organisations for they are defined by what they do and by their vision for a better world.

## 1.2 The Gender Focus Programme

### 1.2.1 Background to the Gender Focus Programme

#### *Profile of Novib*

Novib (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand) was established in 1956, and its first activities were characterised primarily by supporting

*Today, Novib uses a rights-based approach, which deals with five interconnected basic rights:*

- *The right to resources for a sustainable livelihood;*
- *The right to basic social services;*
- *The right to life and security;*
- *The right to social and political participation*
- *The right to an identity*

projects to combat hunger. From its inception it has aimed to fight poverty through three related strategies: challenging policies that sustain poverty and exclusion; educating the Dutch public about their possible contribution to solutions; and supporting local initiatives in developing countries. The organisation has a substantial number of donors in the Netherlands and profits from sustained government support. Over the years, Novib has grown into a well-known Dutch NGDO, actively involved in supporting civil society in the South and in development campaigns. In 1994 it joined Oxfam International, an alliance of twelve independent development cooperation organisations working together on the basis of the conviction that poverty and exclusion are unjust, unnecessary and unsustainable<sup>17</sup>. In 2006, on the occasion of its 50-years Jubilee, it will alter its name to Oxfam Novib.

The basis of Novib's work is cooperation with counterparts in developing countries and their networks. In 2004, Novib transferred 118 million Euro to more than 800 counterparts globally, divided over eighteen core countries, eleven regional programmes and a global programme working with international development networks (Novib 2005).

#### *Novib and Gender and Development*

The GFP was formulated in 1995 in the context of the organisation's search for ways to strengthen its work on gender and development. Novib was reformulating its gender policy to follow a 'two-track approach'. It involved, first, support to women's movements and all-women's organisations, consuming about fifteen percent of its resources. Second, it wanted to

promote the integration of a gender perspective into the projects and organisational structure of the so-called mixed organisations supported by Novib (Novib 1995; 1997), where it invests the remaining 85 percent of its resources. The underlying rationale for this course was stated in the new gender policy 'More Power, Less Poverty':<sup>18</sup>

*By using a gender and development approach, the underlying structural causes of these unequal relations between women and men are examined constantly within society and within organisations and institutions. Organisations and institutions that do not base their work explicitly on this approach sustain the existing inequality between women and men (Novib 1997: 6).*

Despite the steps that were actively taken from the mid-1990s onwards, Novib was a latecomer to the gender and development agenda. In 1981, a group of pioneer women within Novib formed the Task Force on Women and pointed out that women's role in development was universally neglected and that Novib was no exception. However, it took almost a decade until 1991 for gender issues to be established as one of Novib's priority themes. It was only after this that staff with specific gender expertise was recruited. Since 1992, development and implementation of a gender and development policy has been included in the Novib cycle of annual plans, multi-annual plans and central monitoring (Novib 1998b).

Novib's participation in the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 intensified its dialogue with partner organisations on how to pursue the gender and development agenda and how best to mainstream gender equality. By 1996, Novib adopted gender equality criteria for approving grants to partner organisations. Organisations failing to provide sufficient evidence of progress toward good gender practice were to be phased out, and a target was set that by 2000 '50 to 70 percent of all Novib funds would increase women's control of their own development process' (Novib 1997: 6).

### *Why a Gender Focus Programme?*

How was gender equality in development to be pursued? What were the methods and tools to mainstream gender equality? These and related questions such as the role of Novib, which is primarily a funding organisation, in promoting gender equality in the work of their partners, gave rise to the need to build a body of knowledge and practice (Novib 1995; Sprenger et al. 1998; van Dueren 2001). In particular, this called for

increased learning on how to integrate a gender perspective into the work and organisational processes of 'mixed' partner organisations. 'Mixed' organisations were seen as those comprised of both women and men in staff and target group. It was clear that if these organisations were to adopt a more integral approach to gender, there would be implications for the organisation as a whole (Novib 1995).

## 1.2.2 Characteristics of the Gender Focus Programme

### *A global pilot project of linking and learning*

The GFP was introduced by Novib as a 'linking and learning' programme to integrate a gender perspective into 35 mixed organisations that were selected from 800 partners across the globe. The findings and experiences from this pilot group, each member of which was to implement a similar package during the same period, would generate strategies, instruments and good practices that would be relevant to the rest of Novib's partners (Novib 1995; Sprenger et al. 1998; Brouwers and Meertens 2001) and would influence Novib's own policy and practice as a donor organisation.

### *Objectives*

While an overall long-term objective was formulated for the entire programme<sup>19</sup>, the short-term objectives addressed three different levels of actors: Novib, partner organisations, and consultants (See Figure 1.1). During the course of the GFP, specific objectives concerning the latter faded away (Brouwers and Meertens 2001).

## FIGURE 1.1 – OBJECTIVES OF THE GFP

### Long-term objective:

- Empowerment of resource- poor and marginalised women in terms of organisation building, access and control over economic and ecological resources, basic social services, (political) decision-making processes, control over their own bodies and elimination of stereotypes. The ultimate goal is equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

### Five-year objectives:

#### *Partner organisation:*

- Undertaking of activities with the target group, which have led to or are expected to lead to attaining the long-term objective.
- Achievement of concrete results by counterparts in their internal organisation during the term of the Gender Focus Programme.
- Improved skills and know-how in the field of gender and organisational development.

#### *Novib:*

- Improved understanding of how Novib, in its role as a donor, can best support and promote gender learning and good gender practices among counterpart organisations, including an understanding of strategies and instruments that are most suitable under specific conditions.
- Improved knowledge and skills in the field of gender and organisational development.
- Improved understanding of how counterpart organisations assess Novib's gender practices.

#### *Consultant:*

- Improved skills and know-how in the field of gender and organisational development, on the part of the consultants involved in the GFP.

(Sprengrer et al 1998)

As can be seen from the above, the GFP objectives were based on a dual agenda: an agenda for equal rights and opportunities for women and men at the target group level in the long-term, and an agenda for improved organisational performance on gender equality of the partner organisations in the short-term. This difference of emphasis between the long-term and short-term objectives reflects an on-going debate about the actual focus of the programme (Brouwers and Meertens 2001). Was the point of departure of the GFP the organisation or the target group? Novib's major assumption appears to have been that these two objectives were closely linked. Gender fair organisational practice would lead to gender aware development programmes (Steehouwer 2002c).

### *Participants and selection criteria*

Novib invited partners to join the Gender Focus Programme based on three criteria: the partner should have a long-term relationship with Novib; should have taken some earlier initiatives in the field of gender equality; and should be interested in taking gender issues forward. In the case of the South Asia and Middle East GFP, an additional criteria was added: that participants should be medium-sized intermediary NGOs working with integrated rural development programmes in at least 100-150 villages.

### *Timeline*

The GFP in South Asia and the Middle East was implemented over four phases initially over what was supposed to be a three-year period, 1996 to 1999 (See Figure 1.2). The end date was later changed to 2000 and, for some late starters, to 2001.

At the end of the global programme in 2001, 25 partner organisations out of an initial 35 had completed their programme routes. A few never got started due to communication and logistical problems while others dropped out because they were not sufficiently motivated to continue or because they had ceased being Novib partners (Brouwers and Meertens 2001).

**FIGURE 1.2 – PHASES AND TIMELINE: THE GENDER FOCUS PROGRAMME IN SOUTH ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST 1995-2002**

<i>When</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Focus</i>
<b>PHASE 1</b> <i>Introduction and start of GFP</i>	<i>Desk Study by Novib to assess the status of partners in relation to gender and development activities and establish baseline (shared with participating organisations)</i> <i>Regional conference to launch GFP and explain the use of the diagnostic tool</i>	
August 1995	Start of GFP in Novib	Formal approval and budget
November 1995	Invitation to partners in South Asia and Middle East to participate in the GFP	Creating commitment and cooperation agreement with selected partners
First quarter 1996	File reviews in Novib	Review of information available in Novib
August 26-30, 1996 (Kathmandu)	Launching of GFP during the first Conference	Training in the use of the nine-box tool and gender concepts
<b>PHASE 2</b> <i>Organisational diagnosis and development of change strategy</i>	<i>Organisational self-diagnosis (using the nine-box tool)</i> <i>Formulation of action plans</i>	
September 1, 1996 – June 30, 1997	Preparing the action plans	Self-diagnosis by partners, development of action proposals
<b>PHASE 3</b> <i>Implementation of tailor-made action plans</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Implementation</i></li> <li>○ <i>Review conferences – review, share experience and gender training</i></li> <li>○ <i>Monitoring</i></li> </ul>	
July 1, 1997 – June 30, 2000	Project period GFP	A three years action plan for capacity building on gender and organisational development
March 9-13, 1998 (Kathmandu)	Second Conference, exchange of self-diagnosis and project plans	Analysis of self-diagnosis reports, final project plans, training on monitoring indicators
March 27-April 1, 2000 (Dhaka)	Third Conference, Mid Term review	Analysis of first achievements and bottlenecks, training on change agent strategies
<b>PHASE 4</b> <i>Evaluation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>External evaluation for one-third of the organisations</i></li> <li>○ <i>Self-evaluation for others</i></li> <li>○ <i>Regional conference to discuss evaluation results and sustainability of GFP</i></li> </ul>	
January 2001 (Bangkok)	Workshop on the GFP-evaluation	Developing a ToR for self-evaluation and external evaluation
2001	GFP evaluations	Evaluation of the overall GFP and internal and external evaluations of project partners in South Asia and the Middle East
March 4-8, 2002 (Yogyakarta)	Fourth Conference All Asia level, End of Term review	Analysis of final results, discussions on sustainability

### *The nine-box tool*

Both Novib and its partners needed a framework to begin the process of diagnosing how gender equality was or was not being addressed in the organisations. This diagnosis was seen as a first step towards building a programme of action. Since a key objective of the programme was to bring about the organisational change necessary to promote gender equality, the framework that was used was an organisational diagnostic tool derived from management and organisational development methodologies. The Tichy organisational development tool (Tichy 1983), commonly referred to as the nine-box tool, was not originally designed to capture gender issues within organisations but was adapted to include questions that were designed specifically to address gender dimensions.

The nine-box tool pinpoints three elements of an organisation – mission/mandate, organisational structure and human resources – and it makes a distinction between three subsystems of an organisation: the technical, political and cultural subsystems (See Figure 1.3). Altogether these different aspects and layers of an organisation form nine boxes, which help to distinguish which areas of an organisation (represented by the boxes) need to be dealt with in a process of change. With this framework, the organisations were expected to identify and analyse their organisational strengths and weaknesses in terms of gender sensitivity. They were then expected to plan a route through the boxes; a strategy that plotted the steps to be taken to improve or change the situation. Organisations could start their route from a box that they saw as strong and use these strengths to proceed towards improving those areas that were weak. Alternatively they could start from their weak areas and proceed towards the stronger elements. The route therefore signified what the organisations would do. Based on this analysis and the identified route each organisation formulated, action plans were to be developed that addressed the question of how they were going to bring about the necessary changes (See Annex 1 for Novib's presentation of the nine-box tool).

In the South Asia and Middle East GFP process, which is the focus of this book, the nine-box tool was used in several ways and at different moments in the programme. It was used for self-diagnosis by individual organisations, to analyse the commonalities in diagnosis and the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed routes, to monitor changes and evaluate outcomes, and finally to recommend future areas of attention to sustain the process.

**FIGURE 1.3 – THE GENDER SELF-DIAGNOSTIC TOOL:  
NINE-BOX TOOL**

	Mission/Mandate	Organisational Structure	Human Resources
<i>Technical Point of View</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 1</b> <i>Policies and Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ analysis</li> <li>○ policy</li> <li>○ activity plan</li> <li>○ budget</li> <li>○ monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>○ impact</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 4</b> <i>Tasks and Responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ tasks and responsibilities</li> <li>○ coordination/ consultation</li> <li>○ information system</li> <li>○ gender infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 7</b> <i>Expertise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ quantity</li> <li>○ quality/recruitment</li> <li>○ wages</li> <li>○ job description</li> <li>○ appraisal</li> <li>○ training</li> </ul>
<i>Political Point of View</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 2</b> <i>Policy Influence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ role of management</li> <li>○ people influencing the organisation from within</li> <li>○ people influencing the organisation from the outside</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 5</b> <i>Decision-making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ adequate information</li> <li>○ participation in discussion and decision-making</li> <li>○ conflict management</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 8</b> <i>Room for Manoeuvre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ space for organising</li> <li>○ physical infrastructure</li> <li>○ reward/incentive systems</li> <li>○ diversity of styles</li> <li>○ career opportunities</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Point of View</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 3</b> <i>Organisational Culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ image</li> <li>○ ownership</li> <li>○ woman friendliness</li> <li>○ reputation</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 6</b> <i>Cooperation and Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ teamwork</li> <li>○ support</li> <li>○ networking outside of organisation</li> <li>○ reflection/innovation</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 9</b> <i>Attitude</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ enthusiasm</li> <li>○ commitment</li> <li>○ willingness to change</li> <li>○ stereotyping</li> </ul>

(Novib 1996a)

### 1.2.3 The focus of the book: GFP in South Asia and the Middle East<sup>20</sup>

#### *The seven organisations from South Asia and the Middle East*

During the GFP, the seven participating organisations from South Asia and the Middle East showed a high level of commitment to the programme. Novib's gender focal point for the Middle East and South Asia regional bureau also devoted much time and effort to analysing the organisations' plans, progress reports and findings with the partners. Novib also made a case of itself, walking a route for itself and sharing lessons learned during its own GFP. This high level of engagement and transparency among the

organisations and Novib staff considerably facilitated the process of the programme and was unique for the programme globally. Furthermore, it was partners in India who had first suggested to Novib in 1991 that they should make gender equality objectives part of the policy document on Asia, and the idea of having gender focal points arose in this context. The result of this commitment was a systematic and open approach to the entire regional GFP (Brouwers and Meertens 2001).

### *Partner Profiles*

**Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA)** was formed in 1987 with the aim of providing emergency relief for war victims; assisting with the rehabilitation of rural and urban life; and working with communities for sustainable development in **Afghanistan**. CHA set up its main office in Peshawar, in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan and ran its programmes from there. The unstable and changing political developments in Afghanistan throughout the 1990s forced CHA to alter its programmes and activities. With the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001, CHA moved its head office to Kabul and intensified its work in Afghanistan. At present, CHA core activities include health, agriculture, education and infrastructure rehabilitation. It reaches a population of almost three million people in nine provinces of Afghanistan. The main target groups are poor people living in rural and urban communities, especially women, children and disabled people.

Historically, Afghan society has had a very strong gender division. This, together with the unfavourable political circumstances and the anti-women policies of the Taliban era, posed major constraints to CHA's work with poor women. Despite these difficulties, CHA continued specific programmes for women in education, health and skills training. While CHA had recognised the importance of working for women's inclusion and towards the elimination of discrimination based on gender and other differences, it had not integrated gender concerns into the organisation in a systematic and strategic way, which is why they saw the GFP as an opportunity (CHA 1999 b); CHA 2005 b); Waqfi 2005-06-21).

**Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG)** was established by a group of volunteers in 1975 in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh in **India** to raise awareness about the environment and sustainable development. Today, GEAG's activities include research, training, advocacy, networking, publication and documentation, and implementation of projects and programmes on a range of environmental and livelihood issues. A core theme is sustainable agriculture,

and the target group is primarily small and marginal farmers. Since the mid 1990s, GEAG has been working to promote participatory technology development for ecological agriculture as well as facilitate links between farmers, government organisations and research centres. GEAG has also been mobilising self-help groups, mainly among women farmers. At present, GEAG's interventions directly reach more than 40 villages and indirectly, through their networks and activities, 200 villages.

Since its inception GEAG has addressed women's concerns in environment and natural resource management. By recognising women as major actors in environment, agriculture and natural resource management, GEAG has promoted access for women to technology for sustainable agriculture, to credit (through self-help groups) and to training and capacity building. The Gender Focus Programme came at a critical moment when GEAG was considering how to move from addressing women's practical needs to more strategic gender interests (GEAG 2001; GEAG n.d.; Brouwers and Meertens 2001; Wajih 2005-12-06).

GRAM Abhudhyaya Mandali has been working in northern Andhra Pradesh, India, since 1980 on a wide range of development issues and primarily with *dalit*<sup>21</sup> groups. It started out working in urban areas organising rickshaw pullers and gradually expanded its activities to rural areas addressing poverty and social justice issues. GRAM's focus is on building the capacity of self-help groups of people facing multiple discrimination due to poverty, caste and gender. The majority of the target group is comprised of *dalits*, especially *dalit* women, who face the triple discrimination of being poor, casteless and female. GRAM's objective is to strengthen the visibility of these people and their access to resources provided by the state, and to support them in becoming economically viable. Micro-credit is an important component of GRAM's programme. Initially, separate self-help groups – *Sanghas* – for men and women were formed, but men's groups did not thrive as women's groups did, and their membership declined. Hence GRAM has become de facto an organisation working with a largely female target group. Today there are totally some 3,100 women self-help groups with a membership of 40,000 spread over 500 villages.

GRAM's motivation for participating in the Gender Focus Programme was that all activities of the organisation focussed on empowering poor *dalit* women, supporting their struggle for dignity and self-respect and developing their leadership skills (Brouwers and Meertens 2001; Subrahmanian 2001; GRAM 2000; Samson 2005).

**The Foundation for Participatory Action and Learning Methodologies (PALM) in Sri Lanka** came into being in 1985 when a group of Dutch citizens started to support the small scale projects of a Dutch volunteer working in the Nuwara Eliya district in the central highlands of Sri Lanka. The organisation aims to build up self-supporting community organisations in the tea plantations and the surrounding villages. The Tamil population in the plantations differs in language, socio-economic situation and cultural characteristics from the surrounding villages. However, PALM supports Sinhala and Tamil populations with the intention of improving the living conditions for the underprivileged and poor in the area. PALM works today with a total of 25,000 families in six districts; Nuwara Eliya, Kandy, Matale, Badulla, Ampara and Batticaloa. Its programmes include social mobilisation and training, infrastructure development, education, health, gender, pre-school development, organic agriculture and natural resource management.

In the early 1990s, PALM started to make conscious efforts to support women in the plantations and in the surrounding villages. Women in both communities suffer from gender inequality, but the isolation and extreme deprivation and discrimination of women in the plantations makes their lives even more problematic. These efforts to respond to women's needs became part of the reason for joining the Gender Focus Programme (Brouwers and Meertens 2001; PALM 2002; Wijebandara 2005-12-01).

**Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC)** was founded in 1983 by a group of Palestinian agronomists. By offering expert advice to marginalised, poor farmers they were responding to the deterioration in agricultural extension programmes in the West Bank as a result of the Israeli occupation. PARC has since expanded to serve some 60,000 beneficiaries in its efforts to promote sustainable development in the rural areas in Palestine. PARC's main areas of work are agricultural extension, land development, irrigation and environment, institutional development and capacity building, and programmes to empower rural women.

PARC initially provided extension services to men only, but after conducting research they realised that 60 percent of agricultural work was being done by women. The extension service was then extended to women farmers with the help of female agronomists. At the time when PARC signed up to the Gender Focus Programme, they had been facilitating the development of agricultural skills of rural women and improving their productive capacity and economic situation, but without clear strategies or policies (PARC 2001; PARC n.d.a.; Novib 1996h).

**Prodipan**, which means enlightenment, has been operating in southwestern Bangladesh since 1983. The field programmes cover ten districts including the coastal areas near the Sunderban mangroves and the urban slums of Dhaka. Prodipan's mission is to organise the poor and support their efforts towards human and economic empowerment with special emphasis on gender and environmental needs. Group formation and collective action are major strategies and include training and awareness-raising. Prodipan has programmes on savings and credit, solid-waste management, water and sanitation in the urban slums, child workers in hazardous industries and environmental regeneration in the fragile ecological region of the Sunderbans.

Prior to the Gender Focus Programme, poor women's needs were primarily addressed through micro-credit programmes. Prodipan also provided women with legal support for family and land disputes. In 1992, the organisation started discussing how to incorporate women into development planning on equal terms with men. Training for staff on gender and development took place, and gender-sensitised work plans were formulated. A gender diagnosis was done shortly before Prodipan joined the Novib's Gender Focus Programme (Brouwers and Meertens 2001; Prodipan 1997; Prodipan 1998; Rowshan 1998; Rahman et al. 2001).

**Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP)**<sup>22</sup> was set up in 1989 as an integrated rural development programme with a long-term objective of poverty alleviation. The programme is operational in twelve districts of North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. SRSP's main strategy is social mobilisation: developing partnerships with the rural poor and building upon their potential to undertake development activities on their own. SRSP's major programme components include micro-finance and promotion of small enterprise, capacity building and skills development, particularly in the field of natural resource management, and human resources and physical infrastructure development. In addition, SRSP's social sector programmes include education, health and gender equality.

SRSP's social mobilisation involves both men and women. It works today with over 6,000 community organisations, of which one third are women's organisations. Credit and enterprise development, agriculture programmes, and social sector development have been carried out with both women and men. SRSP has encouraged women to form women's organisations at the village level in order to be able to play a role in the planning and implementation of development projects. The aim of the former WID section

in SRSP was to address rural women's needs and increase their economic empowerment. As a parallel structure, though, it became isolated from the rest of the organisation and its operations. In 1996, the decision was taken to move towards a more integrated approach. The Gender Focus Programme was thus very timely for SRSP as they moved towards a gender mainstreaming approach (Brouwers and Meertens 2001; Sidiqui 2001; SRSP n.d.; ul-Mulk 2005-12-05).

### 1.3 Writing of this book

This book is written four years after the Gender Focus Programme officially ended. There are both advantages and disadvantages to writing about a process after a period of time has elapsed. An advantage is that one acquires a certain distance from the on-going process and consequently is better able to analyse and interpret the many struggles and strategies that went into the making of the programme. It is possible with distance to examine the politics of the possible rather than simply valorise the efforts and achievements. However, the distance in time is also a disadvantage because many details tend to get lost and often cannot be recovered from the records. The quantity and quality of information that was available for each organisation is uneven, hence some partners are featured more than others. There is another serious disadvantage. The intention was to write this book from the perspective of those participating in the programme, and especially the key agents like the gender coordinators. The distance to the actual happenings has meant that we can no longer interrogate the process in the thick of engagement by the actors and therefore from the point of view of agents.

The idea of writing a book about the experiences of the participating organisations (including Novib) was first suggested at the final conference of the GFP in 2002. The final evaluations were over, the reports were available, and the overall evaluation report of the entire GFP programme was shared at this conference. But we still felt that these reports, valuable as they were, had not captured in its entirety the specific experience of this group of partners in South Asia and the Middle East, the Novib officers directly involved, and the consultants who had accompanied the process. There was still a story to be told from the perspective of this collectivity since it had met, shared and learned together during the programme period. Thus while the politics of the possible was played out in the organisations themselves, this collectivity that was formed around the programme played a role in interpreting and giving meaning to what was going on in the individual organisations. Participants at

the final conference of the GFP in 2002, the directors and gender coordinators were asked to contribute their organisation's version of what should go into this book, including the achievements but also the real and persistent difficulties. Although an outline of the book was discussed and agreed, only two partner organisations and Novib contributed in writing in 2002.

The writing of the book was resumed in 2005. Time and resource constraints did not allow for a new field investigation and data collection. In any case, the process we wanted to record and analyse was already in the past. The authors, therefore, relied on the archives and, since two of them had been involved in the process, on their notes and insider information including Novib's note on the 'Politics of the Possible' (Steehouwer 2002 c). The secondary data generated during the programme became the key source of information. This included reports by the organisations, policy guidelines, resource materials, Novib reports and correspondence with partners, conference and workshop reports and final evaluation reports (for a complete list see Original Sources in the Bibliography). In July 2005, once the archival material was compiled, all participating organisations were contacted by electronic mail and requested for additional information on the GFP process itself and on where the gender mainstreaming process was at since the official closure of the GFP. A questionnaire was designed for the purpose and all the organisations responded. It was also possible to interview in person the heads of two of the participating organisations.

This book is not a research study, and therefore a detailed discussion of the methodology is not called for. However, there are methodological problems that need discussion. The intention was to write about the *process*, the difficult and politically sensitive process of bringing about organisational change to promote gender equality. To do this, one needs access to critical information that lends itself to analysis of gender power relations and the politics of decision-making in organisations. This, in turn, requires that data generated using an anthropological approach, together with a close observation of the process, are available. Unfortunately this was not possible for this book, being based on records and reports and on the minutes of the GFP conferences where sensitive issues were discussed. The reporting and documentation were primarily structured to report on progress of the project but not the ethnographic details of the process. Also, the discussions of what was going on in terms of power struggles and decision-making in the organisations were held in out-of-session encounters at these periodic conferences. Steehouwer's regular reporting at these conferences of his analysis (using the nine-box tool) of the partners' organisational diagnosis

and strategies provided a basis for discussions about organisational culture, resistance to gender equality and strategies to overcome resistance. Despite this, however, there was insufficient evidence to track changes in attitudes, behaviour and ways of thinking about gender relations and how it affected everyday practice.

Accessing critical information that lends itself to analysis of gender power relations and the politics of decision-making in organisations is difficult in any case. One reason for this, as Goetz (2001) suggests, is that questions about gender relations often cannot be asked because they are about habits or ways of thinking that are virtually pre-discursive since they are deeply internalised. Another difficulty is that when people working in development organisations are asked about their personal opinion on gender issues, they tend to repeat organisational policy or reproduce the 'politically correct' version rather than what they believe. They are not being untruthful; they respond in this manner because, in most cases, people have not reflected directly or challenged their misconceptions and assumptions about gender equality.

Given the constraints of the available materials, the writers had to devise analytical tools that could be used to interrogate the process. One way to circumvent the problem was to start by analysing the reported actions and to look for clues in the reports (self-reporting, evaluation reports and insider information provided by the writers) as to why these actions were undertaken. In this way, we hoped to arrive at patterns of decision-making and changes in perspectives that reveal the *processes* of bringing about organisational change to promote gender equality. For example, in Chapter 2 the organisational diagnosis undertaken by the organisations using the nine-box tool is analysed. The focus in this analysis is not whether they used the nine-box tool correctly, but rather how they used the tool, what they did and what this says about this difficult and politically sensitive process. This analytical device is used throughout, and, as a result, there is considerable detailed discussion of what the organisations and key individuals in these organisations did. However, the detailed discussions of actions are not ends in themselves but are undertaken to reveal the process of change. Thus this book is neither a linear tale of achievements nor is it a 'how to do' guide. Rather it is about the everyday politics of promoting gender equality in the policies, practices and cultures of non-governmental development organisations.

- <sup>1</sup> For links between these two, see Geisler et al. (1999) and Razavi and Miller (1995a).
- <sup>2</sup> These are sometimes respectively referred to as the Harvard and Moser Frameworks respectively (e.g. March et al. 1999).
- <sup>3</sup> See for example Kabeer (1994); March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay (1999); and Miller and Razavi (1998).
- <sup>4</sup> Woodford-Berger (2004: 65) comments that the initial appeal of GAD was it being 'founded on, and to a significant extent, grounded in feminist theoretical frameworks'. Similarly, Standing (2004: 82) considers gender mainstreaming to have 'a direct lineage in feminist inspired gender and development'.
- <sup>5</sup> Certainly gender equality is uniformly stated as the goal of gender mainstreaming, although the term itself is not commonly defined. For exceptions, see Oxfam (n.d.) and CIDA (1999).
- <sup>6</sup> These interpretations are described in broad terms for illustrative purposes; they should not be seen as mutually exclusive but rather as, sometimes, inter-related.
- <sup>7</sup> At the same time, it is confusing in its use of language (particularly 'integrationist' in reference to 'mainstreaming' which was suppose to address the limited integrationist nature of WID). Moreover, an integrationist mainstreaming approach seems contradictory: given its historical roots, there is only one type of gender mainstreaming, which is agenda-setting (Geisler et al. 1999). Also problematic is the suggestion that integrationist and agenda-setting approaches are mutually exclusive. Mukhopadhyay (2004: 96) suggests that they are not and, in fact 'integration depends for its success on transformation'. She does use a somewhat different definition of integrationist, which, however, is not incompatible with Jahan's.
- <sup>8</sup> For example, see Derbyshire (2002) or Development Assistance Committee OECD (1998).
- <sup>9</sup> For example, see Gender and Development Programme (GIDP/UNDP) (2000) and Oxfam GB (n.d.).
- <sup>10</sup> See Macdonald, Sprenger, and Dubel (1997); Porter, Smyth, and Sweetman (1999); Rao and Kelleher (1997); Wallace, Crowther, and Shepherd (1997).
- <sup>11</sup> What was unique was not the realisation but the breadth and depth of this realisation; for female NGO staff, whether in the North or South, were certainly not immune to gender discrimination in their workplace. For example, see Goetz (2001).

- <sup>12</sup> Another difference, which we are unable to explore in this introduction, is the disparate ways these approaches have evolved, almost independently of each other.
- <sup>13</sup> Generally while such efforts have addressed some workplace gender issues, they have overall disappointed proponents, mainly for failing to address systemic causes of gender inequity. For an exploration of their failure, see Hurst and Usher (1994).
- <sup>14</sup> OD has not been limited, however, to the private sector. It has been widely used in the public sector although in recent years, its application in this context has assumed more and more values associated with the private sector. Acker (2000) writes of the public sector's increased interest in OD as it becomes more influenced by market-oriented forces and trends such as needing to be more competitive and customer and service oriented.
- <sup>15</sup> For example, see Bate (1997), Hirsch and Gellner (2001) and Wright (1994).
- <sup>16</sup> For example, see Goetz (1995) Kardam (1991) and Geisler et al. (1999).
- <sup>17</sup> By the end of 2004 the Oxfam group was made up of Oxfam Australia, Oxfam Solidarité (Belgium), Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Québec, Oxfam Deutschland (Germany), Oxfam GB (Great Britain), Oxfam Hong Kong, Oxfam Ireland, Novib-Oxfam Netherlands, Oxfam New Zealand, Intermón Oxfam (Spain) and Oxfam America (United States) (Novib 2004).
- <sup>18</sup> This policy document (1997) is still the main document related to 'gender and development' in Novib.
- <sup>19</sup> During the GFP process, various versions - though along essentially the same lines - were presented by Novib.
- <sup>20</sup> While the GFP included Novib's own organisational change process, this book exclusively focuses on its partners in South Asia and the Middle East.
- <sup>21</sup> This refers to 'untouchables', the lowest caste in India.
- <sup>22</sup> During the GFP, Sarhad Rural Support Corporation (SRSC) changed its name to Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP)

# Chapter 2

## The Agenda for Change

### *Introduction*

The objective of the Gender Focus Programme was to promote gender equality through organisational change in non-governmental development organisations. Women's right to equality is accepted and even promoted by international development organisations, national governments and especially by those non-governmental organisations whose mission and mandate is to promote social justice and equality. And yet actually achieving equal rights through development has been difficult. The project of gender equality has faced enormous social resistance because, as Goetz (2001) explains, notions of gender equality are profoundly counter-cultural in many societies, North and South. Development workers, even if they happen to belong to non-governmental organisations that are wedded to values of equality, share this resistance. How, then, do development organisations and those working in them change their perceptions about women's entitlements and capabilities and begin to champion women's right to equality?

The GFP was set up specifically to address these challenges. It proposed that OD tools (albeit adapted to the circumstances of non-profit development organisations) and an organisational development approach could be used to promote gender equality. The GFP thus took on the additional challenge of marrying what in Chapter 1 has been alluded to as seemingly incompatible approaches – mainstream OD developed for the profit sector and the non-profit development sector. This incompatibility becomes more acute when viewed from the perspective of gender equality advocates. For gender advocates the objective of organisational change is to achieve equality, whereas in mainstream OD equality and equity are instrumental to achieving organisational effectiveness. Thus OD tools may not necessarily be compatible to the task of promoting equality. This chapter analyses the experiences of the seven GFP partners in South Asia and the Middle East in using what were in essence OD tools to set an agenda to promote gender equality through organisational change.

All participating organisations went through the common steps set out in the planning stage. This involved making a gender self-diagnosis of the structure, culture and relationships of the organisation using the nine-box tool, and designing an action plan addressing the specific needs of the organisation concerned. There was considerable diversity in the way the tool was used, the process of planning followed and the reasons given for a particular course of action. Despite the diversity in the use of the tool and in the contexts of the seven organisations, the self-diagnosis exercise yielded common patterns in what the organisations saw as being their strengths and weaknesses and what they wanted to do to change the situation. This chapter seeks to capture and understand the significance of these common patterns and the insights that this might provide on how the contradiction between gender equality and organisational development can be managed in NGOs.

This chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part examines how participating organisations treated gender equality prior to their participation in the GFP, so as to establish a baseline against which to assess the change agenda and the actual changes. It also looks at how the self-diagnosis tool – the nine-box tool – was introduced to the participating organisations and the initial reactions that this provoked. These initial reactions informed the subsequent process of the GFP both at the individual organisation level and at the GFP conferences that brought participants together at regular intervals. The second part analyses the experience of the participating organisations in using the nine-box tool. It shows the process followed by the participating organisations in using the tool and the organisational diagnosis arrived at. It pinpoints the common patterns that emerge from the process and the diagnosis. The analysis tries to interpret what underlies these common patterns and concludes that this provides the key to understanding the politics of the possible. The final part of this chapter critically examines the proposed action plans that the organisations devised based on their analysis of their weaknesses and strengths. In this section too, the focus is on establishing the common patterns and what this said about the change model being proposed.

## 2.1 Participating Organisations and Gender Equality: Where they Started

Participation in the GFP was not the partner organisations' first experience of addressing gender issues. On the contrary, Novib selected these organisations from their partner pool because of their stated commitment to gender equality and because these organisations had special programmes to promote women's development and empowerment. Before the GFP was launched, Novib undertook file reviews of each organisation to establish the baseline for the programme, which were then shared with the participating organisations. The reviews showed that whereas there was commitment to gender equality and actual efforts to promote women's development and empowerment there was a lack of clarity about what was meant by gender equality, how it was to be achieved and measured. This lack of clarity was not limited to the participating organisations but also characterised the work of Novib staff as evident from their intermittent and unfocused reporting on gender issues in the files. Thus both for Novib and for the partner organisations, the GFP provided the opportunity to take a systematic look at how to incorporate gender equality concerns in the organisation and in their programmes.

At the start of the programme, the participating organisations shared common characteristics in their treatment of gender issues. Gender issues were exclusively addressed in the field programmes. Whereas at the programme level many of the participants or beneficiaries of the organisations seemed to be women, the programme approach did not take into consideration gender differentiated needs and interests nor did they treat women as autonomous agents in themselves. A related characteristic was that the main development programme, especially if it was focused on livelihood or economic development, (such as agriculture), addressed men, and women beneficiaries were either included in the welfare and social sector programmes or in special programmes that fitted their role in the traditional division of labour. Thus for example, PARC whose main objective is agricultural development addressed its core programmes, which included extension support, crop production, and animal husbandry, to men while food processing and household economy programmes targeted women. PALM works in the rural communities and tea plantations in Nuwara Eliya in Sri Lanka to empower groups living in poverty. Whereas both in the plantations and in the rural communities the majority of beneficiaries and participants are women, the organisation mission did not reflect conscious concerns about gender equality at the organisation and programme level. Economic programmes addressed men and women were targeted in the welfare programmes.

### ***Women's development infrastructure***

*The Women's unit in PARC combined agricultural extension with social issues making for a parallel and different programme approach to the rest, which lacked the support of technical sections. GRAM formed a women's staff forum prior to GFP and had also undertaken gender sensitisation training. SRSP had a WID programme that included organisation building, income generation, credit and workload reduction through the introduction of appropriate technologies. The WID programme had its own staff that operated in parallel to the core programmes of SRSP. The organisation was in the process of change from a WID approach to a GAD approach at the initiation of the GFP process.*

Most organisations did have a women's unit or similar infrastructure devoted to women's concerns but these operated separately from the rest of the organisations' other activities, with separate programmes and staff, and had little influence on the main programmes, which had most of the staff and resources.

Some of the organisations had trained their staff in gender awareness although none had tried to link awareness of gender issues to what staff members actually did in the field, nor to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes.

There was very little information about gender issues in the organisations themselves. For example, there was little information about staff composition. How many women and men were there in these organisations and how were they placed in terms of status and decision-making power?

What were the issues in hiring and retaining women staff in the cultural context of South Asia and the Middle East? Given the fact that the target groups of a number of these organisations, namely GRAM, PALM

and GEAG, were overwhelmingly female, what efforts had been put in to including women in the workforce? Did the organisations see this as a need?

It is against this background that the GFP was launched as a linking and learning partnership and as a project of organisational change to promote gender equality.

#### **2.1.1 Introducing the nine-box tool**

Both Novib and its partners needed a framework to begin the process of diagnosing how gender issues were being addressed in the organisations as a first step towards building a programme of action. As has been discussed in Chapter 1, the framework used was an organisational diagnostic tool derived from management and organisational development methodologies and adapted to the circumstances of non-profit, development organisations. It was referred to as the nine-box tool for the duration of the project. Although

the adapted version of the tool included questions that were designed specifically to address gender dimensions, it pre-supposed some knowledge of gender issues. The questions were meant to guide discussion and were not a substitute for undertaking a gender analysis. In order to undertake a gender

***Gender awareness or organisational development?***

*In undertaking a programme of organisational change to promote gender equality, should the first step be to build gender awareness and knowledge among participants or should it be to introduce a tool for organisational development (OD) that most people find practical and can easily follow? The need was for both. In order to support partners in using OD tools and gender analysis as well, a series of workshops were organised during the life of the project where Novib and partners shared experiences and learned about gender analysis and programming tools.*

analysis of their organisation, participants needed to learn about gender concepts and tools. When the GFP was launched, however, this was not foreseen. The realisation that all parties – participating organisations, Novib and their consultants – needed to reach a common understanding about gender concepts and learn to use gender analysis tools grew as the GFP progressed.

The first conference in 1996 brought together all participants, partners and Novib to launch the GFP officially. Both the leadership of the organisations (generally the director or key decision-maker) and persons responsible for gender/women's development were invited to attend to ensure adequate support for the programme. The main agenda of the conference was to train participants in the use of the tool. By the second day, however, it became apparent that participants were using this tool mechanically because they did not know what a gender issue was or how it affected their organisations. Also, suggestions by the facilitators regarding gender equality deficits that needed to be remedied, provoked resistance. For example, the suggestion that recruitment rules should be reviewed so that women have an

equal chance as men to be hired, thereby ensuring a gender balance in the workforce, provoked considerable resistance. Some men felt that the introduction of provisions to hire more women would mean a threat to their and other men's jobs since their organisations did not have limitless possibilities of recruiting staff. Others took this particular suggestion as a criticism of their integrity and commitment to social equality. As organisations devoted to social justice, they seemed to imply, it went without saying that they were committed to gender equality.

Considerable time in the first conference, therefore, was devoted to discussing what gender is and how gender differences and inequality manifest themselves in the working of organisations and thereby find

expression in their policies, structures and programmes. Learning about and understanding gender concepts and analytical and planning tools became an important feature of all subsequent GFP conferences.

After the first conference, participants had to introduce the GFP and the organisational diagnostic tool in their organisations. In the following sections the process of introducing the GFP and undertaking the self-diagnosis is analysed. What did the organisations do to build understanding and ownership for the GFP and how did they do this? What can be learned from studying the process about the difficult and politically sensitive project of bringing about organisational change to promote gender equality?

## 2.2 Using the Nine-box Tool: the Process

*'We understand the environment we are working in. The staff members have the ownership of this plan. We fear that an outsider consultant could have spent time and effort to devise a 'perfect' plan that would have been less appropriate to our needs'*

(PARC 1997b: 5).

Most participating organisations took about nine months to complete the analysis and planning phase. This included the organisational self-diagnosis using the nine-box tool, setting up objectives and finalising work plans. Although the long gestation period was partly due to exchanges between the partner and Novib regarding each step, it was also due to the care and time that most partners devoted to introducing and gaining acceptance for the Gender Focus Programme in their organisations.

Most participating organisations used a consultant to help them with the process of organisational self-diagnosis. Besides the fact that this was very much part of Novib's guidelines, consultants were used because they were from outside the organisation and therefore more 'neutral'; they were in a position to raise difficult issues; and because they brought in gender expertise. However, not all participating organisations used an external consultant to assist in the self-diagnosis or in devising the work plan. PARC for example used what they termed as their own internal experts on the grounds that this built ownership of the process.

Almost all participating organisations did their organisational self-diagnosis more than once. PARC held two workshops with staff. The first was a combination of sessions to orient participants to gender concepts and then to introduce and use the nine-box tool. The second undertook problem analysis and development of objectives. The plan of action was prepared at this second

workshop. After the 1996 launch of the programme, GRAM did its own GFP workshop and prepared a three-year proposal for implementation of GFP.

***Using the nine-box tool:  
the process***

- *Most organisations used a gender consultant to facilitate the process because they were neutral and had expertise.*
- *But most organisations tried to make the process as inclusive as possible by holding workshops with different levels of staff (e.g. GEAG, PALM, GRAM, PARC, CHA).*
- *In most cases the diagnosis was done more than once (e.g. GRAM, SRSC, CHA).*
- *Some organisations also involved target communities (e.g. GEAG and PALM).*
- *Almost all the organisations had an introductory training on gender concepts as a prelude to undertaking the diagnosis.*

Based on suggestions and certain conditions set by Novib, they revised the plan. Prior to this revision, GRAM organised another workshop with staff, guided by an external consultant, which included an orientation on OD as a prelude to undertaking a gender diagnosis and needs assessment. Staff did the gender diagnosis again as they felt that they were now clearer as to how this should be done having attended the OD workshop. PALM organised a series of workshops over the year following the inception of the GFP and SRSP used the self-diagnosis tool both as a diagnostic and as an assessment tool, and used it several times.

All the participating organisations tried to make the process as inclusive as possible by holding workshops with different levels of staff. In the first workshop organised by PARC, held in late 1996, participants representing different levels of the organisation attended. The GEAG gender diagnosis exercise was carried out with the help of a consultant and included both meetings and consultations with all levels of staff. Before embarking on a self-diagnosis using the nine-box tool, PALM organised a series of strategic planning workshops (ten in total) in early 1997 and then the self-diagnosis involving senior and junior field staff. Twenty participants including ten from different work areas in Afghanistan and ten from the Peshawar office (including the senior management) participated in the CHA self-diagnosis workshop.

Some organisations also involved their target communities in the self-diagnosis process. GEAG, for example, held workshops at field level as part of their self-diagnosis exercise. PALM involved selected community members in strategic planning and in assessing the prevailing gender situation at the programme level.

Almost all the organisations had an introductory training on gender concepts as a prelude to undertaking the gender diagnosis. In PARC, the first workshop was a combination of sessions to first of all orient

participants to gender concepts and then to introduce and use the nine-box tool. PALM organised gender orientation sessions before conducting the self-diagnosis. Similarly, gender training workshops were organised in SRSP before undertaking the self-diagnosis exercise and both GEAG and CHA used their workshop to orient staff to gender concepts.

### 2.2.1 Key lessons

- *All organisations tried to make the planning exercise a participatory and inclusive one to create ownership of the process and accountability.*
- *Building ownership for the difficult and politically sensitive project of bringing about organisational change to promote gender equality was a central objective of the planning stage.*
- *This was extremely important in order to minimise real resistance and tension. This tension and resistance was manifested in several ways ranging from outright questioning of the need for such an exercise, to labelling gender concepts as 'western' and therefore not applicable, to the fear that feminism was being introduced through the back door.*
- *The involvement of all levels of staff in the self-diagnosis and planning exercise helped to build the capacity to undertake an analysis throughout the organisation.*
- *Some organisations involved target communities because they were part and parcel of the identity and purpose of the organisations.*

### 2.2.2 Using the nine-box tool: The diagnosis

This section analyses the diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses arrived at by the participating organisations. The nine-box tool itself was used very differently by the different organisations – both in terms of what each box represented and how it was scored. Despite the different ways of going about doing the diagnosis, common patterns emerged in what the organisations enumerated as their strengths and weaknesses. The focus is therefore on these common patterns.

The self-diagnosis involved two steps. The first step was to go through every box in the nine-box tool and use the guide questions to enumerate whether the box represented a strength or a weakness of the organisation. The second step was to decide on a route for the change process, to decide on which boxes would be addressed and how this would be sequenced.

### *Identifying strengths and weaknesses: common patterns*

PARC, GEAG and GRAM identified the **political and cultural layers** of their organisations as being their strong point. Why did they make this diagnosis? PARC, for example, scored the *policy influence* box (in the political layer) highly because the management was supportive of gender equality. The *room for manoeuvre* box (political layer) was rated equally strong because there was space for the women's unit to organise and for diversity as represented by the needs and interests of women finding a place in PARC.

GEAG identified the *policy influence* box (political layer) as being strong because the management was non-interfering and open; *decision-making* was democratic and non-hierarchical; and women had room for manoeuvre to organise, decide tasks and working hours. The *organisational culture* was diagnosed as a strong point of the organisation because it was women-friendly with a positive image among beneficiaries and other women's organisations; there was teamwork, collective learning and sharing; and core-team members shared a positive attitude to gender training and policy.

GRAM identified the political layer as being strong because the management was supportive of gender equality initiatives. Affirmative action measures to support women in the organisation had been introduced prior to the GFP and there was a functioning women's forum that articulated women workers' needs and priorities. The cultural layer was seen to be strong because there was teamwork and collective problem solving. The enthusiasm of staff members, their openness to new ideas and willingness to adapt to new practices were the cultural strengths of the organisation. Gender issues were taken seriously and openly discussed and any instance of stereotyping was countered.

The reasons given by all three organisations for considering the political layer as being strong revolve around two issues. The first is the role of a supportive management in pushing a gender equality agenda. The second is the space given to women to organise within the organisation. The reasons for identifying the cultural layer as being strong are very similar in the case

of GRAM and GEAG. Both organisations see the people in the organisation and the cooperative and collective spirit that binds them as emblematic of their culture. PALM also diagnosed their main strength as being the *organisational culture* because of their woman-friendly image and conducive work environment. But unlike GEAG and GRAM, PALM found that they had much work to do to improve cooperation and learning among staff. Without exception, the **technical layer** of the organisation was diagnosed by all participating organisations as their weakness. What were the reasons given for diagnosing this layer as the weakest part of the organisation? In the nine-box tool, the technical layer comprises three boxes: *policies and action, tasks and responsibilities* and *expertise*. PARC diagnosed the *tasks and responsibilities* box as the weakest because coordination between departments on gender issues was poor; the management information system did not capture progress or lack thereof on gender issues; tasks and responsibilities were not defined and staff were not made accountable for gender performance. GEAG too attributed the weakness in the technical layer to poorly defined *tasks and responsibilities* and to a genuine lack of *expertise* on gender. Similarly GRAM perceived the technical layer to be weak because *tasks and responsibilities* were not clearly defined, the information system was poor and the expertise base was weak. The technical layer was further diagnosed as being weak because, although policies were in place, the lack of an action plan with clearly defined responsibilities made the equity policies ineffective. The lack of clear activity plans also meant that mechanisms to monitor and evaluate performance and programmes from a gender perspective were lacking, as was a plan to involve gender specialists in decision-making. PALM lacked a clear gender policy, the organisational structure was inadequate to promoting gender-fair development and there was a lack of *expertise* to undertake gender-focused work.

The strengths and weaknesses as diagnosed by four of the seven organisations, namely, PARC, GEAG, GRAM and PALM is summarised below using the nine-box tool.

**FIGURE 2.1 – THE DIAGNOSIS:  
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

	Mission/Mandate	Organisational Structure	Human Resources
<i>Technical Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 1</b> <i>Policies and Action</i></p> <p>GRAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ lack of an action plan to implement policy analysis</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 4</b> <i>Tasks and Responsibilities</i></p> <p>PARC, GEAG, GRAM and PALM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ tasks and responsibilities not clearly defined</li> <li>○ poor coordination</li> <li>○ ineffective information system</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 7</b> <i>Expertise</i></p> <p>PARC, GEAG, GRAM and PALM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ lack of in-house gender expertise</li> <li>○ gender training inadequate</li> <li>○ fewer women than men in the organisation (GRAM)</li> </ul>
<i>Political Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 2</b> <i>Policy Influence</i></p> <p><u>Strength</u> PARC, GEAG, GRAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Role of a supportive management in pushing a gender equality agenda.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 5</b> <i>Decision-making</i></p>	<p><b>Box 8</b> <i>Room for Manoeuvre</i></p> <p><u>Strength</u> PARC, GEAG, GRAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Space given to women workers to organise themselves</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 3</b> <i>Organisational Culture</i></p> <p>PALM, GEAG, GRAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Women-friendly with a positive image among beneficiaries and other women's organisations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 6</b> <i>Cooperation and Learning</i></p> <p>GEAG, GRAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ emphasison teamwork</li> <li>○ culture of collective learning and sharing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 9</b> <i>Attitude</i></p> <p>GEAG, GRAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ enthusiasm of staff members</li> <li>○ openness to new ideas and willingness to adapt to new practices</li> <li>○ gender stereotyping firmly dealt with</li> </ul>

### 2.2.3 A different diagnosis: the case of CHA

CHA is an Afghan organisation that was operating in exile out of Peshawar in Pakistan when the GFP commenced. CHA programmes were run both in Afghanistan and in Peshawar amongst Afghan refugees. The Afghan operations were severely restricted in scope and outreach because of the Taliban regime. One of the major restrictions was on the employment of women staff in the Afghanistan-based programme and, as a result, contact with women in the community was difficult. Male workers could not approach women and women workers feared for their lives. It was under these circumstances that CHA decided to join the GFP.

CHA enlisted their strengths partly in the technical and political layer, and mostly in the cultural layer of the organisation (See Figure 2.2 below for a summary of strengths and weaknesses using the nine-box tool). The *policies and action* box was seen to be strong because the overall CHA mission and policy were conducive to an approach that valued women and men. CHA had a committed management and Board willing to support a gender aware programme. The strengths in the cultural layer were identified in the field of *cooperation and learning* (Box 6) because women's participation was promoted by CHA policy. Box 8 or *room for manoeuvre* was also seen to be strong as the organisation had provisions to promote women's employment opportunities.

The weaknesses identified were numerous and covered each of the nine boxes and therefore were to be found in all three layers of the organisation. At the technical layer that looks at the mission / mandate of the organisation, the organisational structure and human resources, it was found that there was no plan of action or budget allocation to support a gender policy; the gender coordinator position was there in name but had not been adequately institutionalised; there was a lack of gender expertise and recruitment was not gender sensitive. The analysis of the political layer of the organisation – *policy influence* mechanisms, *decision-making* structures and the *room for manoeuvre* – showed that the information system was ineffective in giving information about gender issues on which to base decisions, and the gender coordinator and committee were not represented in decision-making forums. Furthermore, the situation in Afghanistan and the uncertain work environment for women posed specific challenges for women to continue in and work effectively for the organisation. While many of the strengths of the organisation were identified as being in the cultural layer, numerous cultural weaknesses were pinpointed that were threats to bringing about gender aware change. Externally or internally, gender was not related to organisational image or

competence. CHA was not perceived as a women-friendly organisation. There was no sense of ownership of the gender policy among staff. CHA did not collaborate with other organisations/professionals on gender issues. Constant organisational changes had resulted in staff becoming averse to change processes. A gender equality perspective was new in Afghan organisations in general as well as in the attitudes of staff in the organisation; the prevailing traditions saw women as subordinate to men. The CHA organisational diagnosis highlighted how necessary a process of organisational change that would promote gender equality was for the organisation. It also showed how competent and committed they had to become to be able to work and live up to the humanitarian mission of the organisation in the extreme situation that Afghanistan represented in the 1990s. The self-diagnosis of weaknesses is summarised in Figure 2.2 using the nine-box tool.

Figure 2.2 also indicates the route chosen by CHA. Given the weaknesses that were enumerated in the diagnosis, it is not surprising that the route traversed each of the nine boxes. The route starts from the technical layer, the *policies and action* box which was seen as a strength of the organisation because the overall CHA mission and policy were conducive to an approach that valued women and men equally. The need was to build sufficient gender expertise to operationalise the potential of the high-minded mandate and policies. So the next step in the route targeted *expertise*. Following this was to ensure that *tasks and responsibilities* to undertake gender aware work were clearly defined and the gender coordinator and her team had acknowledged and legitimate roles in the organisation. In order to be able to exercise this role, *decision-making* in the organisation needed to be improved and made more inclusive. This then is the fourth step in the route. CHA was one of the few organisations that addressed the decision-making box in the nine-box tool. Participation in decision-making and better information regarding the gender deficits in the organisation and programme would have to impact on the role of management in steering gender aware change. Therefore the route enters the *policy influence* box. Teamwork and support would need to be built in the organisation and relations with other organisations working on gender issues were imperative to drive the change in CHA. The next step of the route was the *cooperation and learning* box and here the route enters the cultural layer of the organisation. The route then enters the *attitude* box in the cultural layer to target staff and then on to the political layer to improve women's position within the organisation and open up spaces for them to organise and express themselves. The route exits at the cultural layer where the aim is to improve the image of CHA as an organisation that is committed to gender equality and as a woman-friendly organisation to work in.

**FIGURE 2.2 – CHA SELF-DIAGNOSIS OF WEAKNESSES AND PROPOSED GENDER ROUTE**

	Mission/Mandate	Organisational Structure	Human Resources
<i>Technical Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 1</b> <b>entry point for route</b> <i>Policies and Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gender policy with no plan of action and budget</li> <li>○ PMES – no gender disaggregated data</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 4</b> <i>Tasks and Responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gender coordinator does not have access to formal or active mechanisms to support her work</li> <li>○ Lack of gender expertise</li> <li>○ Turnover of female staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 7</b> <i>Expertise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recruitment not gender sensitive</li> </ul>
<i>Political Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 2</b> <i>Policy Influence</i></p>	<p><b>Box 5</b> <i>Decision-making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ineffective information system</li> <li>○ Gender coordinator and committee members not represented in decision-making</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 8</b> <i>Room for Manoeuvre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Uncertain work environment</li> <li>○ Women limited by Afghanistan's political situation</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 3</b> <i>Organisational Culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Externally or internally, gender is not related to organisational image or competence</li> <li>○ Not perceived as a women-friendly organisation</li> <li>○ No sense of ownership of the gender policy among staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Exit point for route</b></p>	<p><b>Box 6</b> <i>Cooperation and Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No collaboration with other organisations/ professionals on gender issues</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 9</b> <i>Attitude</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Constant organisational changes result in resistance towards a new change</li> <li>○ Gender new in Afghanistan</li> <li>○ Traditional values strong</li> </ul>

POLITICS OF THE POSSIBLE: GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE – EXPERIENCES FROM THE FIELD

## 2.2.4 Interpreting the self-diagnosis

The diagnosis of weaknesses and strengths revealed a pattern common to most organisations. What did this signify beyond the fact that this was so? In undertaking a self-diagnosis involving different levels of staff and in some instances members of target communities, the organisations were opening up their internal life to scrutiny. When this kind of scrutiny is brought to bear on issues of efficiency where prevailing power structures are not threatened it is not resisted by organisation leaders, decision-makers or staff. For organisations, being more effective is almost instinctive. In this case, however, the scrutiny was focused on gender issues. As discussed in Chapter 1, a 'gender equality agenda' is not as intuitive nor does it command the same level of broad-based support as other organisation change agendas. This is because gender biases and inequity seem to be so entrenched and linked to deep 'structures' that they are not always obvious. Moreover, such practices, ideas and beliefs are so ingrained and pervasive that an 'organisational change' approach seems to be a contradiction. Because organisational development approaches are internally driven, change that calls for a fundamental reworking of organisational policies, practices, ideas or behaviours, has its limits even if the leadership supports it and it comes from the top. Organisational change to promote gender equality demands precisely this kind of fundamental reworking of practices, ideas or behaviours that perpetuate gender inequity. In interpreting the organisational diagnosis undertaken by the participating organisations we ask the question that, given this contradiction between promoting gender equality and organisational development, how was the change agenda that these organisations had signed up for to be managed? Do the common patterns evident in the enumeration of strengths and weaknesses provide the key to understanding the politics of the possible?

### *Self-diagnosis = Self-image*

A self-diagnosis is about self-image. As non-governmental organisations engaged in development work the participating organisations all shared common values of social justice and equality that defined who they were. These organisations were formed to redress wrongs in society and to champion the cause of the poor and the marginalised. Their mission and mandate reflect these aspirations. Thus for these organisations to acknowledge that in their everyday practice they have not paid equal attention to women and men or that they have treated women unfairly and discriminated against them is tantamount to fracturing the self-

image and thus the integrity of the organisation. And yet a process of organisational change that promotes gender equality opens up precisely those areas of inequality to scrutiny that are taken for granted in everyday life. How was this process, which could potentially threaten the integrity of the organisation and challenge its self-image, to be managed without de-motivating people and creating insurmountable resistance?

The nine-box tool provided an instrument to open up this discussion in a non-threatening way. By systematically going through each box and answering the questions organisations were able to avoid acrimonious debates and blame giving and taking. However, it should not be imagined that just the existence and introduction of a tool could have achieved a discussion. The process had to be managed, and ownership and acceptance built – a process that was discussed in the earlier section.

The self-diagnosis exercise was about acknowledging that despite the good work and progressive image of the organisation, gender inequality existed and was taken for granted. The question was how to ‘name’ gender inequality for what it is and be able to do something about it without destroying the self-image of the organisation? The answers lie in the way the organisations framed their strengths and weaknesses.

*Strength = political and cultural, weakness = technical*

As evident from the self-diagnosis exercise, the strengths identified by the organisations are invariably in the political and cultural layer of the organisation.

When organisations say that the political layer is strong, they generally mean that the management is open to change and committed to gender equality and social justice issues. This explanation is common to GRAM, GEAG, PARC and CHA. They also mean that the mission and mandate of the organisation is supportive of equality issues and thus provides the legitimacy for promoting gender equality. When they refer to the cultural layer as being the strong point, they refer to the people working in the organisation as open-minded and dedicated, willing to share and learn. In fact all the organisations refer to the strengths in the cultural layer in this way. In the political layer, the decision-making box comes back both as a weakness and strength. When it is mentioned as a strength it refers to the participatory, democratic patterns of decision-making within the organisation. When it is mentioned as a weakness, it refers to the lack of an adequate information system on which to base decisions as is the case for PARC, Prodipon, CHA and GRAM.

### *The Politics of the Possible*

- *The strengths identified by the organisations are invariably in **the political and cultural layer** of the organisation.*
- *The weaknesses identified are without exception in **the technical layer***
- *The process of rendering strengths as the political and cultural layer and weaknesses as the technical layer made it possible to 'name' gender inequality without blaming the people, the management and the value base of the organisation*
- *It also helped to 'locate' gender inequality in that part of the organisation about which something tangible could be done.*
- *The political and cultural=strength and technical= weakness signifies what was politically possible to do given the sensitivity of the exercise.*
- *The self-diagnosis process as being politically possible does not mean that it was merely politically expedient*
- *It means that the self-diagnosis had to be managed in a way that made sense to and was owned by staff members from different levels of the organisation because it was they who would have to do something about it.*
- *It also meant that the change process initiated by the GFP had to rely on a supportive management and on the people working in the organisation who for the most part were open-minded and dedicated, willing to share and learn.*

In other words, when it is mentioned as a weakness decision-making is treated as a technical flaw (rather than a political issue signifying power imbalances) which can be corrected by putting in better systems.

The weakest area identified is without exception **the technical layer** – lack of a gender policy, lack of adequate planning, monitoring and evaluation system, poorly distributed tasks and responsibilities and lack of expertise in-house to undertake gender and development work.

The process of rendering strengths as the political and cultural layer and weaknesses as the technical layer made it possible to 'name' gender inequality without blaming the people, the management and the value base of the organisation. It also helped to 'locate' gender inequality in that part of the organisation about which something tangible could be done.

The self-diagnosis exercise, more than any other activity of the GFP, was an autonomous exercise conducted by the organisations themselves. Yet there are commonalities in the approach and outcomes of the exercise. What accounts for this? Novib did not mediate the process or outcomes. As such the project framework did not impose the commonalities of approach. The answer lies elsewhere. The answer seems to lie in what was *politically possible to do* given the sensitivity of the exercise and the possibility that it might fracture the self-image of the organisation, jeopardise the work and position of gender advocates in the organisation and create insurmountable resistance to change.

When we refer to the self-diagnosis process as being politically possible, it is not the intention to suggest that these were merely politically expedient strategies or that some manager had a master plan and directed / manipulated the process. What is meant is that the self-diagnosis had to be managed in a way that made sense to and was owned by staff members from different levels of the organisation because it was they who would have to do something about it. For example, although participating organisations had to work so hard to change attitudes, due to the resistant culture, they also had to look for and acknowledge positive aspects of their organisational culture in order to continue the process of change. If this is kept in mind, it becomes possible to understand why for example the cultural layer, particularly the attitude box, comes back both as a strength and as a weakness, as is the case in the CHA self-diagnosis. In this particular case the strengths in the cultural layer were identified in the cooperation and learning culture (Box 6) of the organisation because women's participation was promoted by CHA policy. On the other hand, the cultural weakness lay in the fact that the organisation was not perceived as women-friendly, did not have links with other organisations working on gender issues and there was little ownership of a gender fair policy among staff. Similarly the political and cultural layers were diagnosed as being the strong points of most of the organisations because the change process initiated by the GFP had to rely on a supportive management and on the people working in the organisation who for the most part were open-minded and dedicated and willing to share and learn.

## 2.3 The Gender and Organisational Change Route

Given the above identification of strengths (in the political and cultural layer) and weaknesses (mainly in the technical layer), it was not surprising that the route for organisational change suggested by the organisations had many similarities.

- *Start with the technical.* All organisations except PALM started plotting their route from the technical layer beginning either from the policies and action box or the expertise box.
- *Secure the technical layer.* The first three stages of the route for four of the seven organisations were aimed at improving the whole technical layer which is the policies and actions, tasks and responsibilities and expertise.
- *Address the cultural layer if possible.* GRAM and PARC focussed primarily on the technical and to some extent on the political

layer but their route did not traverse the cultural layer. GEAG and Prodipon on the whole remained in the technical and political layer of the organisation and only traversed the cultural layer once to improve cooperation and learning. The SRSP and CHA route visited the cultural layer once the technical and political layers had been dealt with. It was only PALM who started from the cultural layer because they identified this as their strength.

For the partners, promoting gender equality through organisational change meant, at this stage, that the organisations had to get their systems right. This implied that they had to have better policies and these policies should be backed by concrete action plans. There should be an evaluation and monitoring system that was capable of gauging progress on gender equality. Tasks and responsibilities had to be better distributed; there was need for improving coordination on gender issues between departments and across the organisation. Finally, the organisation needed appropriate expertise, which is why recruitment should reflect the new direction. Recruitment rules, job descriptions, training and appraisal needed review to bring these into line with the new emphasis on incorporating a gender perspective in the life and work of the organisation. How did the organisations plan to bring this about? In what follows we scrutinise the objectives that were set up and the work plans developed.

### 2.3.1 What did they want to achieve: Setting the objectives and outcomes <sup>23</sup>

*GFP means changes both in the organisation and in the field*

The self-diagnosis exercise was based on a tool that analysed the internal functioning of the organisation. However, the mission and mandate of the participating organisations orient them towards a larger goal of bringing about societal change. Because these organisations interpreted the meaning of their existence as lying in the work that they do, we have seen that some organisations included community groups with whom they work in their self-diagnosis exercise. In setting the objectives and outcomes of the GFP, we find that these aim to achieve changes in gender relations in the field of operations as well as bringing about changes internally. What organisations seem to be saying is that it is necessary but not sufficient to get internal systems right: the struggle for gender equality has to be waged equally in the field. This is different from saying that once the organisation has sorted itself out

by having a clear gender equality mandate; by improving its organisational structure to reflect this goal; and by building capabilities of those working in the organisation, the orientation of the programmes will begin to change and more women will be included in their own right in these programmes.

Thus we see that in all cases except CHA, the objectives address what they want to get done at the organisational level and at the programme / community / target group level. GRAM, for example, set four of their seven objectives at this level. Thus besides raising awareness among staff about gender equality, equipping them with the relevant skills, modifying the organisational structure and decision-making bodies appropriately, they planned to achieve gender awareness in the target communities that they work in, empower dalit women who are their main constituency, promote networking among men and women's self-help associations and undertake a study that gave better insights into the situation and position of dalit women. (See Annex 3 for summary of the objectives and outcomes for each organisation).

*GFP means mainstreaming gender and focussing on women and equity.*

A second important feature is that the objectives focus on both mainstreaming gender and on women-specific activities. For example, GEAG objectives set up specific programmes for advancing women in the organisation and in the field programme, besides aiming to mainstream gender issues in all policies and programmes. Similarly, the PARC objectives make specific mention of recognition for women's work in the organisation, and provision of equal opportunities for women for training in management and administrative skills. They also encompass engendering the planning and monitoring systems and training all staff to mainstream gender in their work. At the field level, the women-specific objectives include increasing their access to resources and enhancing their presence in decision-making bodies through initiatives that focus only on women.

*GFP means women's empowerment.*

A third and related feature is that both in the objectives and outcomes for the internal processes of change as well as at the community/ target group/ programme level a number of organisations specifically mention women's empowerment. Empowering women in the organisation meant equal opportunity for women and men in training and promotions,

equal pay for equal work, including women in decision-making and working towards a more gender balanced staff composition (in what was primarily a male work force especially at senior levels). CHA specifically mentions, 'nullified harassment of women, and recognised procedure to deal with any claims' as an indicator for achievement of objectives. Empowering women in the community meant enhancing their access to and control over resources, building substantive participation in decision-making and strengthening women's community based organisations.

The GFP objectives and outcomes for SRSP provide a good example of these key characteristics (See Figure 2.3).

**FIGURE 2.3 – EXPECTED OUTCOMES: SRSP**

Organisation	Community	External
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build in-house expertise; put into place gender sensitive mechanisms and create a more gender sensitive environment.</li> <li>2. Build ownership of SRSP's gender strategy by the staff.</li> <li>3. Establish an effective gender group.</li> <li>4. Develop a gender friendly/sensitised organisational image.</li> <li>5. Create a pool of internal gender resource persons</li> <li>6. Improve coordination between male and female staff.</li> <li>7. Develop a gender sensitive PMES.</li> <li>8. Make job descriptions for all staff gender sensitive.</li> <li>9. Raise women's representation from two to three on the Board of Directors.</li> <li>10. Establish women staff in key positions.</li> <li>11. Raise women staff employment to 28 - 30 percent.</li> <li>12. Make service rules more gender sensitive.</li> <li>13. Design gender training module.</li> <li>14. Incorporate a gender perspective in staff training programme.</li> </ol>	<p>Address both practical and strategic needs, especially of rural women through gender sensitive programme packages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase gender sensitive and women-specific packages.</li> <li>2. Make equal numbers of inputs into C/WOs (plan and budget).</li> <li>3. Enhance WO planning, management and leadership skills through increased number of activists and leadership training.</li> <li>4. Develop regional gender specific strategies after gender assessment study.</li> <li>5. Conduct gender impact studies in each region by external consultants.</li> <li>6. Conduct gender specific studies by the staff themselves.</li> </ol>	<p>Network with other organisations to promote institutional learning and GAD training to others in NWFPP (SRSC 1998b)</p>

The plan highlights the need to work at three levels with different although related objectives: at the organisation level, to create gender awareness among staff; at the community level, to integrate gender in programme components/field levels/client/ beneficiary level; and at an external level, through networking to promote learning and cooperation. The overall objectives were to create gender awareness; and to create gender balance in allocation of resources, access and control, and in decision-making.

### 2.3.2 How did they want to achieve it? Understanding the work plans

The activity plans were discussed several times between the organisations and Novib, and, as a result, the approval process was a much more mediated process than the organisational self-diagnosis. However, the end product, which was the finished plan, while developed through dialogue and in the framework of conditions set by Novib represented what the organisations believed that they could do.

For the most part activities could be clustered as follows: (1) training and capacity building; (2) policy development (gender policy, recruitment and training policy etc.); (3) programme development (planning, monitoring and evaluation); (4) research (studies and baseline); (5) organising / strengthening women's community based organisations; (6) internal advocacy and external networking on gender. (See Figure 2.4 for summary of all planned GFP activities.)

## FIGURE 2.4 - THE PROPOSED ACTIVITIES IN THE GFP-ACTION PLANS:

### 1. *At the grassroots level*

- Involve village organisations in self-diagnosis and programme review;
- organise rural women's rallies to make their strengths and ambitions visual;
- organise an assessment of the role of women in mixed village organisations and the strengths of separate women's organisations at grassroots level;
- organise leadership development training for grassroots women's organisations.

### 2. *At the organisational level*

- Arrange a scheme of temporary job swaps for male and female staff, also across units;
- set-up day care arrangements to enable female staff to visit the field and attend training;
- develop special gender training for male staff and develop an internal team of male gender-trainers;
- review all service rules and develop procedures to handle sexual harassment cases;
- introduce a methodology for gender budgeting specifying budget allocations per gender in the entire core programme (including staff, training and project activities in all sectors);
- invest in special skill training for the gender-unit staff: especially confidence building, negotiation and leadership techniques;
- develop affirmative action plans to promote better opportunities for female staff.

### 3. *At the institutional level*

- Produce a gender bulletin for grassroots women and leaders of various NGOs;
- cooperate with gender training centres;
- install a gender advisory committee, next to the existing NGO-Board.

(Steehouwer 2002c)

A common activity was training. Training was seen as a way not only to raise awareness but also to build up skills in gender analysis, programme planning and implementation. Training was also seen as a means to build in-house expertise on gender, identified by most organisations as their weakness.

Another important activity for most partners was generating gender disaggregated baseline studies, which were seen as crucial for building a gender-aware information system. These studies also allowed partners

to see their field work from a different perspective that a gender analysis provided. Moreover, the intention was to foster internal reflections regarding the relevance of the existing project activities and to demonstrate the need to develop new activities. Doubts regarding the relevance of a gender aware approach in diverse, generally conservative cultural contexts were sought to be dispelled by gathering 'neutral' information and hard data. At this stage towards the beginning of the project, not a single organisation felt that it would be appropriate to do a gender audit or review of their existing project activity portfolio. To question the relevance of existing project activities from the outset was clearly too sensitive.

### 2.3.4 The Bermuda Triangle: the change model proposed in the work plans

An analysis of the action plans using the nine-box tool shows that most change activities were concentrated in the technical layer. This was not surprising given that this layer was identified as the weakest layer by most organisations. But this was not the only reason why they concentrated their efforts in this layer. As the analysis of the self-diagnosis process has shown, the politics of the possible lay in being able to locate the weaknesses in that part of the organisation about which something concrete could be done without provoking too much resistance and jeopardising the project from the start.

In his analysis of the action plans, Steehouwer (2002 c) showed that by focussing on the technical aspects of change the participating organisations were dealing primarily with the tangible and visible aspects or the 'hardware' of organisations. The 'software', on the other hand, comprising those aspects of change that are least visible and most resistant – namely ideas, practices and behaviour that perpetuate gender inequity – was not being addressed. In fact there was a resounding silence about the entrenched and pervasive culture of gender inequality in the organisations and what the organisations planned to do to change it. Steehouwer likened the change model proposed by the organisations to the Bermuda Triangle (see Figure 2.5), a metaphor that signified the disappearance of those aspects of change that are most necessary to transform gender relations. Steehouwer shared his analysis with the participating organisations at the GFP conference held in 1998. There was much consternation that the proposed change model would fail to address the power structures in the organisation or the attitude and working culture of its staff. Would this organisation give more

room for manoeuvre to women staff? Would it be possible for such an organisation to transform all its programmes and address the position and strategic interests of women and men at grassroots level? It was feared that with this initial approach the resulting changes and organisational development would be cosmetic. But would it? In the following chapter we try to make meaning of the changes that took place.

<sup>23</sup> See Annex 3 for a full list of partner’s objectives and expected outcomes.

**FIGURE 2.5 - THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE:  
WHERE ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE DISAPPEARS**

	Mission/Mandate	Organisational Structure	Human Resources
<i>Technical Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 1</b> <i>Policies and Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ analysis</li> <li>○ policy</li> <li>○ activity plan</li> <li>○ budget</li> <li>○ monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>○ impact</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 4</b> <i>Tasks and Responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ tasks and responsibilities</li> <li>○ coordination/consultation</li> <li>○ information system</li> <li>○ gender infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 7</b> <i>Expertise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ quantity</li> <li>○ quality/recruitment</li> <li>○ wages</li> <li>○ job description</li> <li>○ appraisal</li> <li>○ training</li> </ul>
<i>Political Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 2</b> <i>Policy Influence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ role of management</li> <li>○ people influencing the organisation from within</li> <li>○ - people influencing the organisation from the outside</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 5</b> <i>Decision-making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ adequate information</li> <li>○ participation in discussion and decision-making</li> <li>○ conflict management</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 8</b> <i>Room for Manoeuvre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ space for organising</li> <li>○ physical infrastructure</li> <li>○ reward/incentive systems</li> <li>○ diversity of styles</li> <li>○ career opportunities</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 3</b> <i>Organisational Culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ image</li> <li>○ ownership</li> <li>○ woman friendliness</li> <li>○ reputation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 6</b> <i>Cooperation and Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ teamwork</li> <li>○ support</li> <li>○ networking outside of organisation</li> <li>○ reflection/innovation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 9</b> <i>Attitude</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ enthusiasm</li> <li>○ commitment</li> <li>○ willingness to change</li> <li>○ stereotyping</li> </ul>

## Summary of key points from this chapter

- This chapter analyses the experiences of the seven GFP partners in South Asia and the Middle East in using what were in essence OD tools to undertake a self-diagnosis of gender relations in their organisations. On the basis of this diagnosis they identified weaknesses and strengths and devised an action plan to promote gender equality through organisational change. The wider applicability of this analysis lies in what it teaches us about managing the politically sensitive agenda of promoting gender equality in non-governmental organisations, and negotiating the contradiction between using OD tools and methods and promoting gender equality.
- **At the start.** The participating organisations shared common characteristics in their treatment of gender issues as the programme began. Gender issues were exclusively addressed in the field programmes, they did not take into consideration gender differentiated needs and interests, nor did they treat women as autonomous agents in themselves. Most organisations had a women's unit or similar infrastructure which, by and large, was isolated. Staff training in gender awareness did not link such awareness to what staff members actually did in the field. There was very little information about gender issues in the organisations themselves.
- **Introducing the GFP.** When the self-diagnosis tool was first introduced to participants, it was done without an introduction to gender issues. This resulted in a mechanistic use of the tool since most participants did not know what gender was or how gender inequality manifested itself in their organisations. It also provoked resistance since men saw the suggested affirmative action measures for women as threatening their jobs. Others saw this as challenging the egalitarian value base of non-governmental organisations.
- **The process of organisational diagnosis.** The organisations took time and expended considerable energy in undertaking the self-diagnosis. An analysis of the process shows that because management and the gender coordinators were aware that introducing gender equality issues was a politically sensitive exercise, care was taken to make the process as participatory and inclusive as possible

in order to create ownership and to minimise real resistance. Building ownership was a central objective of the planning stage. Although the self-diagnosis involved the internal systems of the organisation and could exclusively have been undertaken by staff, some organisations involved members of their target communities both because the programme level is a part of their identity and to create wider legitimacy for the project of gender equality.

- **The diagnosis.** The analysis of the organisational self-diagnosis undertaken shows common patterns of strengths and weaknesses. Most organisations identified their strengths in the political and cultural layers and their weakness in the technical layer. When organisations say that the political layer is strong, they generally mean that the management is open to change and committed to gender equality and social justice issues. They also mean that the mission and mandate of the organisation is supportive of equality and social justice issues and thus provides legitimacy for promoting gender equality. When they refer to the cultural layer as being a strength, they mean that the people working in the organisation are open-minded and dedicated and willing to share and learn. The weaknesses in the technical layer are seen to be the lack of a gender policy, lack of adequate planning monitoring and evaluation systems, poorly distributed tasks and responsibilities and lack of in-house expertise to undertake gender and development work.
- **The Politics of the Possible.** What did these commonalities signify in practical terms? The process of rendering strengths as the political and cultural layers and weaknesses as the technical layer made it possible to 'name' gender inequality without blaming the people, the management and the value base of the organisation. It also helped to 'locate' gender inequality in that part of the organisation about which something tangible could be done. This represented what was politically possible to do given the sensitivity of the exercise and the possibility that it might fracture the self-image of the organisation, jeopardise the work and position of gender advocates and create insurmountable resistance to change.

- **The GFP objectives and outcomes.** An analysis of the objectives that each organisation developed points to the following:  
(1) The GFP would enable the participating organisations to reform their internal organisation as well as their programmes;  
(2) the GFP was seen as a way to both mainstream gender equality and to focus on women's needs; (3) a key objective of the GFP is taken to mean women's empowerment.
- This interpretation by the participating organisations of the GFP differed both from Novib's conception and from how gender mainstreaming was understood. Novib initially saw the GFP as an organisational change programme and limited its scope to the internal environment. The partners did not, and included their field programmes. Contrary to the proponents of gender mainstreaming orthodoxy, the partners proposed working on women-specific programmes alongside mainstreaming gender equality issues in all policies and programmes.
- **The change model proposed in the action plans.** An analysis of the action plans using the nine-box tool showed that most change activities were concentrated in the technical layer. By focussing on the technical aspects of change, the participating organisations were dealing primarily with the tangible and visible aspects or the 'hardware' of organisations. The 'software', comprising those aspects of change that are least visible and most resistant – ideas, practices and behaviour that perpetuate gender inequity – was not being addressed. The proposed change model was likened to the Bermuda Triangle, a metaphor that signified the disappearance of those aspects of change that are most necessary to transform gender relations.

# Chapter 3

## Making Change Happen

### *Introduction*

Chapter 1 alluded to the challenge implicit in bringing about organisational change because, as Lourdes (1984) suggests, ‘the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house’. Lourdes is referring to the contradiction of changing something – in this case gender relations – which cannot be seen because one is part of it, and with tools – in this case the nine-box tool – which are themselves gendered and are used in gendered ways.

In analysing the participating organisations’ processes of self-diagnosis and the action plans, we have found that the agenda for change was concentrated on improving the technical and political layers of the organisations, making it possible to ‘name’ gender inequality without blaming the people and the management. This ‘naming’ process helped mitigate, but could not eradicate, Lourdes’ contradiction.

This chapter analyses the making of the change that the organisations had planned. How were changes to the technical and political layer to be brought about? Through management fiat and orders from the top? By changing the service rules, policies, action plans, evaluation and monitoring system, tasks and responsibilities and expertise? Would this be sufficient to ensure compliance to the new policies, systems and rules introduced as a result of the GFP?

Making change happen requires more than changing the rules. It requires a culture of compliance to the rules, which in turn means a culture of accountability. Accountability for gender equality is unlike other forms of accountability, such as financial accountability. Financial accountability is a widely accepted and therefore a legitimate form of accountability, in that everybody working in an organisational set up is supposed to account for the use of money since it is not their personal money. The same cannot be said for accountability for gender equality. This is because desire for gender equality is not widely shared, nor is it part of the widely held values of working in an organisation.

In examining the making of change, this chapter focuses on what made change possible, acceptable and practiced during the lifetime of the GFP. In so doing, it shows that the change model envisaged in the planning phase (See Figure 2.3, The Bermuda Triangle), whereby change activities were primarily concentrated in the technical and political layer of the organisation, was to a large extent reversed in its execution.

Culture, as Hall (1981) explains, refers to the wide and available descriptions through which societies make sense of and reflect their common experiences. In this sense it is more about the common ideas available to talk about, react to and act upon a certain situation. Culture is often used to refer to 'social practices'. Culture is not a practice, nor is it the sum total of traditions and mores. Rather it is the common experiences / ideas that are threaded through all social practices in a specific society and at any given moment of time. It is in this sense that the term culture will be used in examining the practice of organisational change to promote gender equality. This is because organisational culture is composed of the common experiences / ideas informing practice, including the meanings and definitions of what it is to be a woman or man, and what constitutes their relationship, claims and entitlements. These are central to the definition of social life and life within organisations. Because these ideas / experiences and practices are specific to societies and to time they are not immutable and static but change all the time. The cultural meaning of what it is to be a man or woman does change through human agency and therein lies the hope of forwarding a gender equality and social justice agenda.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section we discuss the changes in the organisational structure that were brought about to institutionalise organisational change to promote gender equality, and review the challenges and experiences of the gender committees set up to manage the GFP. Section two analyses the changes in organisational rules to allow for the entry and retention of women into the work force and the outcomes of this. Section three analyses the making of cultural change, change that involved 'constructing' a new and shared meaning of gender relations and women's and men's entitlements. The final section looks at the strategies that participating organisations used to promote gender equality in their field programmes, and their outcomes.

## 3.1 The Gender Infrastructure

A key strategy to make the planned changes happen was putting in place a gender infrastructure, either by setting up a new committee or by reconstituting an existing WID committee. While the suggestion to build an organisational infrastructure that would carry forward the envisaged activities of the GFP in a coherent manner came from Novib, the composition, purpose, powers and location of these structures and the strategy they pursued were specific to the organisational culture, structure and work context. Thus while the creation of structures that focus on specific outputs is part of organisational development orthodoxy, the reality is that each organisation has to make sense of how to do it, decide what the role and powers of such a structure should be, and locate the strategic management of this role. The gender mainstreaming literature is replete with instances of failed gender machineries, especially within government and multilateral agencies. Studies have shown that gender infrastructure is most often starved of resources and isolated from the arena of political decision-making within organisations and, therefore, has had little influence on policy making (Goetz 2003). While there is less information on the situation in non-governmental organisations, what little exists seems to corroborate the relative powerlessness of women's committees to affect change internally or in programmes, or to support women workers in organisations (Goetz 2001). So why should the committees set up by the participating organisations have had a different fate?

In what follows, the experiences of three of the participating organisations are analysed, organisations that are relatively large in the number of people that they employ and in their field programmes. The aim of setting up or reconstituting gender committees was to broad-base the responsibility for gender equitable development among all staff and sections of the organisation. Since the GFP was an organisational change project to promote gender equality, the aim of setting up these committees was also to oversee reform of organisational policies and rules. This too was seen as broad-basing responsibility for gender equality since these committees were constituted with representation from different sections of the organisation. While this worked for some participating organisations, it did not for others. The aim here is to understand what factors contributed to the acceptance or rejection of this structural change, and what made it function for the purposes for which it was set up.

### 3.1.1 Broad-basing responsibility for gender equitable development

#### *The case of Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), Pakistan*

##### Context:

SRSP works in NWFP in Pakistan, part of which borders Afghanistan. Gender is defined very clearly in such a society. Its strongest manifestation is the strict physical, mental and social segregation between women and men and the clear roles attributed to sexes with insurmountable boundaries. Comparatively, men are more mobile than women and have greater access to basic facilities and services such as health care, education and livelihood opportunities. Women are constrained in their mobility by the observance of ‘purdah’ norms which include veiling. Their entry into the public sphere is limited by these norms. Women’s ability to make decisions regarding their public and private lives is far more constrained than that of men. Men’s public role is accepted by society. It is men who dominate the ‘jirgas’ or traditional councils of elders that arbitrate in community and personal matters. It is in such a context that SRSP works for women’s empowerment and talks about gender and development. SRSP’s programme focus is strongly influenced by this cultural setting, as its employees belong to areas they work in and share the dominant values defining the roles and relationship between men and women (Sidiqui 2001).

##### Structural shifts:

As has been mentioned in Chapter 2, SRSP did have a WID unit that by and large was isolated from the rest of the organisation, ran its own programmes and had little influence on policy and mainstream programme decisions. While the decision to move from a WID to a GAD focus was taken before the GFP was launched in SRSP, the actual work of setting up a GAD infrastructure took place during the GFP. SRSP’s reports and final evaluation indicate that initially a lot of time and energy was devoted to explaining the shift from WID to GAD. They did this not by explaining the conceptual shift in the initial instance, because the discussion of concepts and ideology would cause resistance, but by explaining the structural shift from a WID structure, which had an autonomous but isolated existence, to a GAD structure that would be dispersed throughout the organisation at the central office, in the regional offices and in field programmes. This would also entail making all staff members responsible for gender equality outcomes.

SRSP is a large organisation employing over 200 people and working in ten districts of NWFP. In order for a gender equality agenda to have an impact it was necessary for GAD units to have a presence and 'voice' both at the centre and in the decentralised units of the organisation and its programme. At the head office level the Social Sectors and Gender Issues section was responsible both for facilitating and monitoring the women's development programme and also for overseeing the process of gender mainstreaming and implementation. They were not alone in having to shoulder this dual responsibility. A Gender Core Group (GCG) was formed at head office level comprising members from the Social Sectors and Gender Issues section, the Gender Monitoring Officers (GMOs) from the regions, and heads of the Human Resource Development (HRD), the Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) and Personnel departments. Thus the GCG had senior managers within its fold who were charged with the responsibility of implementing the gender strategy.

At the regional level, the WID coordinators were replaced by the GMOs whose role was to facilitate and oversee the process of gender mainstreaming, train people, help HRD to review existing trainings and re-design them with a gender focus, and monitor overall integration of gender equality concerns into the programme. Again the GMOs were not expected to be lonely pioneers, but were supported by the Regional Gender Groups (RGGs) whose main role was to oversee GFP activities in the region. The change from a WID coordinator to GMO was not just a change in name. On the contrary, the GMOs were designated as focal points for the RGGs and as a result were integrated into the existing programmes. This meant that the organisation could no longer see gender equality as separate from its overall development agenda.

### Political shifts:

As the experiences of gender machineries indicate, putting a structure in place, no matter how coherent it is, does not necessarily mean that it will work. It requires advocacy and agency to make machineries work. The first challenge before SRSP in implementing the action plan at organisation level was to inculcate a culture within the organisation which was responsive to change (Sidiqi 2001). During the implementation of GFP, SRSP focused on the 'software' of the gender route, that is the political and cultural systems in order to change perceptions and attitudes of the staff towards gender equality issues (Bangash 2001).

*'Gender focal points have been the rallying point at the core office as well-as regional levels for gender mainstreaming. They have been successful in raising the 'flag of gender' throughout SRSP. Their role has led to a focused approach. In programme regions where gender focal points were absent, the progress of the project was different. Where gender focal points were present understanding and internalisation of gender was significantly more' (Bangash 2001).*

- *Explaining the shift from WID to GAD* – As has been mentioned earlier, a considerable amount of time and effort was spent in explaining the shift to all levels of staff. This explanation emphasised the structural changes initially because 'any discussion on concepts and ideology/theory was bound to be resisted. WID was threatening to men and GAD to women as women felt a temporary loss of power' (Sidiqiu 2001).
- *Training in gender awareness* – A series of trainings were organised exposing staff to gender and development concepts and practice that evolved into debates on the relevance of gender awareness in development and allowing for staff members to express their hesitations, opposition and scepticism. Since the field programme deals with different sectors such as natural resource management, credit and enterprise development, health and education, care was taken to develop sector-specific gender training programmes.
- *Internal networking and advocacy* – A dispersed gender infrastructure like the one that SRSP set up should help the gender focal points to network throughout the organisation and programme. But this is not always the case, as the isolated position of gender focal points in development bureaucracies seems to indicate. The role of formal and informal networks in providing support to individuals and representing group interests in organisations has been much discussed in the literature<sup>24</sup>. These studies have also shown that men, because they have a longer history of work place participation, are more likely to band together informally and also carve out spaces in organisations for formal networking than are women. In SRSP the GMOs were designated as focal points for the RGGs and as a result integrated into the existing programmes. However, this in itself was not enough to ensure that they would be listened to, respected and given a chance to put forward the interests of women in the programme and in the organisation. Bangash (2001), for example, notes that there was a tendency in the beginning to see the focal points as the only persons responsible for gender mainstreaming, or to give the focal points additional responsibilities

because their job was not perceived as being a real 'job' by programme managers. In such situations, individuals whose formal 'job' it is to mainstream gender equality could easily find themselves isolated. This isolation was counteracted by the fact that the gender infrastructure evolved into a network providing support for the gender focal points in their professional development, as well as in dealing with unfair, unjust behaviour and attitudes that sought to undermine them as persons and belittle the cause that they were hired to promote. The gender infrastructure as a formal and informal network became identified as a political grouping in the organisation that supported fairness, justice and equal treatment. Bangash (2001) reports that the Gender Section became the place where ordinary staff members, men and women, brought their grievances and problems in the expectation that the section would mediate with management on their behalf. The problems ranged from not receiving a daily allowance to unfair treatment. Similarly, during the process of devising the gender policy the regional staff raised issues and problems not necessarily related to the gender policy but which had to do with being unfairly treated, problems that hitherto had not found a forum for expression.

- *Strategic alliances* – The establishment of the GCG at the head office provided the gender section the opportunity to liaise with and influence the key managers of the organisation. Facilitating the formation of strategic alliances with senior managers responsible for mainstream departments was the GCG's ability to give advice and concrete support to the managers' work. The gender section worked with the PME section to engender evaluation and monitoring, with the HRD section to develop training, and with the Personnel department to revise service rules and introduce affirmative action for women. The outcome was that in management meetings the key managers supported the gender chief in decisions. For example, when recruitment for women-only technical posts was being discussed, many regional managers proposed that if sufficiently qualified women were not available, the jobs should go to men. The programme managers for Finance and HRD held out against subversion of the policy by arguing that if qualified women were not available women interns should be hired instead and trained on the job (Bangash 2001).

*When the Gender Focus Programme started in 1997, people within the organisation were not even properly informed about the basic definitions of gender. And let me admit that I was no exception. We could not see discrimination against the opposite gender, as it was part of our daily life. ... And then came the realisation that we are a part of a male dominated society, where man holds more power than woman. And this realisation was the beginning of gender mainstreaming in SRSP.*

Ijaz Ahmad –  
HRD Manager, SRSP  
(Bangash 2001)

An example of how these strategic alliances worked to secure policy is also evident from the concrete support that the passage of the gender policy received from senior managers. The gender policy was formulated through organisation-wide debates and discussion. There was considerable resistance to it from regional managers delaying thereby its passage through the Board of Directors. It was the managers in the GCG who supported and defended the policy when the regional managers and male staff working in regional offices opposed it in the internal workshops paving the way for its approval by the Board.

### *The case of Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC)*

#### Context:

PARC works in the Occupied Territories of Palestine. As the name suggests, their main mission is the organisation of farmers and agricultural development. In the situation of occupation, land symbolises

Palestinian dispossession and therefore asserting the claim to land and the rights of farming households to work on their own land is paramount, constitutes a political act and gives meaning to development initiatives. Farming households in Palestine, as in the rest of the world, function according to divisions of labour that rely on women and men, young and old fulfilling different tasks. These divisions of labour coincide with the prevailing gender ideologies. In Palestine, gender segregation differentiates the social, physical and psychological worlds of women and men. Women's roles are seen to be household bound, and men have more opportunity to access the public sphere. Codes of family honour privilege men, and men are considered heads of households. The farmer, therefore, is considered to be a man, and men were the main constituency of PARC. It is no wonder, then, that three of the GFP objectives in PARC addressed the political dimensions of gender relations and were formulated as:

1. The work of women is given full recognition
2. Women's access to resources increased
3. More women in decision-making

## Structural shifts:

PARC has a Rural Women Development department whose director took on the responsibility for the Gender Focus Programme. In order to broad base the responsibility for gender aware change in the organisation, a Gender Steering Committee was set up comprising six members who were managers from different departments including the Rural Women Development, Extension and Land Development (the largest and most powerful) and Public Relations. PARC is a large organisation, and, in order to ensure adequate spread throughout the organisation, staff were drawn from different sections of the organisation and formed into teams with specific responsibilities: gender research, gender training, production of newsletter, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. A member of the steering committee headed each team and reported back to the committee (PARC 1999).

## Political Shifts:

- *Joint planning as a forum for exchange and learning* – An initial activity of the GFP was to prepare an operational plan for the GFP. Since a major problem of planning in PARC was that it saw farmers as being men and farming households as being represented by men, the gender committee decided to target the mainstream planning process itself. A number of workshops were conducted in the regions with the participation of PARC's

*'It is worth noting that the regions' employees used to prepare the operational plans with the target groups without taking into consideration the gender perspective because the target groups have been dealt with as rural families'*

(PARC 2001).

staff of the regions, gender team and target groups from both sexes to design the activities for the operational plan. PRA methods were used to identify the needs and interests of target communities. Whereas such methods had been used in PARC previously, this was the first time that it differentiated between women and men. This exercise helped to involve regional staff of the mainstream departments in learning about gender analysis and owning the plan that was prepared as a result. This method of working – collective planning and the use of PRA methods to differentiate between the needs and interests of women and men – was

carried into other planning exercises with the result that gender analysis was integrated into the PARC strategic plan (PARC 1997c).

- *Training in gender awareness* – Besides involving staff in undertaking a gender analysis in the context of planning their work, gender awareness workshops were conducted for all levels of staff. The GFP evaluation notes

that because these training programmes encouraged staff to express their views and did not prevent anybody from expressing different opinions (i.e. not always agreeing with the concept of gender equality) it gave rise to debate and allowed it to evolve.

- *Rotation as means to communicate on 'gender'* – Towards the latter part of the programme, PARC introduced a system of rotation for the directors of departments so that all directors would be exposed to both gender aware development and how to integrate this perspective in the work of the major departments. Thus a woman head of the Rural Women Development department was designated as the director of the Extension and Land department and the male director of this department became in charge of the Rural Women Development department.

*Rotation between the departments' directors has taken place as a new experiment: a man has been appointed as a director for the Women Development department and a woman was appointed as the director of the Extension and Land Development department. This experience has not been evaluated till today but the indicators show that the information flow and the communication between departments on gender issues is greatly facilitated as a result*

(PARC 2001)

- *Making alliances with mainstream departments* – The gender team built alliances with the mainstream departments by offering concrete assistance and promoting joint projects. They worked with the PME section and introduced gender indicators into the system. Similarly the joint workshops and planning between the Land Development Department, the Environment department and Rural Women Development department persuaded the mainstream departments to take on gender analysis and include women and men in their activities.
- *Strengthening interlocutors* – The gender advocates within the organisation invested in building up women's organisations in the field

known as women's clubs and exposing them to training for leadership and management of their organisations. This proved to be indispensable for PARC's work during the second 'intifada' that coincided with the last phase of the GFP programme. Women's clubs organised relief for villages that were cut off due to Israeli re-occupation, provided the much needed communication channels between villages under siege, and carried on 'business as usual' as a form of resistance. They were able to do this both because of their organised strength and because as women they were less under suspicion than men and less likely to be attacked by the Israeli army. This role had an important impact on PARC as an organisation in that the

strength of women's organising could no longer be ignored, and their role in protecting and promoting Palestinian agriculture and rural life made these organisations an important constituency for PARC (Novib 2002). Thus while the intra-organisational changes helped promote the visibility of women and the importance of gender relations in development, this was further strengthened by the extra-organisational changes that had taken place in terms of women's roles.

### 3.1.2 Where broad-basing did not work

*With the expansion of its work with women within the community, GRAM both recruited more women staff and developed a greater gender orientation within its staff, drawing links between intra-organisational issues and the work with the wider community. Such a focus began with the pragmatic concerns for the well-being of women staff and problems of transport, accommodation and safety. Taking on greater number of women staff also had implications for GRAM's position within the wider society – as women staff were seen to break all social norms by driving motorbikes, travelling with male staff, moving freely on public transport etc. Gender sensitivity thus became a central part of the agenda, evident in the focus on addressing concerns relating to women's reproductive responsibilities and physical mobility*

(Subrahmanian 2001).

#### *The case of GRAM Abhudhyaya Mandali (GRAM)*

Broad-basing a gender committee did not work in the case of GRAM. As the evaluation report points out (Subrahmanian 2001), the Gender Task Group set up to take forward the GFP was unable to function in a systematic manner. This was not because they lacked commitment and motivation to work on gender issues but because this task group was not an organic growth out of the organisation's own internal discussion on the need for such a committee. The internal discussion on broad-basing was happening elsewhere and through a different modality. The main change process that was taking place in GRAM at the time of the GFP was one in which GRAM staff were being made responsible and answerable to the community based organisations (CBOs) led by dalit women. GRAM staff was being seconded to the Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies (MACS), which are federations of community based organisations representing dalit women, to facilitate these and turn them into viable financial bodies with wider political and social decision-making influence. Thus GRAM's approach was to reduce its own organisational presence by serving as facilitators rather than as leaders or managers of change. This was changing the balance of power between GRAM and the CBOs with GRAM staff undergoing what can best be described as role subordination. GRAM senior staff, mainly men from middle class backgrounds, were

being made answerable to poor, dalit women. This role subordination called for a changed understanding of gender, class and caste power relations and new skills to work with power relations. Thus what was preoccupying GRAM was not how to broad base the responsibility for gender mainstreaming throughout the organisation but how to prepare staff to be responsible and accountable to women leaders in the community.

GRAM also had introduced an organisational mechanism to promote the rights of women workers prior to the GFP. The Women's Forum was the space for women workers to discuss their needs and bring these to the attention of management. GRAM changed its internal policies and rules to support women workers' roles in response to the representations made by the Women's Forum. In its internal restructuring of policies and rules to promote gender equality in the organisation, GRAM followed a different political modality to the other organisations. The Women's Forum was nurtured as a space for the articulation of women's interests in the organisation and to give 'voice' to the needs and problems of workers who were subordinates both because most occupied low ranking positions in the organisation and because they were women. This did cause jealousy and resentment among male staff, which is discussed later in this chapter. However, in terms of gender equality outcomes – affirmative action to support women, 'voice' development and increased mobility and visibility – this strategy yielded as many positive results as the strategies pursued by the other organisations. But it is important to recognise that this strategy and its outcomes cannot be attributed to the GFP since this process had begun earlier.

## 3.2 Making the Work Place Habitable for Women and Men

### 3.2.1 The gendered nature of organisations

Non-governmental organisations in development are not insulated from the social and political relations within which they exist, and thus reproduce gender inequalities. Prejudice against women is embedded within the organisational cognitive systems and work cultures. This prejudice amounts to more than discriminatory attitudes or irrational choices on the part of individuals. It is embedded within the norms, structures and practices of institutions, shaping the incentive systems, accountability structures and bureaucratic procedures in ways that derail gender equality efforts (Kardam 1997; Goetz 1997a).

Goetz (1997) explains that organisations are historically constructed frameworks which continue to serve the political and social interests they were designed to serve in the first place. Historically, women were excluded from the public sphere, and while class, caste, race and other differences did not allow all men access to public institutions of power, men dominated decision-making and decision enforcing, and men's needs and interests were embedded in the structures and practices of public institutions. Institutions thus promoted male dominance and female dependence. Therefore even when new agents (women) entered and new concerns (such as gender equality) were introduced, little seemed to change. Men are better able to pursue their interests within the public world of organisations because organisations grant entry to people who approximate men, that is human beings who are free agents, unencumbered by domestic or child care responsibilities, and who have women at home doing this work for them (Mukhopadhyay and Meer 2004).

The participating organisations reflected many of these problems associated with bringing about gender equality internally. First, the existing incentive systems, accountability structures, and recruitment, staff development and other procedures were geared towards a male work force. In the context of non-governmental organisations working in development, especially rural development in South Asia and to some extent in the Middle East, a male workforce is ideally suited. Male development workers are by and large unencumbered by domestic responsibilities, are mobile and therefore can travel which is an important consideration for these workers. They are able to live away from home in remote rural areas without concerns for their sexual safety. Living among strangers away from home and travelling unaccompanied is not construed as 'improper' behaviour for men and, therefore, is not penalised by the society, family and community.

Second, because of the historic partitioning of the public world of education, work and decision-making along gender lines whereby men are over-represented in the public sphere, the leadership in most of the participating organisations was overwhelmingly male.

A programme of gender aware organisational change made it imperative for these organisations to scrutinise the norms, structures and practices shaping the incentive systems, accountability structures and bureaucratic procedures that exclude women without meaning to do so, and to try and change them. In so doing the participating organisations looked at their existing human resource development and personnel policies and introduced affirmative action regulations to include women, and measures to make women workers'

reproductive role a concern of the organisation. Some organisations introduced a gender policy in addition to reviewing and changing existing policies.

This section discusses some of the changes that were brought about in the organisational, norms, rules and practices and the realistic outcomes.

### 3.2.2 Getting more women in

*'The GFP was the best time of my life'* Salma Waqfi, gender coordinator  
CHA (Waqfi 2005).

For many of the participating organisations an important task was to get more women in to the organisation because the workforce was largely male. Whereas all participating organisations intended to increase the number of women staff, CHA, SRSP and PARC actually changed recruitment rules to favour women's employment.

#### *The case of CHA*

Within the first year of the GFP, the number of women workers in CHA increased from 33 to 76. This increase resulted from women being appointed to 41 existing vacancies, and women replacing two men who resigned or were transferred to field posts (CHA 2000). At this time CHA was operating out of Peshawar but ran programmes with limited staff in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, the increase of female staff was due to expansion in the health programme which was the only programme area in which the Taliban allowed female workers. In Pakistan, the increase in women's share of employment resulted from conscious efforts to identify new employment opportunities for women following a decision to have an 'affirmative action' strategy. New female posts were created in the Finance department and the Galaxy programme, and more women were employed in other sections (Waqfi 2005).

CHA returned to Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, resulting in expansion of its field operations. Since CHA had adopted a policy of affirmative action and the gender coordination committee was extremely vigilant about maintaining the momentum, large numbers of women employees were hired for the various programmes (Waqfi 2005). Table 3.1 shows CHA's progress in employing women in CHA. Women's employment share before 2000 was around ten percent, but by 2000 it was almost fifteen percent and by 2005 it was 25 percent.

**TABLE 3.1 – WOMEN'S  
EMPLOYMENT SHARE IN CHA**

2000		2005	
Male	Female	Male	Female
577	92	3750	1263
84%	14%	75%	25%

(CHA 2005b)

The CHA experience of getting more women into the organisation provides an interesting case study of internal advocacy, of the creation and adaptation of rules to suit the Afghan gender segregated context, and of the struggle to create a profile and image of working women. The organisation worked hard to create an internal culture that is accepting of women workers in contravention of the wider societal mores that abhor women in the public sphere. In her report to the 3rd GFP conference in 2000, the gender coordinator of CHA, Salma Waqfi, explained in detail how the position of women in the organisation was being gradually negotiated (Novib 2000). The GFP process, the self-diagnosis and the gender route provided CHA with the rationale to improve its performance on gender equality (see Chapter 2). The GFP objectives for CHA addressed internal issues: a key objective was that by the end of year 2002, CHA would be recognised as an organisation offering equitable opportunities to women and men as employees and partners. A key indicator measuring achievement of this objective was that female staff numbers should increase from the present ten percent. Other indicators were: equal opportunity for women and men; equal pay for equal work; and equitable training and promotional opportunities for women and men. While both the objective and the indicators might seem unremarkable to those working in organisations where such measures already exist and are taken for granted, for CHA this was revolutionary and in contravention of the wider social and political norms in which the organisation was embedded. Having set these objectives how were they to be made real? What followed was a process of cultural negotiation and consensus building.

The organisation built up a gender-disaggregated database of male and female employment in CHA. The gender committee, with direct involvement of the director, worked on an affirmative action policy to promote more women in jobs. A major hurdle was that there were just not enough qualified women available to the organisation. So they began a capacity building programme for women known as the Galaxy training programme. Getting more women

*When recruiting staff, women are chosen in preference to men from among applicants with the same qualifications, expertise and skills.*

*Training is provided for supervisors in the identification and elimination of barriers that women encounter in work practices and promotion to higher grades.*

*Every six months the Gender Committee monitors the implementation of policy and procedure for the employment of women.*

*Formal evaluations are conducted by the organisation include evaluation of policy and procedure for the employment of women.*

*A Female Galaxy Training Centre has been initiated to provide learning opportunity for girls and women who were strictly ignored during the Taliban regime.*

*There is a focus on creating more capacity building opportunities for female staff at CHA. Women can now attend university during work time and can receive support from the office for attending trainings, workshops and scholarships outside the country*

*(CHA 2005b).*

in to the organisation was also dependant on women being allowed greater mobility by their families and community. CHA began what the gender coordinator has termed a diversification programme, which meant diversifying the ways in which women could be employed. This included employing husbands / brothers to accompany wives / sisters to work<sup>25</sup>, and measures to allow women to work from home.

These measures were accompanied by others such as the introduction and implementation of the equal work for equal pay policy and a procedure for dealing with gender harassment in the work place. Women workers were given access to organisational transport for late or after hours work. Maternity leave was introduced, and time off and space to allow women to breast-feed on their return to work was also made and implemented.

For all these measures to work on a routine basis it was necessary to invest the role of the gender coordination team with dignity and authority. Salma Waqfi explained how the gender committee went about doing this through their engagement in cultural politics. First was the politics of space. In all organisations, the importance of a staff member is signified by the physical space that she / he occupies. The room of the director belongs to him / her only, and is generally larger and better furnished. The gender coordination team demanded and obtained a separate room for the coordinator, thereby investing meaning in the position of the occupant. This was followed through with separate space for the women's programme, which in the gender segregated world was not difficult to explain. The coordinator's adherence to dress codes that made her look serious and 'respectable' (behaving as befits a good Afghan woman) added to her acceptability. The importance of

a position in an organisation is also signified by the number of interactions that the person has with the outside world. Managers and directors are generally called to meetings and invite others to meetings and consultations.

*Outcomes – CHA*

*"The culture of CHA seems to have shifted to the point where promotion of women is accepted and by many staff even welcomed. A particular benefit of having increased number of female staff seems to be that women have greater confidence to raise their interests and concerns. For example, women staff requested an outdoor picnic to celebrate International Women's Day. Men and women now sit together for lunch!*

*Women in CHA have now shifted from their original position of (Welfare) members of staff, being treated as passive beneficiaries of employment opportunity. Now they have improved access to...various section(s) of the organisation, and through their greater numbers they have raised awareness among themselves about inequalities in the organisation.*

*Women in CHA are now achieving capacity and confidence to mobilise themselves to draw attention to their needs and interests. This is well supported by having a female staff member in senior position, which provides a female hand at the 'control' level. It seems that women staff are beginning to feel that inside CHA at least, they have greater equality with men"*

(Waqfi 2005).

Secretaries and administrative staff do not. The gender coordinator made it her business to attend meetings outside the organisation relating to women's programmes. She also hosted meetings at CHA so that the organisation's image among other development and Afghan organisations based in Peshawar improved.

The adaptation to the norms of female behaviour expected of and acceptable within the Afghan framework, while being strategic was nevertheless dangerous since it also implied subscribing to the conventional values of inequality between women and men. When questioned about this, Salma Waqfi was extremely clear as to what they hoped to achieve. It was explained that initially the gender focus programme and the coordinator's position in CHA were seen more as a new fashion than as a serious endeavour to change the organisation. Since the struggle was to establish authority and to be taken seriously, abiding by dress codes and behavioural norms was the first step in being taken seriously by male colleagues. This opened the door for programmes for women and the hiring of women staff.

Subsequently, the promotion of the previous Gender Coordinator to the position of Administrative and Finance General Manager placed a woman in the second highest position in CHA with management responsibility for the highest level of staff. Similarly, the Deputy of Education Technical Support position was filled by a woman through promotion, placing her in the third highest position in CHA.

The CHA case study shows that affirmative action involved a number of measures. Whereas most participating organisations adopted new measures and strengthened existing ones in order to get more women into the organisation and to keep them, the types of measures adopted were often unique to the situation and cultural context of the organisation.

### 3.2.3 Getting more women into the field

A key to getting women into the organisation and keeping them there in the specific context of the participating organisations was to make it possible for women and men to work in the field programmes. All participating organisations have large field programmes that require a mobile work force, able to travel and live in remote rural areas with few facilities and little security. In most cases field programmes were technical and sector specific and therefore those delivering them were expected to have the expertise, qualifications and experience of the sector. Since generally the availability of women professionals is less than men (men have greater opportunity to get technical education and experience) and women have many more social restrictions on their movements and on how and where they live, most field workers are men. Therefore, getting more women into field operations was one of the strategic ways of building a more gender-balanced work force (See Figure 3.2 for summary of measures undertaken by participating organisations).

#### SRSP

*Even in times of financial crunch SRSP provided its women staff with hostel and facilities. None of the staff were laid off and all of their salaries were paid from the SRSP endowment. This specifically including women staff. Men staff were willing to give up pick-up-and-drop facilities so that women staff could avail it in times of financial crisis*

(Bangash 2001).

When SRSP started its activities in 1990 there was only one woman staff member, but by the end of 2001 this number had increased to 38 which represented 30 percent of the work force. This was achieved by adopting a number of measures to increase the employment of women. SRSP developed an equal opportunity policy. Recruitment advertisements made clear that SRSP was an equal opportunities employer for both men and women. Expanding female employment meant targeting the main work of the organisation which was the technical sector programmes in rural areas. SRSP therefore created women-only technical and sector-specific posts meaning that only women could apply. Besides creating women-only posts, recruitment rules to technical and sector posts were relaxed for women by lowering the qualifying marks necessary for

eligibility and reducing the work experience required<sup>26</sup>. These measures were accompanied by measures to create a more conducive work environment for women workers living and working in regional offices and in rural communities. This included provision of travel facilities and hostel services for women in the regions. These provisions were later made part of the gender policy.

Compared to CHA and SRSP, GEAG is a relatively small and informal organisation. Like the other organisations, GEAG had problems recruiting and keeping women technical staff members. A key objective of the GFP was to achieve gender parity in staffing. GEAG recruited women who although not technically qualified in the field of sustainable agriculture and environment nevertheless possessed higher education qualifications, in many cases social work or social science degrees. They then trained the new recruits in the technical aspects of their work along with the social mobilisation work that they were already trained to undertake. Social mobilisation is the basis for the delivery of the technical programmes. The gender policy also introduced a number of affirmative action measures for women including desk-based work (as opposed to field travel) during menstruation, access to transport, safety regulations, and toilets. The organisation introduced regulations to limit the number of late night meetings in rural communities since women workers were unable to attend these (GEAG 2001).

Prodipan in Bangladesh introduced specific measures to make it possible for women to work in field level operations. If a woman and her husband were both working for Prodipan, they were generally posted to the same field area so that women could keep their jobs. Separate hostel facilities for men and women staff in the field, transport and security measures were made to make it easier for women to live in rural areas (Rahman et al. 2001).

PALM too introduced several provisions to ensure that women staff members could work in rural communities. Separate residences for women and men workers, especially social mobilisers, enabled women to be employed in greater numbers. Central and regional centres had separate facilities for women and men, and women workers were allowed to bring their small children to training programmes and the organisation provided for their care when necessary. Women with small babies were allowed to use office transport for a period of six months if they had to bring them to work. A gender-neutral rule of providing loans to women and men workers to purchase motorbikes while aiming to improve mobility did not actually work in women's favour. Women did not avail of these loans because it was not culturally acceptable for women to be seen riding motorbikes, besides being considered unsafe given the security problems in rural areas of Sri Lanka.

While such provisions to enhance women workers' mobility in rural areas, take care of security and provide for safe accommodation were not exceptional, they were nevertheless strategic, and contributed to the image of the organisations as being good places for women to work in.

The outcomes of these gender friendly provisions can be evaluated both in terms of the increased numbers of women in the work force, as in the case of SRSP, GEAG and to some extent PALM, and also in terms of the image of the organisation as an employer. Interviews with women and men field workers of PALM, for example, revealed that they considered PALM to be a better employer than most other NGOs and definitely better than the government programmes because of its concern for the well-being, security and mobility of its women staff (Sethi and Farid 2001).

In sum, getting women in to the organisation meant recognising that without special help it would be difficult to recruit and retain female staff in the core business of most organisations, which is rural development. However, getting more women into field work also meant that women required technical and sector specific experience. As has been discussed, SRSP tried to resolve this problem by creating and recruiting for women-only technical posts so that women would not have to compete with men with higher qualifications and years of experience. GEAG trained their women recruits on the job in sustainable agriculture related topics. PARC and CHA encouraged women to get higher education and training by giving them special facilities to do so.

**FIGURE 3.2 GETTING MORE WOMEN INTO THE FIELD OPERATIONS: MEASURES THE ORGANISATIONS TOOK**

GRAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improving physical infrastructure for women, such as toilets, dormitories, and jeep facilities for night travel.</li> </ul>
GEAG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improving gender parity at all levels;</li> <li>○ introducing equal opportunities for capacity building, exposure, presentation of views etc.;</li> <li>○ avoiding late night meetings, or providing women with transport home;</li> <li>○ providing scooters/mopeds for mobility to all supervisory staff, including female staff;</li> <li>○ installing toilet facilities in field offices.</li> </ul>
PRODIPAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keeping some positions reserved for female staff;</li> <li>○ giving priority to women's promotion through capacity building;</li> <li>○ providing safe and separate accommodation during field work;</li> <li>○ posting women in their home districts or in the area of the woman's father or husband;</li> <li>○ posting men workers in the same place as their wives if they are also employed by the organisation;</li> <li>○ giving female staff at the head office priority over use of the organisation's transport for their field visits;</li> <li>○ allowing female staff to travel and receive reimbursement for upper class transport to ensure their safety;</li> <li>○ allowing female staff travelling to other districts to bring a companion, with prior approval and if the Prodipan office has not made any other arrangements;</li> <li>○ installing separate toilet facilities for women in every office;</li> <li>○ providing safe accommodation facilities for female staff if they are transferred beyond their home district;</li> <li>○ allowing female staff to leave field activities before dark or taking necessary security measures for women to reach home.</li> </ul>
PALM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing separate residences and toilets for women at regional training centres;</li> <li>○ encouraging female field staff to take a loan for the purchase of a motor bike;</li> <li>○ giving equal priority to male and female project coordinators in the use of the organisation's transport;</li> <li>○ giving preference to female employees in training programmes.</li> </ul>
SRSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Relaxing recruitment rules and experience required for technical and sector posts for women candidates;</li> <li>○ making clear in recruitment advertisements that SRSP is an equal opportunity employer;</li> <li>○ considering gender awareness in recruitment texts and interviews;</li> <li>○ initiating a women internship programme to build up a pool of trained women and expand career opportunities for them;</li> <li>○ giving preference to promotion of female staff to higher grades for initial few years;</li> <li>○ providing two-months job training for newly appointed female technical and sector staff to compensate for lower qualifications and work experience.</li> </ul>
PARC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Giving priority in recruitment to women with the same qualification level as a man;</li> <li>○ giving priority to female employees to continue higher education and training.</li> </ul>
CHA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Making special efforts to identify new employment and promotion opportunities for women;</li> <li>○ providing gender equality in pay scales: 'equal pay for equal work'</li> <li>○ providing female staff with transport for late or after hours work;</li> <li>○ recruiting women with the same qualifications, expertise and skills in preference to men.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.4 Recognising and providing for women's reproductive role

Achieving a gender balance entailed recognising that workers should not be treated as free agents, unencumbered by domestic or child care responsibilities. Most organisations made changes to service rules aimed at recognising and providing for women's reproductive roles. A few also tried to support men in their role as parent and householder. See Figure 3.3 for a summary of measures undertaken by participating organisations.

Providing maternity leave was high on the agenda. GRAM introduced three months paid maternity leave and one month without pay for women staff. Sensitivity to women's needs for time off in relation to personal health meant granting them optional leave without the need to apply in advance. The need for child-care facilities for women staff with very young children was accepted as organisational policy, and as a result, women staff are now provided a monthly stipend to cover the costs of hiring help to manage children under the age of eighteen months.

While GEAG introduced flexible working hours for women workers who are breast feeding, and the option to do desk jobs for five to six days in a month during their monthly cycles, the gender policy does not mention maternity (or paternity) leave. The reason given by GEAG is that they are dependant on project-to-project funding and do not have core institutional funds to support the expense of providing maternity leave. Women are therefore compelled to take unpaid leave and/or adjust their working hours. The difficulty in accessing the GEAG office at Gorakhpur (traffic, narrow roads) and the lack of crèche facilities make it impossible for a mother to nurse her baby as frequently as she should in the first few months if she decides to return to work. Currently GEAG seeks to compensate women in other ways – through privileged access to alternative work and capacity building opportunities.

Prodipan provided three months maternity leave, half-day work days for three months after the birth of a child, fifteen days paternity leave for male staff and loans to male staff members to cover their wives' delivery expenses. PALM, CHA and PARC also made provision for maternity leave and time off for breastfeeding. The SRSP gender policy specifically mentions that to build a gender fair work environment it is necessary to 'enable all staff to balance work and family life'. Thus besides maternity leave, the gender policy makes provision for paternity leave and day care facilities (on the payment of nominal charges) for women and men with children up to three to four years.

**FIGURE 3.3 RECOGNISING AND PROVIDING FOR WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE ROLE: MEASURES THE ORGANISATIONS TOOK**

GRAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing three months paid maternity leave;</li> <li>○ permitting one month additional unpaid maternity leave;</li> <li>○ providing day care helpers to women staff members' children under the age of eighteen months;</li> <li>○ providing optional leave for women in relation to personal health.</li> </ul>
GEAG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing flexible hours for women up to a maximum adjustment of one hour per day;</li> <li>○ allowing women to take up desk jobs for five to six days a month during their monthly cycles.</li> </ul>
PRODIPAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing three months maternity leave;</li> <li>○ initiating a half-day work facility for three months after birth of the child;</li> <li>○ facilitating the same working place for both husband and wife;</li> <li>○ providing fifteen days paternity leave and loans to cover delivery expenses;</li> <li>○ providing food and a care taker for children of women staff who have daylong training outside the home;</li> <li>○ stopping transfers of female workers during pregnancy and up to five months after the birth;</li> <li>○ providing flexibility for external trips during menstruation and pregnancy;</li> <li>○ allowing head office based female staff to use the organisation's transport for medical check-ups during pregnancy.</li> </ul>
PALM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing three months paid maternity leave, medical leave if necessary, and an additional one-month leave from available general leave;</li> <li>○ allowing women field staff to bring their babies to the office during training, and providing baby care if necessary;</li> <li>○ allowing field staff to bring their babies during field training programmes, using the organisation's transport facilities if the baby is under six months;</li> <li>○ allowing field staff (mobilisers) to take their babies to the field.</li> </ul>
SRSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ providing two to three months paid maternity leave twice with two years space each time (further leave will be considered on need basis);</li> <li>○ providing ten days paternity leave twice with two years space;</li> <li>○ taking place of residence of women staff into account prior to a transfer; placing married women near or in their home station;</li> <li>○ enabling all staff to balance work and family life, especially at the field level;</li> <li>○ ensuring that women staff finish their work within office hours;</li> <li>○ providing women field staff with separate transport to facilitate their community work and return home at reasonable hours;</li> <li>○ providing day care facilities for women and men with children up to three-four years on nominal charges;</li> <li>○ reducing the intensity of field visits for women during pregnancy.</li> </ul>
PARC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing maternity leave for three months;</li> <li>○ providing breastfeeding leave.</li> </ul>
CHA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing maternity leave ;</li> <li>○ providing time and space for breast-feeding after returning to work.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.5 Getting women into leadership and management

Affirmative action to recruit and retain women, especially as field workers, had the desired result in some organisations of increasing the number of women staff. Facilities that recognised and provided for women's reproductive role made these organisations a more habitable place for women to work in. However, these measures, although necessary, were insufficient to increase the number of women in the decision-making bodies of the organisations. Decision-making bodies are of two types: governing bodies, which are generally comprised of paid employees like senior managers and volunteer members who are well-known persons in the field of work; and the management and supervisory body that runs the day to day affairs. Getting more women into decision-making bodies required political will, leadership and management development programmes for women, and the cultural work to establish women as authority figures. Not all the organisations were successful in making a dent in the existing leadership profile. This section discusses the track record of the organisations in getting women into leadership and management and the reasons for the overall failure to establish women in senior positions.

#### *Governing Bodies*

Because governing bodies, such as Advisory Boards and Boards of Directors and Trustees, are generally comprised of members drawn both from the public and from the organisation, some of the organisations were able to increase the number of women by inviting women with expertise from the general public to their governing bodies, although not without difficulty. PARC, CHA, SRSP and GEAG were able to change the gender composition of their governing bodies, which fulfil both advisory and policy making functions, although

none achieved gender parity. The Board of SRSP consisted of nineteen directors of whom five were women at the end of the GFP period, compared to the all male Board at the beginning. In 1998, a woman competed in a field of two men contenders, received the most votes, and was elected to the Board of PARC . She went on to become the chairperson of the Board and has also been elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PARC 1998b). GEAG changed the gender composition of its Executive Board from an all male Board in 1997 to a composition of nine men and one woman by actively soliciting the participation of women professionals.

*SRSP  
‘The composition of the Board was changed due to advocacy of the Vice-Chairperson and gender equity considerations of the Board Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson, who is a woman, is very vocal and believes in women's interests, promoting them at all forums’*

(Sidiqui 2001).

Despite these efforts GEAG has faced difficulties in achieving gender parity in the Board because it is difficult for professional women to sustain their participation (attend meetings regularly and take part in activities) given their multiple roles and responsibilities (GEAG 2001).

Among the organisations that were unable to make significant changes to the gender composition of their governing bodies was PALM. The PALM Advisory Board is not a policy making body but, as its name suggests, is an advisory one. It comprises of people from outside the organisations who represent different fields of expertise as well as staff members. The Advisory Board should have nine members – seven volunteers and two staff representatives. At the time of the evaluation in 2001 the Board had five men and one woman with three positions remaining vacant including that of the gender expert. PALM also faced difficulties finding a gender consultant after the consultant who started the GFP in PALM left to take up a university job in the capital. Similarly, the gender coordinator post in PALM remained vacant after the person recruited left the area both in search of better opportunities and for family reasons.

### *Management and supervisory staff*

The record of increasing the number of women staff in management and supervisory positions is overall rather poor. The track record of PARC was better in this regard than other organisations. Three women were recruited to the Board of Directors and the fourth was promoted to regional directorship, making her the first woman in the organisation to occupy this post. PARC attributes this change to the measures that were consciously put in place by the organisation. Women's promotions were fast-tracked and they were encouraged to pursue university studies and improve their qualifications so that they could apply for promotion. The CHA track record is also better than others in that two women were promoted to the second and third positions in the organisation. Like PARC, CHA attributes this success to political will, fast tracking women's promotion and providing them with opportunities to obtain formal qualifications.

Despite the increase of female staff at the professional level in SRSP during the GFP period, only one woman staff member made it to a management position and this was the gender coordinator. GRAM recorded a slightly improved gender balance in management in 2000 when there were two women and four men at this level as compared to 1997 when there were six men and one woman. Overall, however, women employees in GRAM were clustered at the bottom of the organisation (Subrahmanian 2001).

As discussed above, PALM had less success in promoting women into leadership positions in the organisation. The senior staff comprises of team leaders, section heads, project assistants, and health and education trainers. The position of section head for gender, health and education lay vacant from mid 1999 onwards. At the time of the evaluation in 2001, there were eight men and three women at the senior level but none of the section heads were women. At the junior level, women were concentrated in the social mobilisation section. While there were equal numbers of women and men in the social mobilisation section, none of the coordinators in this section was a woman. The overall effect of not being able to recruit and retain women in senior positions is the reinforcement of gender stereotypes in the organisation. Men occupy all decision-making positions whereas women are the foot soldiers.

What accounts for this state of affairs, which can also be seen in GRAM, GEAG, SRSP and Prodiplan? In the case of PALM, the lack of qualified, Tamil speaking women workers in the region has been given as a reason. The evaluation also mentions other reasons, such as the lack of programmes for women's career advancement or leadership training, and the general lack of a strategy to build a more gender balanced leadership. In both PALM and GEAG we find that with the departure of the female gender coordinator (who was the senior most woman staff member in the organisations), men took over the responsibility and position.

In her path breaking work on gender and organisational change that analyses the structure, culture and practices of development organisations in Bangladesh, Goetz (2001) argues that although many of the problems that women face in expressing authority and gaining respect for their leadership roles arises from the socio-cultural construction of women as subordinate to men, this is not just passively reflected in the attitudes of staff and management but is actively reproduced in the day-to-day interactions within the organisation and between people in the organisation with others outside it. A range of ways and means undermines women as decision-makers and as leaders. Among these are subtle processes that exclude women from informal networks between men in the organisation, or patronise and condescend to them instead of treating them as equals. The nature of the information available to us about the organisations participating in the GFP programme does not lend itself to detailed analysis of these and similar processes that exclude women from leadership positions and thereby reinforce the idea and reality that authority, competence and managerial abilities are male. Nevertheless, the fact that most organisations were singularly unsuccessful

in either recruiting or grooming women into leadership positions seems to indicate that exclusionary processes were at work and that there was insufficient attention paid to managing them.

*The new (gender) coordinator is just beginning to familiarise himself with the work involved but will need more exposure to gender concepts at a conceptual level*

(GEAG 2001).

One of the ways in which this exclusionary process worked was in defining the standards of 'qualified' professionals capable of handling management and leadership roles. A common refrain was that qualified women were simply not available to take on these roles. Another common problem cited was that qualified women were difficult to retain because the demand for these women was larger than the supply. Whereas the problem of not having technical and professional staff at field level was tackled by

lowering qualifications necessary for recruitment, setting up women-only posts etc. these strategies were not used to promote women into leadership positions. Further, while men were recruited into management positions and then groomed, this was not the case for women except in a few instances. This can be seen from the fact that gender coordination posts, often the only senior post occupied by women, were given to men once the female incumbent left. This can suggest a progressive measure, signalling men taking responsibility for gender equality programmes in the organisation, but this was not the case here. It was done simply because male managers were available and took on this task in addition to the ones they were already handling. In these instances, a lack of qualification for undertaking this task seemed not to matter, thereby reinforcing the idea that men are natural managers whereas women have to qualify.

### 3.3 Inverting the Change Triangle: The Gender Debate

Culture, as we have discussed, refers to the wide and available description through which societies make sense of and reflect their common experiences. Because organisational culture is composed of the common experiences/ideas informing practice, which include the meanings and definitions of what it is to be a woman or man, and what constitutes their relationship, claims and entitlements, bringing about gender aware change in organisations entailed changing these shared meanings.

The changes initiated to build a gender infrastructure, to get more women into the organisation and make the organisation more habitable for both

women and men meant recognising and acknowledging the subordinate position of women in the wider society and its reproduction in the organisational set up. Because women's position within the wider society and the organisation was different than it was for men, women workers in the organisation needed to be treated differently and given 'special treatment' in order for them to be treated equally. Special treatment for those who are different is widely resented by those who are the 'norm' because the concept of equality is most often construed as sameness, which is to be treated in the same way. Why should women expect to be treated specially when they want to be equal is the question that is most often asked. Should women be equal to men (i.e. same as men) when the 'correct' form of gender relations is one in which women and men's roles are different? These and other resentments can jeopardise the project of equality. Although new rules and regulations are brought in to acknowledge and make special provision for women's reproductive roles, these are seen as 'condescension to female disability rather than an accommodation of women's legitimate difference' (Goetz 2001). It can mean that women see their difference as an embarrassment which reinforces their sense of inferiority.

This section analyses what goes into the making of a 'culture' of gender equitable organisational change. A culture of debate and discussion helps organisations and their staff to come to terms with the counter cultural notion of gender equality. To foster a culture of dialogue and debate requires the creation of spaces within the organisation where people feel safe to express their opinions, interact with their colleagues and hear differing viewpoints. It also requires the construction of the 'voices' of those advocating for change and seeking accountability for changes.

### 3.3.1 Training as space

*'Training leads to big discussion'* Nihaya Hamoudeh, PARC,  
3<sup>rd</sup> GFP Conference, 2000

Gender training was a common and important activity mentioned in all action plans. Training was seen as a tool to create awareness and to build analytical skills and expertise. For some organisations, training was the main activity to be carried out in the GFP. Initially, Novib construed this over-emphasis on training as a substitute for concrete action. In the beginning the organisations themselves were not clear about the link between awareness, knowledge, and expertise and improved practice. It was simply assumed that given exposure

to gender awareness and knowledge people would apply this in their work. But would this make staff members more conscious about treating each other equally and more accepting of changes that on the face of it were favouring women? Neither Novib nor the organisations had foreseen that gender training would serve the purpose not just of clarifying concepts, but also of questioning the basis of the GFP, challenging gender equality concepts and helping thereby to transform, in many instances, the ways in which people in the organisation saw, experienced and contributed to the programme. Training events provided the space for people to learn about, debate and come to conclusions about gender equality and its relevance to the organisation.

For GRAM, gender training proved to be a useful strategy for generating awareness on some of the broad issues and perspectives relating to gender. Since the focus was on the organisation's target group, who are primarily dalit women, gender training provided a good basis for promoting issues of equity, equality and dignity in GRAM's work. The strong field orientation of GRAM's work ensured that the debates were framed in terms of 'rights' rather than as serving the 'needs' of the target group (Subrahmanian 2001). By encouraging staff to air their views and disagreements, the training programmes created a healthy climate of debate.

Unlike GRAM, SRSP did not explicitly address women's rights and issues of subordination and patriarchy in the gender training sessions at the initial stages of the GFP. This was part of a strategy not to engage staff in these discussions while they were not very receptive to gender issues. Instead the initial programmes focussed on the practical aspects of gender analysis in development, since staff members were more open to this. However, what the initial rather technical training programmes did achieve was to pave the way for SRSP to engage the staff in discussion on complex gender concepts that enabled them to make policies on sexual harassment and affirmative action. Training with the management of SRSP, conducted by a regional expert and feminist in 2000, was the turning point for the management in understanding the relevance of gender issues for the intra-organisational structure, culture and policies, and it led to their support for the gender policy (Sidiqui 2001).

GEAG exposed all levels of staff to gender awareness training. The final evaluation found that staff articulated their experiences in different ways. Some articulated their internalisation of gender-sensitivity at the personal level (self-change) while others reflected on gender relations in terms of changes in the community or at the level of the organisation. The evaluation takes note that these training programmes contributed to openness about

gender issues and created reciprocity and respect amongst women and men staff (GEAG 2001).

Similarly in PALM, gender awareness training helped not only to clarify concepts but also to change the attitude of staff to a great extent (Sethi & Farid 2001). When representatives of PALM attended the first GFP workshop in 1996, they were averse to affirmative action as this was seen to threaten men's jobs in the organisation. The most averse was a male member of the team who was to be put in charge of the GFP in PALM until a gender

coordinator could be found. In 2000, this very same person presented what the GFP had achieved in PALM with great sensitivity. When asked to explain this change he replied that the exposure to and discussion of gender issues had given him a third eye with which to see the world.

*I have a third eye now.*

Sunil, PALM, 3rd GFP  
conference, 2000

PARC used training forums as a way to open up debate about gender issues. Gender training was conducted by those who knew the organisation in order to counteract allegations that gender orientation was a foreign import and a donor imposed agenda. The evaluation notes that because these training programmes encouraged staff to express their views and did not prevent anybody from expressing different opinions (i.e. not always agreeing with the concept of gender equality) it gave rise to debate and discussion which kept the issues alive (PARC 2001).

### 3.3.2 The gender debate as space for learning about equality

*'However the men generally feel a loss of power and position. Men staff talk a lot about culturally and religiously acceptable policies which would not disturb society' (Bangash 2001).*

*'Resistance to the Women's Forum has been articulated as a resistance to 'special privileges' being granted to a group who are on paper treated equally to men within the organisation, in particular the child care benefits' (Subrahmanian 2001).*

*... The concentration on targeting awareness, orientation and managerial activities to women beneficiaries away from targeting men pushed some of PARC's employees and men beneficiaries to ask for justification (PARC 2001).*

That the special provisions for women would create resentment and insecurity for men in the organisation was to be expected. All participating organisations reported resentment and opposition to the project of gender equality, expressed in different ways at different junctures of the GFP. The politics of the possible lay in creating ownership for the GFP in a way that most people could identify with.

As can be seen from the above quotations, concrete measures to redistribute resources more equitably between women and men within the organisation faced opposition from men and provoked questioning of what gender equality was all about. As long as gender equality meant formal equality between women and men it was not threatening. But special provisions interpreted as 'special favours' given to women were seen as threatening. These resentments could derail the project of equality that the GFP sought to bring about in a number of ways, including limiting the practice of equality to following the procedures. The new rules for recruitment and provisions for women's reproductive role could be followed to the letter of the law, while still not bringing about substantive equality in the interactions between women and men staff.

*The gender debate has the potential to become the space where a whole range of issues including the democratic functioning of the organisation is discussed. What we also learn is that this debate is an ongoing process and not a one-time event. The success or failure of measures to equalise the relationship between women and men in the organisation is dependant on keeping the debate alive and focussed on principles of justice.*

There is no easy answer to resolving the real difficulties of generalising a culture of equality in organisations. A pat answer would be to involve men, and in fact male involvement has become an orthodoxy peddled by development bureaucracies and experts in gender mainstreaming. But what does male involvement really mean, and how does one do this in a way that does not deny the reality of power differentials between women and men? All the participating organisations involved men in re-defining standards of equality. This was inevitable since most of the staff members and especially the leadership was male. What we learn from the experiences of the participating organisations is that the introduction of a gender equality agenda in the internal life of the organisation opens up the space for debate and discussion, including opposition

and resistance, and that by engaging in the debates, individuals and the organisation as a whole can learn about equality.

*'Women staff would often be 'coached' about dress and behaviour by the men staff. Quotes from religion were given to subdue gender activists'*  
(Bangash 2001).

According to SRSP, debate and dialogue were the strong points in the pursuit of gender mainstreaming and gender equality at the organisational level. This has happened at all levels ranging from meetings and workshops to informal gatherings and is an on-going process. Views regarding the concept of gender equality and how this was to be applied in the organisation varied according to the gender of the staff member.

Women were of the view that it meant more opportunities and equality for them. Men felt that although they were clearer about the concept, learning about gender did not address their problems. Gender issues were regarded as women's issues because of women's vulnerable position in society.

Men generally felt a loss of power and position. One of the ways in which men expressed their opposition to gender equality was by questioning whether the gender equality policies were in keeping with cultural and religious norms. To meet these allegations, the gender coordinators organised workshops to which

leading Islamic scholars were invited. 'But it has been seen that these apprehensions are not really religious or cultural. It is a fear of losing control and of accepting women as equals and professionals' (Bangash 2001).

Subtler forms of resistance were also expressed, such as the suggestion that a human rights component should be introduced rather than a gender component.

The introduction of the sexual harassment clause as part of the service rules inevitably created immense controversy. The senior management, which mainly consisted of men, were averse to the idea of such a clause:

*They were adamant that such issues did not exist in 'our society'. Veiling this 'logic' was the fear of being wrongly accused of sexual harassment by women staff. The Chief Gender Coordinator had to fight tooth and nail to have most of the management accept the clause. The extent of resistance was so much that it was suggested that the word 'sexual harassment' be changed to 'gender harassment'. The clause has not been used to the advantage of women staff yet; however the apprehension it can be used exists* (Bangash 2001).

#### *Debating the gender policy in SRSP*

*The preparation of the gender policy was done through a consultative process throughout all the regions and with all staff.*

*Men staff in the core group supported and defended those issues, which regional men staff opposed in these workshops. Those key men staff have also supported and promoted the idea of positive discrimination for women staff. Additionally they have been vocal in promoting gender equality in the organisation and supporting the gender section and its mandate. As a result women staff felt that coordination had improved with the men counterparts*

(Bangash 2001)

The importance of debate in keeping the gender agenda alive and gaining acceptance from a wide range of people in the organisation was recognised very early on by the gender advocates. Thus in formulating the gender policy a wide-ranging consultation process was initiated and all levels of staff got the opportunity to debate the clauses and reach agreements. The approach to formulating the gender policy through open discussion and debate among staff set a new standard of democratic functioning since this had never happened before for other policies.

Because of this climate of debate and discussion and the permissibility of voicing opposition, which was then treated seriously, women and men learned how to treat each other more equally. 'Women feel comfortable in the work

place, an important step and a value, which will remain part of SRSPs character in future' (Sidiqui 2001), and many men have learned that special provisions to include women in the work force are not just special favours but a matter of justice.

#### GRAM

*GRAM's evaluation report notes that 'the reaction of men staff to the women's forum range from mystification (We don't know what they do in their meetings) to polite support (Yes, it's a good idea but we don't know what purpose it serves) to outright hostility (Why do women staff need their own forum? Why can't issues be aired in public?'*

(Subrahmanian 2001).

GRAM's final evaluation report indicates that while a culture of debate and discussion on gender equality was fuelled by the GFP, the use of spaces and forums opened up by the programme represented the possibilities and limits of the organisation. On the one hand, the discussion and debate about gender issues was firmly located in a discourse of rights because of the strong field orientation of GRAM's work (Subrahmanian 2001). On the other hand, this culture of debate and discussion was not extended to intra-organisational gender issues.

As a result the success of the Women's Forum (constituted by women staff from different levels of the organisation) in articulating a wide range of issues that women workers faced and getting policies through to support their role, was resented by male staff members even though they saw the need for this forum. There seemed to be every danger that the Women's Forum was beginning to be viewed as a specific interest group. One of the reasons for this was that the issues raised by them were discussed directly with the Director and resolved at that level without an open discussion in the organisation. Men staff were thus not persuaded that issues raised by the Women's Forum were not just a matter of patronage and privilege, but one of justice.

*What is 'gender'?*

*Gender means bringing about change due to current injustice in society. Nawaz, Agriculture Officer, Charsadda, SRSP*

*(Bangash 2001).*

What we learn from these experiences is that while the gender debate opens up space within the organisation to discuss what gender equality means, steering the debate to focus on principles of justice underlying equality measures constitutes the politics of the possible. This can pave the way for change in attitudes.

### 3.3.3 'Voice': the other side of the gender debate

How can organisations make the practice of gender equality a routine affair? The straightforward answer would be to introduce rules and regulations that uphold equality principles, train people, make compliance to the rules a part of job descriptions and performance appraisals and institute mechanisms to plan, monitor and evaluate programme performance. All our participating organisations institutionalised these measures. However, gender equality is a slippery affair that can be legislated into being and also enforced within organisations by threat of sanctions but cannot be accounted for without a wide and supportive culture of accountability for ensuring equality outcomes. For example, regulations to outlaw sexual harassment may be introduced, procedures may be set up to arbitrate complaints and penalties specified. But these procedures may not be enough to give young women occupying junior positions in a non-governmental organisation the confidence to appeal when faced with routine harassment that is not explicitly physical. For this to happen, and for organisations to inculcate a more exacting standard of accountability from staff for equal treatment of women and men, those who lack power in the particular equality relationship have to be endowed with 'voice'. In the real world 'voice' and accountability are two sides of the same coin because if people within organisations have to answer for their decisions and actions, somebody has to be asking the questions.

There were several ways in which the participating organisations went about developing the 'voice' of gender advocates in the organisations. As has been discussed, creating and broad-basing a gender infrastructure in the organisation was very important in focussing attention on the changes necessary to build a gender sensitive organisation. However, as Goetz (2001) shows, gender machineries and women's advisory committees set up as intra-organisational bodies to take forward gender mainstreaming do not necessarily advocate for women's interests in that they do not necessarily look into women's special difficulties in

the workplace or support women staff in dealing with or resolving difficulties that they face because of their sex. What we do learn from the experiences of the participating organisations is that these machineries and advisory committees assumed different advocacy roles depending on the context of the organisation.

### *The role of gender infrastructure/machineries in 'voice development'*

In GRAM, for example, while men staff resented the Women's Forum advocacy on behalf of women workers (many of whom held junior positions in the organisation), the Forum and its activities played a vital role in putting forward the voices of women staff. It influenced organisational policy to improve facilities that were very important for women workers such as toilets, dormitories, and jeep facilities for night travel. It advocated for sensitivity to women's needs for time off in relation to personal health, which resulted in optional leave granted to women (without the need to apply in advance), and the need for childcare for women staff with very young children. Beside advocating for special provisions, the Women's Forum, as the evaluation points out, played an important role in flagging to women staff the importance of their views and gendered experiences of work at community level, which enhanced their confidence and self-esteem. The leadership potential of junior women staff was being developed through this process (Subrahmanian 2001).

In SRSP, the gender infrastructure at the central and regional office levels played a vital role in advocating for changes. Both women and men members of the Gender Core Group advocated on behalf of women workers, which strengthened accountability for gender equal outcomes in the organisation, like the policy of reserving technical posts for women.

CHA found that increasing the number of women in the organisation was critical for developing 'voice' in the organisation, and therefore recruiting women and training them so that they acquired the skills on the job became the key planks of their strategy in the first phase of the GFP.

### *The role of gender advocates in 'voice' development.*

A key to developing 'voice' was the role of gender advocates, the persons charged with specific responsibility for the GFP. The gender advocates / coordinators grew in leadership, understanding of the issues and strategic thinking and action during the lifetime of the GFP. The gender coordinator

of CHA, Salma Waqfi, succinctly summed up the role played by the gender coordinators and advisors at the 3rd GFP conference in 2000, 'I am not a decoration piece. I exist and I will do' – a feeling that was shared by almost all the gender coordinators. While most of the managements were supportive of the GFP, the role of the gender coordinators, together with the concept of gender aware organisational change was initially regarded by many as a new fashion. Gender advocates went from this beginning to gaining support, planning and actually implementing women-friendly measures. What facilitated their role? The 3rd regional GFP conference in 2000 asked this question of the gender coordinators. A number of factors were suggested. Besides the fact that they dressed, behaved and interacted as 'good' women befitting to their particular societies, gender coordinators earned respect because of their work and the manner in which they worked. In these ways, they functioned successfully as advocates of gender equality in contextually pragmatic terms. Almost all paid tribute to the support and understanding of staff members who were open to new ideas, and informal alliances played a key role. In organisations where participatory approaches were accepted as part of the way it operated, the difficult and sensitive role of the gender coordinators and the GFP were more easily integrated. In other words, democratic functioning, a culture of participation and discussion were fertile ground in which the GFP and gender coordinators could take root.

But gender coordinators/advisors are not usually recruited on advocacy criteria, and few development bureaucracies – government or non-government – attempt to develop or launch good advocates. Gender coordinators may never become good advocates; and yet 'voice' development on behalf of gender equality cannot happen without advocates. This is evident from the final GFP evaluations which suggest that the absence of gender advocates (because the coordinators had left or/ and the responsibility had been taken over by whoever was available) led to the stagnation of the GFP. The development of gender equitable measures did not proceed, and tools and mechanisms for integrating a gender perspective in programmes got limited to facilitating women's role in development rather than questioning their position in society and therefore the underlying causes of women's exclusion. Part of the explanation as to why 'voice' development on behalf of gender equality cannot happen without advocates is because unlike other roles in organisations the role of the gender coordinator or machinery is both a technical and a political one. The technical role which involves providing gender training, devising checklists and tools for planning, monitoring and implementing programmes and so on can be done by bureaucrats or technicians trained for the job. The political role is to draw attention to issues

of power and inequality, and may often involve challenging the status quo and male privilege, a role that requires advocates not bureaucrats. The gender coordinators in the GFP were able to combine these roles which accounts for their role in 'voice' development. A number of internal and external factors contributed to the process of transformation from coordinator to advocates: management support, strong informal alliances in the organisation, support from external gender advocates and feminists, the motivation and commitment of the individual herself and the solidarity generated by the South Asia Middle East GFP collectivity which became a reference point and peer group.

### *The importance of external networking in developing 'voice'*

Advocacy on behalf of gender equality and women's empowerment draws its strength from a wider constituency than the organisation alone. The importance of belonging and contributing to external networks is that knowledge exchange is facilitated; campaigning on joint issues concerning women's position is made easier, and in the process the gender debate within organisations is enriched.

Most of the participating organisations participated in and contributed to networks, and advocates drew strength from their participation in these forums. PARC, for example, has tried to encourage the local government and non-governmental organisations to integrate gender into their policies and work. In the process, PARC has assisted in gender training, raised its image as a gender-friendly organisation, and become a gender consultancy organisation itself. As a result, it has accomplished several things: it has established working relations with a variety of organisations including women's organisations; it is a member of regional institutions promoting Palestinian women's role; and it has begun to work directly with different ministries in the Palestinian Authority, for example with the Ministry of Agriculture to establish a special unit for rural women (PARC 2001).

In a strategy for sharing learning, CHA initiated a project with partner organisations to develop joint policies for improving gender equality and supporting female staff members in their organisations in Afghanistan. CHA took the lead among eight Afghan NGOs participating in this project. The gender coordinator of CHA points out in her report that engaging in these external activities both extended linkages with local NGOs on gender issues, while also encouraging CHA's staff to take gender issues more seriously (Waqfi 2005).

GEAG is part of a number of networks of civil society organisations that work in the field of rural development. SRSP, realising that it needed to build alliances with other organisations working in the region in order to sustain the gender equality agenda both in the programme and in the organisation, was able to develop and sustain a provincial network consisting of several other organisations that play an active role in promoting gender equality. The purpose of initiating and joining networks was to promote linking and learning amongst different organisations:

*A transformatory agenda cannot be achieved through one person only. Strategic alliances need to be built not only in the organisation but also with other organisations. Macro level issues can also be addressed through such forums. With this aim in mind, SRSP has joined these networks so as to promote gender equality (Bangash 2002).*

Steehouwer (2002c) suggests that external networking was one of the principal strategies adopted by the gender coordinators to pursue gender equality in the organisation and to convince programme managers about the need to incorporate gender equality issues in the programme.

### *The importance and role of internal networking and advocacy*

While external networking gives strength and substance to the internal advocates and strengthens 'voice', the role of internal networking in developing widespread support in the organisation for gender aware changes is mentioned by all participating organisations. This happens in a number of ways. Networking internally can take place via those internal forums and spaces specifically set up to communicate on gender issues, such as the gender coordination units / committees, training forums etc. But networking can and does happen through informal channels as well. For example, SRSP held regular informal discussions with all women staff in order to learn about their concerns regarding SRSP's work environment. Another mechanism to enhance voice in the organisations involved setting up internal newsletters which promoted and shared case studies and good practice documentation. PARC, GEAG, and Prodipan all produced newsletters with a focus on gender issues to raise the profile of women in their organisations and programmes. The issues put forward in the newsletters, such as reports on the progress of the GFP, brought about debate among the employees and contributed (together with other gender conscious-raising meetings and trainings) to an increased interest in gender issues.

### 3.3.4 The inverted change triangle

In Chapter 2 the proposed change model was likened to the Bermuda Triangle, a metaphor that signified the disappearance of those aspects of change that are most necessary to transform gender relations and put it on a basis of equality, namely ideas, practices and behaviour. The discussion in this section has tried to show how initiatives and processes to build a ‘culture’ of gender equitable organisational change accompanied the technical level changes. In other words, much of the actual work in the GFP implementation phase invariably ended up concentrating in the cultural layer of the organisation and focussed on peoples’ beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. In the following figure (Figure 3.4), and using the nine-box tool, the actual implementation strategies are mapped showing how the change model was reversed in the execution of the project.

## 3.4 Stepping out of the Nine-box Tool: GFP as a Tool for ‘Mainstreaming’ Gender Equality in the field

### 3.4.1 A different set of tools for mainstreaming gender equality in the field

In chapter 1 it was noted that gender and organisational development practitioners have developed frameworks that concentrate on understanding and correcting those aspects of organisational culture that reproduce wider gender inequalities within organisations. However, not a single gender and organisational development framework actually considers and examines the relationship that organisations have with their programmes. This is particularly important with development organisations, for they are defined by what they do and their vision for a better world.

This section examines some of the key strategies that participating organisations used to bring about a gender perspective in their field programmes, and their outcomes. What is the relationship between gender aware organisational change and gender sensitive programming? Does awareness about gender equality in the organisation automatically lead to greater sensitivity to equality concerns in the field? Is a different set of tools – technical and political – needed to achieve the latter? The following analysis suggests that all participating organisations did indeed adopt different technical and political tools, different from those that were used to promote gender equality in the organisation, to transform their field programmes.

FIGURE 3.4 – THE INVERTED CHANGE TRIANGLE

	Mission/Mandate	Organisational Structure	Human Resources
<i>Technical Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 1</b> <i>Policies and Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Integrated gender concerns into strategic plans;</li> <li>○ Established gender policies;</li> <li>○ Made gender integral part of organisational and programme work.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 4</b> <i>Tasks and Responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strengthened accountability for gender equality with a broad-based, integrated gender infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 7</b> <i>Expertise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Changed or relaxed recruitment rules to favour women's employment;</li> <li>○ Women recruited and then trained in the technical aspects for women-only technical and sector-specific posts;</li> <li>○ Developed 'voice' for women in the organisation by increasing the number of women in the organisation .</li> </ul>
<i>Political Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 2</b> <i>Policy Influence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gender infrastructure networked internally and did advocacy work;</li> <li>○ Made strategic alliances between gender infrastructure and other mainstream departments.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 5</b> <i>Decision-making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Worked on generating adequate information;</li> <li>○ participated in discussion and decision-making;</li> <li>○ managed conflict.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 8</b> <i>Room for Manoeuvre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Built capacity and made fast-track programmes for women;</li> <li>○ Provided physical infrastructure for women;</li> <li>○ Changed service rules to recognise and provide for women's reproductive roles.</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 3</b> <i>Organisational Culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Set up formal and informal spaces to communicate gender issues; created a more gender-friendly organisational culture;</li> <li>○ Created 'voice' for women;</li> <li>○ Promoted affirmative action and attention to women's needs and interests;</li> <li>○ Improved gender reputation of organisation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 6</b> <i>Cooperation and Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facilitated learning about gender equality by space for debate and discussions;</li> <li>○ Jointly planned a forum for exchange and learning;</li> <li>○ Improved knowledge and image of organisation by external networking and alliances with others on gender equality.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 9</b> <i>Attitude</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provided space for staff to debate gender issues and change attitudes in gender awareness training events;</li> <li>○ Staff open to new ideas facilitated the GFP</li> </ul>

Gender mainstreaming in programmes involves the integration of gender equality concerns into the analyses and formulation of all policies, programmes and projects, as well as initiatives to enable women and men to formulate and express their views and participate in decision-making across all issues. In practice, there are two interrelated ways in which gender equality concerns can be mainstreamed in programmes: by adopting an integrationist approach and/ or a **transformative or agenda-setting approach**. Whereas integrationist mainstreaming involves the incorporation of gender equality concerns in the analysis, policy formulation and programming of development sectors, transformative mainstreaming involves addressing women's concerns related to their position (strategic interests) in mainstream development agendas, so as to transform the agenda. Integration and transformation require work at two different institutional levels. While integration involves working within development institutions to improve the 'supply' side of the equation, a transformative agenda requires efforts to create constituencies that 'demand' change.

### 3.4.2 Integrating gender issues in the mainstream

All participating organisations initially used an integrationist approach to mainstreaming. They developed a gender analysis of the problems faced by the particular sector by doing baseline surveys and compiling gender disaggregated data. This analysis was incorporated into the formulation of programmes and projects; monitoring and evaluation systems and tools were also modified to capture the progress made in integrating a gender perspective in programmes and projects. Staff members were trained to use the tools for gender analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

As a result, there was considerable improvement in programme quality in terms of outreach and appropriateness of project inputs. Gender aware planning enabled the organisations to target women and men better and to provide services/ inputs that were appropriate to their different needs. For example, in SRSP gender indicators were developed to assess overall programme performance and monitor the progress of women's organisations. Studies on women's empowerment in women's community-based organisations (WCOs) were conducted, and project proposal development ensured appropriate resource allocation. While preparing the portfolio of opportunities in mainstream programmes, women's needs were separately identified and interventions planned accordingly. In the reports, achievements under the women's programme were separately highlighted in

the data so that they did not get lost. Similarly, whenever an impact study was conducted or case study developed, the impact on women and gender relations was taken into account. As a result 'at the organisational level a marked shift has occurred in strategy of SRSP as now programme initiatives focus not only on poverty but also on gender' (Sidiqi 2001).

PALM also disaggregated data collection and tried to make their planning and monitoring more gender responsive. All reporting formats were revised to capture sex-disaggregated information which was reflected in their progress reports. Efforts were also made to develop indicators to monitor programme performance. Similarly, GEAG reframed their mainstream sustainable agriculture programme with the objective of reaching out to both women and men. GEAG used PRA and the Harvard (Gender Analysis) Framework in all the villages where they work to assess the gender division of labour, seasonality calendars, access to and control over resources and benefits. Monitoring indicators for sustainable agriculture interventions included the use of farm data sheets, which provided details on cropping patterns, labour days (for men/women), crop yields and consumption patterns etc.

Programme quality improvement became an important tool for gender advocates to gain support for the GFP, especially at the management level. But the integrationist approach to gender mainstreaming remained limited in what it could achieve. Integrating gender equality issues in the mainstream served the important purpose of calling attention to the differential needs of and outcomes for women and men. It, therefore, enabled programme managers to plan better and monitor whether women and men were being reached. But it did not necessarily address unequal relations between women and men.

PALM found, for example, that while they were able to devise indicators that monitored inputs and outputs of the GFP, they faced difficulties in designing effect and impact indicators. They were unable to develop a database for gender analysis at the field level that would assess women and men's relative positions rather than just their situation. PRA methods used to assess the needs of the target population were restricted to activity profiling and, therefore, did not yield insights into the structural reasons for women's disempowerment. Gender training for staff focussed on an analysis of gender roles and how these could be changed, with little focus on power relations and other dimensions of social relationships (Sethi and Farid 2001). The evaluation report attributes this both to a lack of in-depth knowledge of gender analysis and to a lack of an overall change model. What did they want to transform – gender roles or/and relations?

GEAG strategy to reframe their mainstream sustainable agriculture programme did reach out to both women and men but not on the basis of equality. GEAG found that while the technical tools to engender sustainable agriculture interventions provided valuable quantitative data with which to design and implement appropriate projects for women and men, it did not provide insights about those aspects of gender relations that pose special constraints to women's participation and subordinate them in the production relations of agriculture. The strategy to integrate gender equality issues in the mainstream sustainable agriculture programme thus failed to analyse and address the gender dimensions of decision-making in agriculture that pose special difficulties for women or the unequal burden of reproductive tasks borne by women which impacts on their role in agriculture. Gender training of staff also faced the problem of conceptualising gender by 'simply looking at both women and men without fully understanding the underlying question of power, the layers of gender relations and how they are negotiated, or the institutional context within which they work (the state, market, household and community)' (GEAG 2001).

*While special provisions were introduced by GEAG to ensure that women and men could attend the technical training programmes on sustainable agriculture, there was little improvement in the attendance of women farmers in the period 1999 – 2000. The reason was not that women were not interested or that training sessions were held at times that women are unavailable but that the technical training on sustainable agriculture focused on farm operations and crop production over which men have control because they own land. Women attended the programmes on kitchen gardens because they have direct control over this resource although they did not own even the homestead plot*

(GEAG 2001).

The limitation of reframing the mainstream programmes from a gender perspective is that it confines programmes to meeting the practical needs of women and often gets stuck in a pattern of gender analysis that does not have a transformatory vision but tries to make the best of the existing division of labour and production relations to get more benefits for women. All the participating organisations and especially those that had large rural development programmes that focussed on livelihood issues (PARC, SRSP, PALM and GEAG) faced this limitation and had to adopt alternative strategies to push for women's strategic interests.

### 3.4.3 Transforming the mainstream: mobilising for women's strategic interests

*Women's groups have become the focal point for development in both off-farm and on-farm activities: for example, women of a Self-Help Group (SHG) contributed to the relief work for the flood affected areas by collecting food and clothes for distribution to the flood victims, and by repairing a village road damaged by rain*

(GEAG 1999a)

Strategies to transform mainstream approaches pursued by the participating organisations were two-fold. First, efforts to create and strengthen women's constituencies and give 'voice' to their aspirations in the field of operations became a key strategy. Second, wider advocacy on women's position, and networking with other organisations to bring pressure to bear on public policies became the other arm of the strategy. Whereas organising women in groups at a community level was a strategy that many organisations had pursued before, the GFP provided the impetus to organise women politically, which means to organise women around strategic interests and not just their practical needs. Thus constituency building became not just a means to facilitate women's access to project

benefits but an end in itself, transforming the self-image of women, their confidence, leadership abilities, and collective thinking and action.

GEAG, for example, found that while women farmers and their work in sustainable agricultural was their core business, there was little room for developing women farmers' roles and improving their access to resources and benefits within a strictly technical programme of improving farming practices. Because of the out-migration of men from the area, women were de

facto in charge of farming operations, but they were neither recognised as farmers in public policy nor did they own land. Self-help groups initially formed to help women access credit and other resources were transformed into forums for rural women to meet and address issues collectively – issues that concerned their position rather than only their condition. Collective mobilisation was on a range of issues from alcoholism of their men-folk to domestic violence, environmental pollution and equal wages. Women mobilised to insist on the granting of 'pattas' (land ownership deeds) in their own names when the government distributed land. They moved against local government institutions to demand transparency in the way community projects were being planned

*Meetings organised in celebration of International Women's Day were forums where, for the first time, women came out of the villages and laid out their problems and demands for basic services and representation of women's needs in village development directly to the concerned government officials*

(GEAG 1999b).

*In 2000, 78 NGOs organised the largest farmers' rally in eastern UP, where GEAG works. It was attended by more than 3,000 small and marginal farmers, half of whom were women.*

*The demands raised included implementation of the minimum wage, legislation for waged work in agriculture, equal wages for women and men, and granting of title deeds in women's names for land distributed by the government*

(GEAG 2001).

*As a result of gender awareness groups have incorporated principles of gender equality clauses in their constitutions. This development has been positively taken by the community, especially men. Women leaders proudly talked about it in their meeting with us. The existence of functioning CBOs with aware and capacitated leadership is the most visible output that is potentially sustainable*

(Sethi and Farid 2001).

and how public money was being spent on these projects. They organised against rich farmers and their exploitation of low caste female farm workers. Through these and other initiatives, women's self-help groups – who are now federated – have become a political force.

Women's community organising was complemented by GEAG's efforts to mobilise like-minded organisations to press for reform of public policies addressing farmers and farming livelihoods. GEAG played a key role in the introduction of a separate section on the role and rights of women farmers in the state agricultural policy document in 1999. This was achieved through joint efforts by GEAG and its partners in lobbying and sensitising the agriculture development bureaucracy on women's role as farmers and their right to state services and ownership of assets. GEAG is part of a number of networks of civil society organisations that work in the field of rural development. By linking with them and bringing a gender perspective into their work it has been possible to have greater impact on state policies in other areas of rural development, namely education, population, women's empowerment and health.

PALM consciously initiated efforts to enhance women's participation and leadership in CBOs. These efforts have resulted in 43 percent of the CBOs being led by women. The evaluation found that women office bearers were vocal and confident, men had begun to accept women's role in development and leadership, and there was positive impact on the sharing of tasks at household and community level.

The initiation of the GFP and the growing role of women in CBOs, which are the key organisational structures for community mobilisation and participation, led to greater attention to women's needs in the mainstream programmes and the realisation that these needed to be reorganised:

*The 'staff in some cases noticed change in leadership styles because women were determined to perform 'well' and 'be equally good as men leaders'.*

*There are changes in the attitude among men accepting women's leadership and for women, the change was not limited to change in roles but the value attached to these roles. Though not explicitly expressed, self-esteem and self-respect among women has increased' (Sethi and Farid 2001).*

PALM's lobbying efforts on behalf of women tea workers and training for plantation managers yielded results in that they were granted time off to attend meetings and training programmes. The plantation managers began to perceive the training for women in labour laws, rights and entitlements in the work place as a positive influence on women workers because it made them more 'rational' in their expectations and in their negotiations with employers.

'Previously the emphasis of SRSP programmes was on making women economically strong but, due to the GFP, the need for making women socially strong became apparent' (Sidiqi 2001). The engendering of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation System (PMES) in SRSP provided the means to plan and assess overall programme performance and gender sensitisation of staff led to more attention being paid to how women could benefit from SRSP programmes. But this in itself was not sufficient to make women 'socially' strong. For this to happen, SRSP needed to pursue a strategy that amplified women's voice, exposed both women and men's community organisations to alternative models of gender relations, and enhanced women's capabilities. Thus enhancing the role of and quality of women's CBOs, alongside fostering debate among men on women's role and position, became central. The increase in the number of WCOs provided the organisational basis for targeting women not only to implement the economic and social programmes but also to raise awareness among women and confidence in themselves.

The men's community organisations were used as forums to discuss and debate the social position of women. However, the growing power of women's organising and the gender debate in men's organisations did not come without costs. In one of the programme areas of SRSP, male elites forbade SRSP programmes, alleging that programme activities

*In Kohat region, one of the activists, Said Khan took affirmative action in his own house after attending gender training. When he was finalising the marriage of his daughter he took a written statement on a legal stamp paper signed by the bridegroom with the following conditions that were attached to the Nikah Nama (marriage contract): i) If the groom divorces his wife when drunk, the divorce would not be valid; ii) If the marriage did not endure, he would willingly give divorce. Said Khan's son was also married to his son-in-law's sister. He made his son agree to the principle that if his daughter seeks divorce and is granted it, the son would not be forced son to divorce the sister. 'This in a way is a miracle in that particular culture'*

(Sidiqi 2001).

were going against accepted moral and religious norms by ‘exposing’ women to public activities. These threats to a transformatory agenda were countered through indirect measures like building alliances with other NGOs in the region to promote gender equality.

## Summary of key points made in this chapter

- This chapter analyses the making of the change that the organisations had planned and focuses on what made changes possible, acceptable and practiced during the lifetime of the GFP. It shows that the change model envisaged in the planning phase, whereby change activities were primarily concentrated in the technical and political layer of the organisation rather than in the cultural layer, was to a large extent reversed in the implementation of the programme.
- Divided into four sections, the chapter analyses: the experiences of the gender committees set up to manage the gender focus programme; changes in organisational rules to allow for the entry into and retention of women in the work force and their outcomes; the making of cultural change that involved ‘constructing’ a new and shared meaning of equitable gender relations; and strategies that participating organisations used to promote gender equality in their field programmes and the outcomes.
- **Gender infrastructure.** The experience of three organisations is examined. The aim of setting up or reconstituting gender committees was to broad base the responsibility for promoting gender equality internally and in the programme among all staff and sections of the organisation. Where broad-basing did work the structural shift from a predominantly WID to a GAD committee had to be accompanied by political shifts in the internal environment. Some of the strategies that made these political shifts possible were: training in gender awareness that evolved into debates and where staff members could express their hesitations, opposition and scepticism; alliances and joint programmes with senior managers responsible for mainstream departments; building the gender infrastructure into a network to provide support for the gender focal points; and strengthening and making alliances with women’s organisations in the field programme and other like-minded organisations working on gender equality.

- **Making the workplace habitable for women and men.** Organisations are deeply gendered in that the norms, structures and practices, shaping the incentive systems, accountability structures and bureaucratic procedures promote men and exclude women. Participating organisations were no exception to this rule and most organisations were overwhelmingly male. The rural development context in South Asia and the Middle-East favours male workers because they are unencumbered by domestic responsibilities, are mobile, and can live away from home without fear for their sexual safety. In order to change this situation the organisations had to review their existing rules and introduce new measures that would: get more women into the organisation; facilitate their entry into the core business of the organisation, the field programmes; recognise and provide for women's reproductive role in order to retain women workers; and promote women into leadership and management. Most organisations did manage to increase the number of women workers and especially women working in field programmes. The turnover of female staff remained high but with the introduction of woman-friendly measures the organisations were perceived to be good employers and attracted women. Some like CHA adopted a range of strategies, cultural and political, to get staff members to accept women's presence and role in the organisation. All of them introduced special measures to support women in their reproductive roles and some introduced measures to support men and women as parents. Most organisations, however, were singularly ineffective in promoting women to leadership and management positions. Exclusionary processes were at work and there was insufficient attention paid to managing them. These included the definition of standards of 'qualified' professionals capable of handling management and leadership roles; grooming men into leadership after recruitment while not doing the same for women; and replacing women in senior positions with men when they left.
- **Inverting the change triangle: the gender debate.** Changes initiated to build a gender infrastructure, to get more women into the organisation and make the organisation more habitable for both women and men meant not only changing rules but also creating new and shared meanings of gender relations and equality. The organisations did this by fostering a culture of dialogue and debate. Spaces were created within

the organisation, such as training forums, where people felt safe to express their opinions, interact with their colleagues and hear differing viewpoints. In fact the gender debate itself became the space for people to learn about equality. Fostering a culture of dialogue and debate also requires the construction of the ‘voices’ of those advocating for change and seeking accountability for changes. There were several ways in which ‘voice’ was amplified: the gender infrastructure/ machineries played a key role in ‘voice development’ by providing women space to organise and articulate their interests; the gender coordinators, who in many instances became advocates, provided leadership and focussed attention on issues of power and inequality, which meant challenging the status quo and male privilege; external networking facilitated knowledge sharing, campaigning on social justice and gender equality; and internal networking through formal and informal channels, gave the gender advocates a presence in the organisation. While the proposed change model in Chapter 2 was likened to the Bermuda Triangle, a metaphor signifying the disappearance of those aspects of change that are most necessary to transform gender relations, making the changes actually work entailed focussing precisely on those intractable aspects of change – on peoples’ beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. The change triangle was thus inverted in the implementation.

- **Stepping out of the nine-box tool: GFP as a tool for ‘mainstreaming’ gender equality in the field.** The participating organisations adopted a different set of tools – technical and political – to promote gender equality in their programmes since the gender and organisational change frameworks did not address this key concern of NGOs. There are two interrelated ways in which gender equality concerns can be mainstreamed in programmes: by adopting an **integrationist approach** and/ or a **transformative or agenda-setting approach**. All participating organisations initially used an integrationist approach to mainstreaming. They developed a gender analysis of the problems faced by the particular sector by doing baseline surveys and compiling gender disaggregated data. This analysis was incorporated into the formulation of programmes and projects; and monitoring and evaluation systems and tools were modified to capture the progress made in integrating a gender perspective in programmes and projects. Staff members were trained to use the tools for gender analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation . There

was considerable improvement in programme quality as a result in terms of outreach and appropriateness of project inputs. Despite the programme quality improvement and the fact that this became an important tool for gender advocates to gain support for the GFP especially at the management level, the integrationist approach to gender mainstreaming was limited in what it could achieve. It enabled programme managers to plan better and monitor whether women and men were being reached. But it did not necessarily address unequal relations between women and men. All the participating organisations and especially those that had large rural development programmes that focussed on livelihood issues had to adopt alternative strategies to push for women's strategic interests.

- Strategies to transform mainstream approaches pursued by the participating organisations were two-fold. First, efforts to create and strengthen women's constituencies in the field of operations became a key strategy to organise women and give 'voice' to their aspirations. Whereas organising women in groups at a community level was a strategy that many organisations had pursued before, the GFP provided the impetus to organise women politically, which means to organise women around strategic interests and not just their practical needs. Thus constituency building became not just a means to facilitate women's access to project benefits but an end in itself, transforming the self-image of women, their confidence, leadership abilities, and collective thinking and action. Second, wider advocacy on women's position and networking with other organisations to bring pressure to bear on public policies became the other arm of the strategy.

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<sup>24</sup> See Goetz 2001: 269 for a discussion of the literature.

<sup>25</sup> In fact Salma Waqfi came to the 3rd GFP conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh accompanied by a younger brother since she would not have been allowed to travel alone from Peshawar, Pakistan.

<sup>26</sup> Lowering qualifications as an affirmative action measure is controversial. Those against such measures argue that it lowers standards. Those for whom it is meant often face prejudice. GFP partners had to navigate their way through these controversies.

# Chapter 4

## Revisiting Change

It has been four years since the GFP ended. It is also over ten years since the UN Beijing Conference that was the catalyst for the programme and for global interest in gender mainstreaming. Over time, the concept of gender mainstreaming has generally lost favour with gender advocates and feminist academics. For many government, donors and development organisations, however, it remains the strategy to promote gender equality. This chapter places the GFP within this paradoxical context – disenchantment with an approach that generally held promise for many, against the continued belief in gender mainstreaming. Chapter 4 looks at the international experience with gender mainstreaming, provides an update of the status of the partners' GFP initiatives within this experience and explores the GFP as an organisational change strategy to mainstream gender equity.

The GFP, as a gender and an organisational change initiative, was not a gender mainstreaming project per se, but it arose from the same historical context and bears many similar features to gender mainstreaming: the establishment of policies and gender structures; the engendering of the project cycle, particularly monitoring; and the setting up of organisational processes for affirmative action including hiring and advancement of women staff. But while the goals are similar, their approaches and emphasis are inherently different.

The focus of gender mainstreaming, for most organisations at least, is on programmes; the engendering of all initiatives, starting with gender analysis, is thought to produce gender equality results. Organisations that do undertake internal organisational changes, albeit in the minority, do so to support the engendering of programmes. Often undertaken without an organisational analysis or even a training needs assessment, organisations establish gender policies, accountability systems such as gender aware monitoring and performance management, and capacity strengthening to ensure gender aware programming. In contrast, the GFP started with an acknowledgement of the links between gender unaware programmes

and gendered organisations. While the long-term aim was also to produce gender equality results in programmes, the starting place was exclusively on organisational change. As the *Politics of the Possible* demonstrates, this fundamental distinction is perhaps what explains the different experiences, despite the similar appearances, of the two approaches.

## 4.1 The Status of Gender Mainstreaming

International experience with gender mainstreaming has overall not been positive. Despite some important advances, ‘feminists’ aspirations for social transformation’ remain unfulfilled (Cornwall et al. 2004: 1). In many ways, efforts have been suffering from the same or similar fate as WID initiatives<sup>27</sup>. Policies are established but not implemented for a number of reasons: resistance to change, and desire for the preservation of male privilege, poor policy formulation, insufficient leadership and commitment, lack of subsequent plans guiding implementation, limited resources particularly financial and human, and lack of policy translation to the field. Similarly, gender units have been suffering the same fate as their antecedent WID or women’s units; they remain at the margins of organisations – with little access to power and decision-making, limited authority, insufficient human and financial resources and overall lack of capacity – whilst often being saddled with the explicit or implicit responsibility for mainstreaming gender in the entire organisation and its programmes.

The recent anniversary of the UN Beijing World Conference on Women has provided an opportunity to assess the last decade. A review of experiences of national machineries for women, the infrastructure often given the responsibility for gender mainstreaming, notes a number of major achievements. It also discusses challenges faced by national machineries, both new and ones that have persisted since 1995. These include lack of political will and leadership, lack of stability in terms of their position within the organisation, human resources and finances, and inadequate accountability, inadequate data collection and monitoring mechanisms as well as poor coordination within government and with civil society (UN Division for the Advancement of Women 2005). Similarly, Moser and Moser (2005), in a desk review of fourteen NGOs and bilateral and multilateral international organisations, conclude that gender mainstreaming efforts over the last ten years have resulted mainly in the establishment of gender policies but implementation has been varied, and the impact of such policies remains generally unknown.

For some, the failure of gender mainstreaming initiatives stems not so much from what is missing – leadership, commitment, effective infrastructure etc. – but rather the nature of the project itself, namely its transformatory ambitions. That gender mainstreaming has failed is not surprising. Echoing Lourde's contention, how can we expect organisations to transform themselves from within, particularly when they are reflections of existing patriarchy and male privilege? Resistance to change, either through outright defiance or by more subtle means of cooptation, results in the 'evaporation' of well-meaning policies (Llongwe 1997).

Of greater concern, many observers note the de-politicisation of gender mainstreaming that has moved from being a process of transformation to an end in itself, pursued with solely instrumentalist intent. The conceptual tools of gender analysis, if used at all, are not employed to analyse power relations but rather have been applied routinely to collect sex disaggregated data, which is often accompanied by a constant cry for more tools, guidelines and checklists<sup>28</sup>. Another instance of gender mainstreaming being interpreted mechanically is embodied in the withdrawal of support for women-specific activities because gender has been 'mainstreamed' and there is no longer a need for specialised organisations or initiatives (Llongwe 1997; Rao and Kelleher 2005). Adding to the already diluted agenda, 'mainstreaming' has itself become mainstreamed. There is now talk of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS, conflict and protection, the environment, Africa, Least Developed Countries, and even women.

In contrast, gender mainstreaming has been absent from the current discourse on exclusion, voice and accountability, which has evolved from the inter-related agendas of good governance, rights based approaches and citizenship. While feminists have focused on women, as citizens and rights holders, and governments, as duty bearers accountable to its citizens, little attention has been paid to how this translates into gender mainstreaming. As described later, the Politics of the Possible shows that the creation of both internal and external space to demand accountability is persuasive and generative.

## 4.2 The GFP today

The GFP experience overall confounds these experiences with gender mainstreaming. For almost all partners, the establishment of a gender policy was key to solidifying their concerns around the discrimination of women and institutionalising their new-found commitment to promoting gender equality.

Five years after their establishment, most report that the policies still have currency and are being used. For some, the end of the GFP did not signify an end to their efforts. SRSP pursued the formal approval of the policy by the Board of Directors and developed an equal opportunity policy after the project. CHA's new five-year strategic plan also includes a focus on gender.

The continuation of gender infrastructures established during the project has, however, been less successful. PARC, GEAG and PALM maintain their Core Groups and Gender Unit respectively, as well as their active involvement in their organisations. However, CHA's gender committee had to be reactivated in 2005; GRAM disbanded their gender task force altogether. Formal gender positions seem to have suffered the most, mainly due to a lack of funds. SRSP was not able to maintain its Gender Mainstreaming Officers while PALM continues to face numerous challenges, as previously described, in hiring and maintaining a gender focal person. Still, the role of such infrastructures continues, with senior management often taking on the task of keeping gender on the agenda, as was the case of SRSP.

Getting women into the organisation and into the field have remained on the agenda with improvements still being made by some of the partners. GEAG maintains a gender balance on its Board and Core Group and has improved the ratio of women and men on its Executive Board. PALM has succeeded in hiring qualified women for senior positions. As noted previously, CHA continues to increase the overall percentage of women staff in all sectors as well as at higher levels of the organisation. Partners, such as GEAG, SRSP and PALM, are sustaining their 'affirmative action' measures as well as women-friendly policies concerning travel and accommodation facilities. While some new measures have been introduced, such as day care in SRSP and paternity leave in PALM, others were discontinued mainly due to financial constraints. PALM no longer provides travel provisions or access to loans.

Support from management is still considered a key factor. The sustained commitment of SRSP's management and Board are seen as a 'main factor ... in retaining the positive changes' from the GFP (SRSP 2005). CHA reports that women are being accepted in management and are sharing in decision-making. Collective awareness as well dialogue and discussion concerning gender issues continues: in GEAG for example, staff seem empowered to challenge 'views and action at personal and organisational' levels (GEAG 2005). Following the recommendations of the evaluation at the end of the GFP, SRSP continued gender awareness raising of staff that has resulted in improved sensitisation, particularly with its management. In contrast, while

women's issues are being discussed at PALM, maintaining a systematic dialogue has been difficult, mainly due to the absence of a gender focal point, according to the organisation.

Internal improvements continue to contribute to the partners' external reputations as gender sensitive, as in some cases do their external networks. GEAG's experiences in gender and agriculture have been documented and published by other organisations. Working with other NGOs has been a major advocacy strategy. SRSP staff act as resource persons for other organisations and government agencies. The organisation has also acted as the secretariat for a gender network of civil society organisations for the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Internal improvements have not only helped being known as a gender aware organisation, this reputation has also, in turn, strengthened staff commitment to contribute to such an environment.

The partners' programmes also continue to evolve both in terms of how they are being undertaken and in the types of programmes being implemented. For GEAG, gender issues are now being addressed in project formulation as well as implementation, where they are being placed at the core of the programmes. SRSP identifies women's needs separately and identifies and plans interventions accordingly.

More than being made gender aware, activities continue to become overall more strategic in addressing not just the condition of women but also their position. In the cases of GEAG, PALM and others, there is a shift underway from seeing gender equality as an issue of redistributing resources, where women are relative to men and their standards, to recognising women and their rights as a value on their own (Fraser, 2001). This implies not just transforming their programmes, but also addressing gender justice and identity, which have become new starting points. For example, GEAG's research is not only more gender sensitive, but it now conducts research on specific gender issues such as women and agriculture extension, women farmers' rights and control of land and the Panchayat Raj<sup>29</sup> system. GEAG is involved in a regional advocacy campaign combating violence against women and a campaign for the rights of women farmers. It has also turned its analytical gender lens from itself to its programmes. GEAG undertook a gender impact assessment of its social mobilisation, sustainable agriculture and micro credit interventions, in order to focus on its gender impact that are not captured by more broadly based programme evaluations (Krishnamurthy 2004). The study compared GEAG's members with non-members and attempted to attribute causality. It found that member households enjoyed

better social conditions, such as less poverty overall, higher levels of children's education, and greater food security. It also found that intra household gender differentials were less pronounced, although still present and biased against women. Still, women members had greater access to household resources and productive assets that were in their name. The study also found women members compared to non-members had greater control over their 'labour ... mobility, reproduction, body integrity and identity' (Krishnamurthy 2004: 4). The women's Self Help Groups (SHGs) continued to be active at different levels: within families, promoting girl's education for example, at community level, such as addressing alcohol abuse and sexual harassment, as well as in local politics. Sixty percent of the SHGs nominated women to run for Gram Panchayat (local government) elections (seventeen percent of SHG contestants won). Also, the SHGs and the federations have been lobbying for more accountable government services. Promoting rural women's organisations remains a key strategy for GEAG.

Since the end of the GFP, PARC has adopted a strategy involving both the Rural Women's Development department and the Rural Women's Development Society (RWDS). The latter was established in 2001 as an independent affiliated organisation, and is a federation of the earlier Women's Clubs. Both provide services while at the same time maintaining a focus on women's empowerment. The Rural Women's Development department focuses on women's social empowerment by enhancing their role and status in rural communities, such as raising awareness for more women in decision-making bodies and supporting women candidates in village council elections. The department also supports women's saving and credit cooperatives. The RWDS evolved from PARC's experience in supporting women's clubs, as described previously. PARC fostered the establishment of RWDS to provide a separate and distinct vehicle to promote women's political standing, for this was not possible within the confines of gender mainstreaming within the current structure and politics of PARC. RWDS focuses on capacity building, establishing women's centers, advocacy, lobbying and networking as well as on income generation projects, food security, and girls and women's education. While service provision includes more conventional activities, capacity building initiatives include legal literacy and women's empowerment and leadership. RWDS also provides educational upgrading and advocates for the inclusion of women's agriculture work as paid work and in the calculation of Palestinian gross domestic product.

For other organisations, there has been less improvement in engendering both what they do and how they undertake their programmes. In GRAM's case,

gender forums have not been conducted for their cooperative societies because of resource and time constraints, created by having to focus their energies on financial performance and sustainability. However, GRAM has been active in creating federations of these societies to lobby government for the creation and implementation of more gender aware policies and greater access to government resources. For PALM, the dire social and economic context in which it works remains a challenge to the organisation in addressing strategic interests. While it seems to be able to address practical needs, for example in water management projects, women lose interest once these needs are met and leave the water committees.

In 2005, the GFP partners reported mostly and most consistently on the technical layer, which is not surprising given their emphasis on this level in their GFP action plans. This was also the level where some partners were unable to continue initiatives from the GFP, for they primarily concern the loss of the gender infrastructure, mainly gender officers. PALM and SRSP report that a lack of funds did not allow them to continue these positions, which had a ripple effect on other initiatives such as gender committees, training and monitoring. Some organisations compensated for this, for example with senior management committees continuing the gender dialogue; others were unable to move forward. Interestingly, very few of the personnel policy measures were cancelled due to a lack of financial resources. Internal provisions, such as male staff forgoing their entitlements in the case of SRSP, were made to continue some measures for women staff.

In comparison, the partners did not report as much and reported less consistently on the political and culture layers. This is not to say that progress in these areas was not sustained, rather it seems to feature less in their updates. When reports refer to aspects of the cultural level, discussion focuses on external factors affecting their organisational culture, rather than internally generated organisational cultural issues. But the partners do not seem to have lost the momentum developed throughout the GFP or experienced any internal backlash. Rather, CHA, PALM, PARC and SRSP discuss how the conservative and traditional contexts and cultures in which they work constrain their activities. PALM refers to patriarchal cultural and traditional barriers in Sri Lankan plantations. This, in particular, impacts on their ability to retain female staff, despite all the capacity development undertaken and organisational incentives and measures they have introduced. For CHA working in Afghanistan, the 'cultural barrier still is a main constraint'. Security issues, and the shortage of women with education, experience and expertise, limit their work. The lack of physical security

particularly constrains female staff, despite their increased capacities and assertiveness. For PARC, the continued occupation and increasing isolation and segregation of Palestine meant that just getting work done has been a major challenge, as travel is severely constrained. SRSP, working in NWFP of Pakistan – an area with very strict socio-cultural norms and where religious groups are very active and influential on the cultural setup – has faced a lot of resistance in their work with the communities. Nevertheless, they are now making considerable progress in organising women in the district communities of NWFP (SRSP 2005).

CHA, however, did also report on internal weaknesses: they state that their gender committee needs to be more proactive and networking and advocacy more engendered. They also seem to be struggling to provide more advanced forms of training to address the different levels of staff needs in the head office and in the field: they need more master trainers, and trainers with greater capacity.

### 4.3 Gender and Organisational Change as a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Although the GFP was not initially intended to engender partners' programmes but to focus on organisational change, participants included this dimension in their efforts to promote gender equality. In this respect, their gender and organisational change efforts became a strategy to mainstream gender.

Gender mainstreaming is often described as a 'process'; this, however, does not provide a sense of strategy. That the GFP's main strategy was organisational change is what makes the programme unorthodox and paradoxical in its approach. The GFP was premised on the acknowledgement of the gendered nature of development organisations and the interrelationship between them and the development programmes they design, implement and monitor. It was also based on the belief that to promote gender equality in programmes, gender issues need not only to be tackled within the organisation, but the organisation itself needs to be changed. In order to achieve this, a tool from organisational development was adapted for this purpose, but the tool proved partly insufficient. While focusing on the internal technical, political and cultural aspects of organisations, the framework did not capture a critical context of the work of development organisations, the element that defines, informs and ultimately motivates them: the external context of their programmes and the communities

in which they work. The fact that members of the latter were invited to participate in some of the GFP partners' organisational analysis attests to the partners' self-image needing to be, in part, validated by the communities in which they worked.

Herein lies the GFP paradox. While gender mainstreaming tends to affect the external, the GFP focused on the internal but ended up also including the external. But unlike gender mainstreaming, GFP partners started internally and moved to the external, whereas gender mainstreaming starts with the external and moves to the internal, although more limitedly. As described later, this critical contextual element, missing from the initial organisational analysis but later included as part of the partners' gender routes, also contributed to creating a mutually reinforcing accountability mechanism between the internal and external.

Gender mainstreaming as a 'process' has a number of implications. First, mainstreaming 'gender' is not an end in itself but a means to a wider goal, which is most commonly defined as gender equality. Its importance and value is not only in reaching a particular destination but also the journey that takes us there, and the quality of the journey directly affects the chances of achieving the goal. A journey without substantial growth and learning generated from dialogue and debate, that in turn is generative of leadership, commitment, accountability and other sustaining factors, is a technical exercise. A gender policy will be developed, gender infrastructure established, gender focal points appointed and gender training conducted, but these will neither affect substantial change, nor be continued. A low-quality journey with a merely technical focus also fails to generate the capacity or willingness to be accountable to addressing gender mainstreaming failures, which experience has shown are inevitable.

In contrast, a process that focuses less on 'what' is done but 'how' it is undertaken makes for a qualitatively better journey or gender mainstreaming process. For the GFP, as an organisational change gender mainstreaming strategy, such qualities included giving gender a place internally, broad-basing responsibility for gender equitable development, making structural and political shifts, getting more women in, making the workplace hospitable for women and men and, finally, making women in communities more visible. The focus on 'how' gender mainstreaming was done shows that it was generative and catalyzed other processes, such as sustained and constructive debate and dialogue, and produced other qualities, mainly concerned with the cultural layer: commitment, openness, teamwork, awareness, heightened

accountability and, perhaps most critically, an internal momentum to resist internal and external constraints on a sustained basis. Without such generative quality, a process is bound to remain at a technical level.

Secondly, 'process' not only implies a journey, but also a journey – in this case a gender route – where there has been no map provided or standard path developed. While the GFP partners developed similar maps – naming their strengths as the cultural and political and focusing on the technical – and almost the same features and approaches – gender policies, infrastructure and training – their processes and routes were at the same time different. As Novib did not prescribe any particular route, partners not only had the flexibility to develop their own path, but also had to establish them as part of the internal negotiation described in Chapter 3. For the most part, the routes were iterative, open processes.

What was common to all the partners was that they started their processes with gender analysis. And while this starting place reinforces the importance of a basic principle of gender mainstreaming – the need for gender analysis – what makes the GFP unique is that the analysis was not initially nor primarily concerned with development programmes or the external contexts in which the organisations were working; it was on the organisations themselves. And, as importantly, the analysis itself was a generative and iterative process that had to be repeated and interspersed with periods of training, negotiations and reflection. This contrasts most conceptualisations of gender mainstreaming, with the exception of a few, that focus exclusively on the external and where gender analysis almost always concerns the projects and the contexts in which they are being implemented.

Thirdly, many of the partners' organisational change processes generated other processes that contributed to an overall self-sustaining process of change. The process started as mechanical but became much more profound in terms of the partners' identities and broader perspectives on justice, gender equality and development. They moved from a focus on women and their practical needs to a focus on women's strategic interests and gender relations. Although many had internal structures dedicated to promoting women prior to the GFP, these too became transformed and politicised as internal spaces for voice and accountability. In other words, while many started the GFP with an understanding of the unequal condition of women and a commitment to addressing this inequity, most saw this as a problem of mal-distribution. The common response to this was to target resources to women. The GFP process expanded the partners' perspectives to see gender inequity as also a problem

of mal-recognition of difference where women's rights and status are judged against standards set for men (Fraser, 2001). As described earlier, PARC recognised and valued women's agriculture work and their role in the formal economy as well as in the resistance. Similarly, GEAG recognised women farmers and the political importance of International Women's Day. So while the partners still focused on women, their approach was different with its emphasis on claiming women's status.

And by viewing gender inequity as both a problem of mal-distribution and mal-recognition, the partners seemed to have resolved the false dichotomy, which plagues many development organisations today, of seemingly having to choose between mainstreamed gender programmes or stand-alone work. The partners saw both as entirely compatible and consistent with promoting gender equality; both offered different strategies to achieve the same goal. PARC's decision, for example, to promote gender equality within its main programmes as well as women's interests in an independent yet affiliated organisation, appears entirely compatible.

Addressing mal-recognition required the partners to re-write and, in some cases, subvert 'the rules of the game', a process which started to impact the institutional norms in which they work. Some changed the terms for staff service and, therefore, the rules that previously prevented women from becoming employed in their organisations. Other, such as CHA and SRSP, challenged the public-private divide. They used the traditional practice of *purdah* to create their own space, in the form of separate offices, thereby demanding the same status for 'female' spaces as accorded to 'male' spaces. By claiming men's symbols of status such as meetings, computers and means of transportation, they were able to muster status for meetings with women and women's organisations. There were others who acknowledged and advocated for the recognition of women's agricultural work. Others promoted women in politics and challenged cultural norms such as violence against women.

Rules and perceptions changed not only for women, for example of what they can or cannot do, but also for men, although in a more limited manner. Generally we can observe an acceptance of de-privileging of men's position and status, whether as senior managers or technical staff. As mentioned previously, male staff of SRSP gave up their privileges to that women could continue to work in the field during times of organisational financial constraints. They also accepted the adoption of sexual harassment policies, thus (eventually) acknowledging the existence of the issue even within their own organisation and men's role in it.

But not all were so successful in changing worldviews. PALM consistently noted its lack of ability to hire and retain female staff as the main reason for not being able to continue their organisational change process.

Yet while they felt ‘experienced’ and ‘qualified’ women were not available locally, they were able to enhance women’s participation and leadership in CBOs, and supported women who gained the respect of plantation managers. Hiring these emerging rural women leaders as PALM gender coordinators did not, apparently, arise as a possibility. PALM seems to have been unable to de-construct its identity as an NGO with privileged status in relation to the CBOs with whom they worked.

The shifts to working on issues of both mal-distribution and mal-recognition as well as from the internal to the external are not automatic. They resulted, in part, from a fourth aspect of gender mainstreaming as process: the need to create voice and space as well as accountability. Sensitising staff and, more importantly, increasing and strengthening women’s voices, both quantitatively and qualitatively, initiated a process for internal gender justice that, in turn, created internal demands for accountability. Women staff became accustomed to a new organisational culture. Internal struggles for justice created an awareness and concern for gender justice in the field. Mobilising women in communities, expanding networks and enhancing their reputations as gender sensitive organisations also buttressed calls for greater accountability, not only from staff, through internal gender infrastructure, but from ‘beneficiaries’ as well.

This is perhaps one of the key differences between gender mainstreaming in international donor organisations and the GFP process. The former are the holders of the purse strings. But they are accountable to their constituents who in the case of multi-lateral institutions are donor governments; in the case of bilateral agencies are respective national legislative bodies; and in the case of northern-based NGOs are their governing bodies and, more broadly, the general donor public. Their position as funders gives them the privilege of being able to demand accountability from recipients: national governmental and non-governmental organisations. Rarely are recipients in a position to demand accountability in return, although there are exceptions, such as the Southern partners who had originally highlighted Novib’s lack of gender awareness, and pushed it to formulate its gender policy in the 1980s. In contrast, the GFP partners, as national NGOs with closer links with communities, are less insulated from demands for accountability, both from their donors (such as Novib), as well as from their constituents whose voice and demands were enhanced by the GFP process.

The strengthening of voice and accountability, particularly by increasing the number of women staff and decision-makers as well as through gender training, is another characteristic of the GFP that confounds the experience with gender mainstreaming to date. The GFP partners seemed to have transcended the ‘numbers game’ of just getting more women in. Increased numbers catalysed other processes that contributed to overall organisational change. Also, although the literature is replete with valid criticisms of gender training insofar as it is seen as a panacea for gender unawareness and insensitivity, gender training played critical roles in fostering organisational change with the GFP partners. What seems to have made a difference is that training was part of wider and ongoing process of open dialogue and debate, and provided space for staff to engage throughout this process.

In this way, the GFP does inform Lourde’s contention that ‘the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house’. The tools – organisational development initiatives that arise from gender unaware contexts and gender mainstreaming – were not only used but also ultimately subverted. For as much as tools and organisational change strategies are gendered, in that they reflect and perpetuate gender norms, they too can be engendered to challenge such norms.

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<sup>27</sup> That some lessons from WID were repeated with GAD, e.g. the establishment and marginalisation of WID and GAD units, seems to be at the root of Jahan’s (1995: 12) observation that ‘there are many unexplored issues that a systematic assessment of WID needs to address.’

<sup>28</sup> For example, the collection of gender disaggregated data is often interpreted as counting the number of males and females or describing who does what and the different needs of males and females all of which are used to inform how to create parity as opposed to equality. Less common is the analysis of socialised roles and power relations of women and men, their constraints and opportunities, predominant notions of masculinity and femininity and how these are reproduced in everyday practice of our activities and organisations.

<sup>29</sup> *Panchayat Raj* is the three-tier local government system in India.

## Annex 1 – The nine-box tool: framework for gender organisational diagnosis (Novib 1996a)

### Introduction

To get insight into the functioning of an organisation we need to ask questions about:

**A:** Who influences whom and about what? This question relates to power and resource allocation and to who reaps the benefits.

We call this the **political point of view** on an organisation.

**B:** How are social, technical and financial resources organised in order to produce the desired output in the most efficient manner?

We call this the **technical point of view** on an organisation.

**C:** Who talks to whom about what? This question relates to the relations, network, values, standards, beliefs and interpretations shared by staff.

We call this the **cultural point of view** on an organisation.

For an organisation to be able to function three crucial elements are needed:

**A:** A MISSION/MANDATE

With this we mean goals and strategies, including all the managerial processes, to realise that goal.

**B:** AN ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

With this we mean clarity on tasks, responsibilities and authorities within the organisation, ways of working, flow of information and communication and learning within the organisation and between external actors.

**C:** HUMAN RESOURCES

With this we mean staff recruitment, staff development, performance appraisal and non-financial reward and incentive systems, and attitudinal issues.

When putting these three viewpoints and three crucial elements in the form of a framework nine building blocks of an organisation can be identified:

	Mission/Mandate	Organisational Structure	Human Resources
<i>Technical Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 1</b> <i>Policies and Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ analysis</li> <li>○ policy</li> <li>○ activity plan</li> <li>○ budget</li> <li>○ monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>○ impact</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 4</b> <i>Tasks and Responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ tasks and responsibilities</li> <li>○ coordination/ consultation</li> <li>○ information system</li> <li>○ gender infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 7</b> <i>Expertise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ quantity</li> <li>○ quality/recruitment</li> <li>○ wages</li> <li>○ job description</li> <li>○ appraisal</li> <li>○ training</li> </ul>
<i>Political Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 2</b> <i>Policy Influence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ role of management</li> <li>○ people influencing the organisation from within</li> <li>○ people influencing the organisation from the outside</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 5</b> <i>Decision-making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ adequate information</li> <li>○ participation in discussion and decision-making</li> <li>○ conflict management</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 8</b> <i>Room for Manoeuvre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ space for organising</li> <li>○ physical infrastructure</li> <li>○ reward/incentive systems</li> <li>○ diversity of styles</li> <li>○ career opportunities</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Point of View</i>	<p><b>Box 3</b> <i>Organisational Culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ image</li> <li>○ ownership</li> <li>○ woman friendliness</li> <li>○ reputation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 6</b> <i>Cooperation and Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ teamwork</li> <li>○ support</li> <li>○ networking outside of organisation</li> <li>○ reflection/innovation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Box 9</b> <i>Attitude</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ enthusiasm</li> <li>○ commitment</li> <li>○ willingness to change</li> <li>○ stereotyping</li> </ul>

### Using the framework for organisational gender diagnosis

This framework helps us to get an insight into the functioning, and therefore the strengths and weaknesses, of an organisation. Based on strengths and weaknesses a choice can be made which building blocks of an organisation need to be addressed in order to improve its functioning. This can be formulated in the form of an objective that we want to reach after a certain

period. Next we look for a strategy for improving the functioning of an organisation: which elements should be addressed to reach the objective? We can start with a certain weak or strong building block, i.e. an entry point, and deal with others one by one. We follow a route through the organisation (a strategy). After having reached the critical building block we have reached the objective, i.e. the exit point.

### *Different steps to take*

- 1: Indicate the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation by using the framework and questions per building block.
- 2: Analyse which aspects can be changed. Here information on external opportunities and threats can be useful.
- 3: Based on the strengths and weaknesses, and external influencing factors, formulate a concrete objective to improve the gender practice of the organisation. Identify one of the building blocks that corresponds with that objective (the exit point).
- 4: Decide how you want to reach your exit point. For example by starting with some of the stronger building blocks and working your way through to the weaker ones. Or by starting with building blocks that are easier to tackle. Indicate your 'route' or strategy by drawing arrows through the different building blocks. In other words: start at an entry point to reach the exit point.
- 5: Identify activities that strengthen the building blocks of the organisation, starting with your entry point and ending with the exit point.

*How to identify strong and weak building blocks*, by using the framework for Organisational Gender Diagnosis and some of the leading questions presented below:

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## MISSION/MANDATE

*(refers to the goal and strategy, including all the managerial processes needed to realise the goal)*

### *Block 1: Policies and Action*

- are the mission and mandate of the organisation based on a thorough analysis of the context, including gender relations?
- does the organisation have a clear policy which includes a gender policy?
- does the gender policy include an activity plan with time frame (e.g. moment for monitoring and evaluation) and allocation of responsibilities?
- are adequate financial resources allocated for the implementation of the gender policy?
- does the organisation conduct its monitoring, evaluation and strategic planning in a gender disaggregated manner?
- does the product of the organisation contribute to empowerment of women and changing unequal gender relations at target group levels?

### *Block 2: Policy Influence*

- do management and the Board take responsibility for policy development and implementation in the field of gender?
- does management promote internal consultations on issues related to policy development and implementation?
- are there many interactions with external stakeholders, such as beneficiaries (women and men), pressure/interest groups, researchers, consultants, gender networks and institutes, politicians, donor agencies, etcetera.
- are opinions of external stakeholders valued and taken seriously by management?

### *Block 3: Organisational Culture*

- does gender fit into the image of the organisation according to staff?
- does everyone feel ownership over the gender policy?
- do women within the organisation, and among beneficiaries, perceive the organisation to be woman-friendly?
- does the organisation comply with gender sensitive behaviour, for example in terms of the language used, jokes and comments made, images and materials displayed and procedures on sexual harassment?
- does the organisation have a reputation of integrity and competence on gender issues? For example among women's organisations and (outside) individuals with commitment to gender issues?

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

*(tasks, responsibilities and authorities within the organisation; ways of working and the way people are grouped and coordinated to accomplish the tasks: flow of information, communication and learning within the organisation and between the organisation and external network)*

### *Block 4: Tasks and Responsibilities*

- are tasks and responsibilities in the field of gender clearly demarcated?
- are there effective mechanisms for coordination, consultation and organisational gender learning between various parts of the organisation, both horizontally and vertically?
- is there sufficient information to do the job well?
- is staff with specific gender expertise and responsibilities located at key positions in the organisation?

- is the existing gender structure (e.g. women's/gender unit versus one or more individuals at decentralised locations, or one full-time staff member versus several part-time staff members) the most appropriate one?

### *Block 5: Decision-making*

- are decisions being made on the basis of monitoring and evaluation exercises, among others in the field of gender?
- is staff, including gender specialists, participating in decision-making processes?
- are decisions (in the field of gender) dealt with in a timely manner?
- are conflicts in the workplace dealt with adequately, for example around issues of sexual harassment, dealing with resistance to gender or side effects of affirmative action?

### *Block 6: Cooperation and Learning*

- does the organisation promote teamwork, involving both women and men and including gender focal persons?
- do staff members support each other in problem solving and identification of new challenges in the field of gender?
- does the organisation promote exchange, collaboration and other forms of interaction with women's organisations and organisation/institutions/individuals active in the field of gender?
- are new, innovative ideas and practices welcomed, reflected upon and incorporated into existing practices?

## HUMAN RESOURCES

*(staff recruitment, staff development, performance appraisal and non-financial reward and incentive systems, attitudinal issues)*

### *Block 7: Staff and Expertise*

- is the management committed to promoting female representation at all levels of the organisation, including the Board?
- is this commitment translated into concrete targets and a time frame?
- is new staff selected on the basis of gender sensitivity and capacity to deal with gender issues in very practical terms?
- do men and women receive equal wages for equal work?
- are job descriptions clearly defined (as far as gender is concerned)?
- are gender issues discussed during performance appraisal interviews?
- is there a gradual increase of gender expertise among all staff members, e.g. as a result of training?

### *Block 8: Room for Manoeuvre*

- does the organisation allow space for staff who wish to organise around parts of their identity (e.g. sex, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual preference, physical ability)?
- does the organisation have an adequate infrastructure to enable female staff to carry out their work (e.g. in relation to safe working environment, toilet facilities, transport arrangement, working hours)?
- is good performance being rewarded, including in the field of gender, e.g. by making good practices available to others, both inside and outside the organisation, or by congratulating individual staff members?

- 
- does staff value different styles of working, e.g. men and women in non-traditional fields of work, more formal or less formal working environments, leadership styles, ways of chairing meetings, etcetera?
  - are interesting career opportunities offered to both women and men?

### *Block 9: Attitude*

- is staff enthusiastic about the work they do?
- is staff committed to implementation of the gender policy?
- is staff open to new ideas and innovation and is there a willingness to change practices?
- is gender taken seriously and discussed openly by men and women?
- is stereotyping (e.g. 'those gender blind men' or 'those' feminists) addressed and countered by individual staff members?

## Annex 2 – Maps of the partners' analysis and change routes developed by Gerard Stehouwer

<b>THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE</b>			
	Mission/Mandate	Organisational Structure	Human Resources
<i>Technical Point of View</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 1</b> <i>Policies and Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ analysis</li> <li>○ policy</li> <li>○ activity plan</li> <li>○ budget</li> <li>○ monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>○ impact</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 4</b> <i>Tasks and Responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ tasks and responsibilities</li> <li>○ coordination/consultation</li> <li>○ information system</li> <li>○ gender infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 7</b> <i>Expertise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ quantity</li> <li>○ quality/recruitment</li> <li>○ wages</li> <li>○ job description</li> <li>○ appraisal</li> <li>○ training</li> </ul>
<i>Political Point of View</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 2</b> <i>Policy Influence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ role of management</li> <li>○ people influencing the organisation from within</li> <li>○ people influencing the organisation from the outside</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 5</b> <i>Decision-making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ adequate information</li> <li>○ participation in discussion and decision-making</li> <li>○ conflict management</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 8</b> <i>Room for Manoeuvre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ space for organising</li> <li>○ physical infrastructure</li> <li>○ reward/incentive systems</li> <li>○ diversity of styles</li> <li>○ career opportunities</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Point of View</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 3</b> <i>Organisational Culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ image</li> <li>○ ownership</li> <li>○ woman friendliness</li> <li>○ reputation</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 6</b> <i>Cooperation and Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ teamwork</li> <li>○ support</li> <li>○ networking outside of organisation</li> <li>○ reflection/innovation</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 9</b> <i>Attitude</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ enthusiasm</li> <li>○ commitment</li> <li>○ willingness to change</li> <li>○ stereotyping</li> </ul>

## THE CHANGE PYRAMID

	Mission/Mandate	Organisational Structure	Human Resources
<i>Technical Point of View</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 1</b> <i>Policies and Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ analysis</li> <li>○ policy</li> <li>○ activity plan</li> <li>○ budget</li> <li>○ monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>○ impact</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 4</b> <i>Tasks and Responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ tasks and responsibilities</li> <li>○ coordination/consultation</li> <li>○ information system</li> <li>○ gender infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 7</b> <i>Expertise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ quantity</li> <li>○ quality/recruitment</li> <li>○ wages</li> <li>○ job description</li> <li>○ appraisal</li> <li>○ training</li> </ul>
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## THE SUSTAINABILITY STAR

	Mission/Mandate	Organisational Structure	Human Resources
<i>Technical Point of View</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 1</b> <i>Policies and Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ analysis</li> <li>○ policy</li> <li>○ activity plan</li> <li>○ budget</li> <li>○ monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>○ impact</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 4</b> <i>Tasks and Responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ tasks and responsibilities</li> <li>○ coordination/consultation</li> <li>○ information system</li> <li>○ gender infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 7</b> <i>Expertise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ quantity</li> <li>○ quality/recruitment</li> <li>○ wages</li> <li>○ job description</li> <li>○ appraisal</li> <li>○ training</li> </ul>
<i>Political Point of View</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 2</b> <i>Policy Influence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ role of management</li> <li>○ people influencing the organisation from within</li> <li>○ people influencing the organisation from the outside</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 5</b> <i>Decision-making</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ adequate information</li> <li>○ participation in discussion and decision-making</li> <li>○ conflict management</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 8</b> <i>Room for Manoeuvre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ space for organising</li> <li>○ physical infrastructure</li> <li>○ reward/incentive systems</li> <li>○ diversity of styles</li> <li>○ career opportunities</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Point of View</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 3</b> <i>Organisational Culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ image</li> <li>○ ownership</li> <li>○ woman friendliness</li> <li>○ reputation</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 6</b> <i>Cooperation and Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ teamwork</li> <li>○ support</li> <li>○ networking outside of organisation</li> <li>○ reflection/innovation</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Box 9</b> <i>Attitude</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ enthusiasm</li> <li>○ commitment</li> <li>○ willingness to change</li> <li>○ stereotyping</li> </ul>

## Annex 3 – GFP partner objectives and expected outcomes

### CHA

#### Objectives

##### *Overall objective:*

By the end of 2002, CHA staff are competent in planning, implementing and measuring the gender orientation of its assistance programme in Afghanistan as a result of a process of building staff's understanding and skills in gender, and revising its policies, plans, systems and structures to support this change.

##### *Immediate objectives:*

Internal: By the end of the year 2002, CHA's 35 senior and middle management programme and organisational staff have a sense of ownership of the organisation's gender sensitive policies, and internal image of a woman-friendly organisation, through a process of training and adjustment of internal structures and systems, and 50 percent of the total staff have an awareness of gender.

External: By the end of year 2002, CHA will be recognised as an organisation offering equitable opportunities to women and men as employees and partners.

#### Expected outcomes

1. Women and men report that CHA provides a supportive work environment for both female and male staff
2. Personnel policies and practices that demonstrate equity principles of:
  - equal opportunity for women and men;
  - equal pay for equal work;
  - equitable training and promotional opportunities for women and men;
  - nullified harassment of women, and recognised procedure to deal with any claims;
  - policies, and organisation's 'Rules and Regulations' gender sensitised.
3. Female staff numbers increase from present ten percent
  - Increase in female to male ratio participation in major decision-making bodies;

- Increase in internal qualified women applicants for senior management posts.

## GEAG

### Objectives

- Reorganising the organisational structures for integrating gender at policy and operational levels;
- Skill and capacity building on gender and development issues within the organisation at all levels;
- Enhancing and sustaining the programme impact by addressing practical and strategic gender interests at field level.

### Expected outcomes

1. To have a gender sensitive team at decision-making and operational levels;
2. To have a well-articulated gender sensitive policy within the organisation;
3. To have a well-articulated affirmative action plan, PMES and staff composition;
4. Increased accessibility and control of resources for women at field level;
5. Enhanced participation of women in decision-making leading towards self-organisation and social justice;
6. Increased capacities and skills both at the staff and field level.

## GRAM

### Objectives

- To raise gender consciousness among the staff through trainings by creating space, time, finance and influence;
- To bring appropriate modifications in the organisational structure and decision-making bodies through improvement in policy and human resources;
- To improve the skills and enable the programme staff to plan, implement and evaluate all the programmes with a gender perspective;
- To raise gender awareness and consciousness among both men and women in the project communities through appropriate trainings;
- To empower the women (with a focus on Dalit women) in the target group and develop leadership and management skills through appropriate training programmes;

- To facilitate networking among men and women groups with like-minded gender sensitive organisations;

To conduct a socio-economic and political study on the position of Dalit women to analyse aspects of workload, consciousness, leadership roles, access and control over the factors of production.

### Expected outcomes

1. Gender conceptual clarity among all project staff and particularly programme staff;
2. Improved skills among the programme staff in planning, monitoring and evaluation of programmes with a gender perspective;
3. Integration of gender sensitive women in the Governing Board;
4. Increase in numbers of women at the management and decision-making level;
5. Institutional learning/better understanding for the organisation about the gender discriminations among dalit communities in the project area;
6. Increased awareness and consciousness about the gender discriminations in the society and among men and women in the target community;
7. Increased awareness and better leadership qualities among elected women panchayat representatives;
8. Better coordination and relationship between group members and panchayat representatives resulting in further political opportunities for women;
9. Self management of groups and programmes by women leaders.

## PALM

### Objectives

#### *Organisational level:*

- Establishing a mandate at the organisational and community level for adopting a clear gender policy for the organisation;
- Adjusting the existing organisational structure, in accordance with the requirements of gender based development activities;
- Developing relevant human resources within the organisation in order to carry out effective and efficient gender based development activities.

*Programme level:*

- Creating a gender friendly atmosphere in the target community;
- Empowering women in the target areas / active participation in all stages of development activities to fulfil their practical and strategic gender needs;
- Strengthening women's economic position and ensuring access, control and benefits to their own resources.

*Expected outcomes*

1. To create awareness among the Advisory Board members and the representatives of the community on the importance of incorporating gender into development activities;
2. To formulate a clear policy on gender in terms of goals, objectives, strategies and recruitment of staff etc.;
3. To incorporate gender into existing monitoring and evaluation (internal) formats in a gender disaggregated manner;
4. To develop human resources, including attitudes required among staff for carrying out gender based development activities;
5. To incorporate gender policy into section goals and yearly action plans;
6. To ensure the entire staff share the gender based tasks and responsibilities;
7. To officially adopt the gender policy;
8. To obtain gender disaggregated information and data to keep a record on the existing situation on gender (base line);
9. To maintain a data base to document the progress in implementation of the project and the achievement of the project objectives;
10. To assess the impact of the programme from a gender point of view;
11. To ensure the effectiveness of the awareness creation and training programmes conducted by the staff;
12. To consider the involvement and interest shown by the staff on gender based activities when evaluating their job performance; to increase the productivity and creativity of the staff;
13. To influence the governmental and other relevant organisations to consider the importance of gender in their policies and programmes with special reference to plantations and women.

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## PARC

### Objectives

- The work of women is given full recognition.
- Communications between different levels of workers (units, districts, management) is improved.
- All planning has a gender focus and gender issues are the responsibility of all.
- All projects are based on a clear analysis of women's needs and interests.
- PMES integrates gender.
- Particular attention is given to administrative and management training for women and equal opportunities exist for women.
- All staff have an increased knowledge and understanding of gender.
- Gender understanding developed with target groups.
- Women's access to resources increased.
- More women get into decision-making.

## PRODIPAN

### Objectives

- Gender sensitive administrative policy;
- Gender sensitive service rules;
- Gender sensitive programme planning;
- More women staff at management level;
- Decentralised gender monitoring;
- A gender friendly working situation within the organisation;
- Prodipan introduced as a gender sensitive people's organisation;
- gender incorporated in all Prodipan programmes.

### Expected outcomes

1. Gender focused vision, mission, strategy, operational guideline and policy reformulated;
2. Training needs at different staff levels assessed;
3. Gender sensitive planning and management operationalised;
4. Gender dimension of programmes implemented with professional commitment;
5. Gender sensitive group and apex body established;
6. Women leaders established, able to analyse gender issues in all levels of people's organisations;
7. Gender committee endowed with more power and authority;

8. Participation of Prodipan in different gender networks ensured;
9. Institutional basis for gender in Prodipan established; every staff member participating in the process of institutionalising gender;
10. More gender conscious female and male staff at decision-making and implementation levels established.

## SRSP

### Objectives

#### *Longterm objectives:*

- To create gender awareness;
- To create balance in access, decision-making, control and allocation of resources.

#### *Broad objectives:*

- Mission and mandate;
- Organisational culture ;
- Gender infrastructure ;
- Programme level work;
- Networking.

#### *Specific objectives:*

- Establish gender strategy and ownership for GFP within staff;
- Develop staff's expertise;
- Improve training;
- Establish a permanent / effective gender focus group;
- Improve coordination between male-female staff;
- Sensitise PMES;
- Sensitise job descriptions;
- Sensitise SRSC service rules;
- Increase representation of women on Board, management, staff;
- Increase in packages for rural women;
- Build capacity of rural women;
- Plan regional gender-specific strategies after gender assessments;
- Develop gender budgeting;
- Develop linking and learning externally.

## Expected outcomes

1. Ownership of SRSC's gender strategy by the staff established;
2. Effective gender group established;
3. Gender friendly / sensitised organisational image developed;
4. Pool of internal gender resource persons created;
5. Coordination between male and female staff improved;
6. Gender sensitive PMES developed;
7. Gender sensitive job descriptions developed for all staff;
8. Women's representation raised from two to three on the Board of Directors;
9. Women staff employed in key positions;
10. Women staff employment raised to 28 - 30 percent and increased female technical staff;
11. More gender sensitive service rules established;
12. Integrated programme planning developed;
13. Increased gender sensitive and women-specific packages planned;
14. Equal numbers of inputs into C/WOs (plan and budget) made;
15. WO planning, management and leadership skills enhanced through increased number of activists and leadership training;
16. Regional gender specific strategies developed after gender assessment study;
17. Gender impact studies carried out in each region by external consultants;
18. Gender specific studies carried out by the staff themselves;
19. Documentation made of gender process within the organisation;
20. Gender training module designed;
21. Gender perspective in staff training programme incorporated;
22. Gender budgeting conducted;
23. Gender integrated approach in all future proposals adopted;
24. Networking established with other organisations to promote institutional learning and GAD training to others in NWFP.

## Annex 4 – The contexts of the partners

### CHA

Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA) focuses on rehabilitation and development activities in nine provinces of Afghanistan. The economic, political and physical environment in Afghanistan is harsh and the security situation is still uncertain after the Taliban regime's fall in 2001.

Afghanistan has been marked by severe conflict and violence over the last 25 years. When the Soviet army invaded in 1979, the agricultural economy of Afghanistan was virtually self-sufficient, and improving at a fast pace. During the war, about five million people fled to neighbouring countries and many more sought refuge in other parts of the world. The infrastructure was badly damaged, and the economy collapsed. After the withdrawal of Russian troops in 1989, and the fall of the communist regime in 1992, some parts of the country enjoyed comparative calm while some were interrupted by factional fighting. But with the establishment of the Taliban movement in late 1994, fighting resumed also in those hitherto calmer areas, and especially so after the Taliban installed its government based on strict Islamic principles in 1995. The wars affected the agricultural sector very badly; the irrigation system collapsed and there was large scale environmental degradation resulting from the indiscriminate felling of trees. The rural infrastructure – such as roads, irrigation canals, schools and health centres – was destroyed during the wars. Another serious problem in the rural areas was the availability of drinking water. Basic services such as banking, postal and telecommunications hardly existed during these years (CHA 1996).

Historically, Afghan society has had a very definite gender division, and due to the Taliban regime's political restrictions on women's employment and mobility, women were limited even further in taking part in social and economic activities (Waqfi 2005). Since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, women's lives have improved. Slowly but surely, women are more visible in society at large, more women are engaged in the political process, there is a Minister of Women, and the media covers gender issues more than they did before. Women can now raise their voices, work, go to school and vote. However, the cultural barriers and the unstable security situation are still serious constraints for women, limiting their movements, and leading to a high drop-out rate for girls from schools.

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## GEAG

Uttar Pradesh is one of the poorest states in India, and in the Gorakhpur district in the Eastern part – where Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG) operates – the poverty levels are higher than in other parts of the state. Poverty is highest among the Dalits when compared to members of other communities. The politico-cultural environment has a feudal male-dominated history, and higher castes dominate at institutional and social levels (GEAG 1997a, GEAG 2001)

Agriculture is the main source of employment and income in Gorakhpur, with the majority of farmers belonging to the small and marginal category. Average landholdings are less than an acre, and about 25 percent of the rural population is landless, working as labourers in other non-farming activities. The practice of sharecropping is widespread, with about 50 percent of the produce going to the landowner in return for seeds, fertilisers and other inputs. Land fragmentation is high, partly due to the high population density and partly due to the large size of families and the tendency to divide land among sons. Women generally do not inherit or own land, despite changes in the law. Recent attempts to give land titles in women's names, or joint ownership between a husband and wife, have met with difficulties.

Agricultural growth has been characterised by Green Revolution inputs (technology, intensive water, pesticide and fertiliser consumption) which has affected soil sustainability and agricultural productivity as well as increased social inequity. For example, agricultural mechanisation has led to considerable labour displacement. This, in turn, has led to high male out-migration to distant urban areas, putting an additional burden on women to manage land in the absence of any recognition of their roles. They also have limited control, let alone access, over productive resources.

Not only are women denied land rights, but there are also marked gender differentials in agricultural wages, in the gender division of labour and in the valuation of women's work. The low status of women, particularly dalits, tribals and Muslims, is indicated by the sex ratio of 881 women per 1000 men (according to the 1991 census). Gender discrimination exists in terms of access to education, health and nutrition, marriage practices (high dowry), a preference for sons, and limited access to contraceptives or control over one's body. Cultural norms (such as purdah) also limit women's mobility and decision-making roles, although recent constitutional amendments have created space for rural women to participate in decentralised governance with

one-third reservation for them in the local government institutions (GEAG 2001).

## GRAM

Gram Abhudhyaya Mandali is based in northern Andhra Pradesh, India. Although the socio-economic feudal system does not exist today as it used to, the structures of society continue to be completely controlled by the elite. This elite, an upper caste Hindu group, owns the majority of productive assets (mainly land), and controls all the local institutions and self-government bodies. In particular, data on patterns of land ownership give some indication of the entrenched inequalities in the area: large farmers who constitute sixteen percent of all farmers, own 74 percent of all the land; small farmers constitute 56 percent of the area's households; and the landless make up 20 percent of all households (Subrahmanian 2001)

The most disadvantaged group are the Dalits, who lack property and land ownership rights. The economic constraints and poverty facing the Dalits frequently force them into child labour, child marriage, bonded labour, all of which deepen the vicious cycles of deprivation. The Dalit community at large is affected since their social and cultural identity is constantly eroded, characterising them as suffering, poor victims without self-esteem. The Dalit girls and women are the most vulnerable and powerless. They are in large part deprived of the right to education and are often forced into early marriage. The destructive practice of child marriage denies them their basic rights, and in many cases their physical and mental health deteriorates with long-term negative effects (GRAM 1997)

## PALM

The Foundation for Participatory Action and Learning Methodologies (PALM) works with both plantations and village communities in Sri Lanka's Central Province. Both communities are diverse because of their distinct socio-economic, ethnic, linguistic and cultural characteristics.

On the plantation estates live descendents from the labourers who were recruited from southern India during the mid-19th century, of whom 98 percent are Tamils. The plantation workers were usually kept in isolation from the rest of the country, and they lived within a characteristic plantation

economy. A low standard of living, high death and birth rates (alongside high infant and maternal mortality), low life expectancy at birth, illiteracy, and a high incidence of illness have been the features of this community from the inception of the plantations. In addition, the labourers were stateless after independence from Britain in 1948, and they did not share in the development that took place in the rest of the country. However, the nationalisation of the plantations in the early 1970s, the achievement of citizenship and voting rights, and reforms to the education system, opened up a door for the people to be exposed to the world outside the plantations. The villages around the plantation areas have a different history altogether. These subsistence economy villages existed before the plantations and few of them joined the labour force of the plantations until after the nationalisation of the plantations. They are Sinhalese and almost all follow Buddhism (Overweel 1997).

In neither community – Tamil or Sinhala – do women enjoy equal status with men. Women invariably lack autonomy and control over resources and benefits. However, the intensity and prevalence of gender issues varies between village and plantations. Women in plantations bear the increased burden of deprivation compared to women in villages. All people in plantations have low status, because their forefathers were conscripted labourers, and also because they are an ethnic minority who for a long time did not have citizenship status. Women plantation workers bear an excessive workload both in the plantations as tea pluckers and at home as primary caretakers. Women comprise over 50 percent of the workers in the tea estates, and they work longer hours than men but do not get paid accordingly. A lack of adequate residential facilities, poor sanitation and water availability, low nutritional status, high incidence of disease, high infant mortality, limited access to health and education services, and restricted mobility and outside exposure further add to women's unequal status within the household (Sethi & Farid 2001). Compared to the plantation women, the village women are better off in terms of access to resources, such as owning land and property, and they also suffer from fewer restrictions in attending educational and other types of programmes.

## PARC

Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) provides support to the Palestinian people, mainly in the Jordan Valley and the West Bank. The social, political and economic situation of the Palestinian people is

affected by the ups and downs in Israeli-Palestinian relations and the Israeli occupation and military offensives. Political instability with the dispute between the Palestinians and Israel on the Israeli settlement policies, the status of Jerusalem, the Palestinian refugees, water and land has continued for years to remain the core issues, causing internal displacement among the Palestinians and a severe economic situation on the ground (PARC 2000a).

Politically, the US-brokered Road Map has been put on hold while Israel pursues its unilateral disengagement plan from Gaza; there have been continuous settlement-building activities; and the construction of the Israeli annexation wall has increased the suffering of the Palestinian people, especially for those who live on the West Bank. Economically, the political process has negatively affected the situation of the Palestinian people: income levels deteriorated in 2004; the number of households living below the poverty line rose, and 66 percent of Palestinians received periodical aid from various organisations. The agriculture sector made losses during 2004 as a result of Israeli practices, such as the uprooting of more than a million trees and the confiscation of land areas for constructing the Israeli annexation wall. This led to a shrinking of cultivated land and restricted access to farmland.

In 2004, the social structure of Palestinian society further deteriorated, with the emergence of the use of force to solve internal disputes, and it was widely noticed that theft, violence against women, bribery, favouritism, school dropout, and delinquency among youth increased. This growing crisis in the society and political order has had severe consequences for the Palestinian people, destroying unity and social cohesion (PARC 2005a).

## PRODIPAN

Prodipan works to empower poor people's living and working in rural communities and urban slums in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has the highest incidence of poverty in South Asia and the third highest in the world after India and China. Nearly half of Bangladesh's 130 million people's live in poverty with about 80% concentrated in the rural areas. A disturbing trend is that while higher economic growth rates have contributed to the decline in poverty, rising inequality has reduced the overall rate of poverty

reduction. Despite this Bangladesh has made progress in terms of economic and social transformation. Infant mortality and life expectancy has improved remarkably. It is the only country among the 20 poorest that has recorded a sustained reduction in birth rates over the past 15 years. Primary school enrolment has increased, particularly among girls. Many commentators attribute this progress to the activism of non-governmental organisations like Prodigon of which there are many in Bangladesh. Bangladesh's non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are among the most active in the world, providing micro-credit and social mobilisation to 8 million poor people, mostly to women.

Bangladesh's constitution grants equal rights to women and the country is signatory to the Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, there is still pervasive discrimination against women. Political activities around women's rights have emerged as a distinct area of mobilisation. Within government there is a Department of Women's Affairs and the major political parties have set up women's wings. Outside government there are various women's organisations both at national and grass root level focusing on women's rights. Most large and small NGOs in Bangladesh also have women's mobilisation programmes.

## SRSP

Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP), the region that SRSP works in, has a population of eighteen million, which is thirteen percent of the total population of Pakistan. The province has the highest population growth rate in Pakistan of 2.75 percent per year. It is inhabited mainly by various tribes of Pukhtuns who are predominantly farmers. NWFP has a literacy rate of 37 percent, with overall female literacy being 21 percent: the rural literacy rate for women is 17 percent. Health coverage and facilities for women are particularly poor (Sidiqi 2001).

Gender is defined very clearly in this society. Its strong manifestation is the strict physical, mental and social segregation between women and men, and the clear roles attributed to the sexes, along with insurmountable boundaries. Men are comparatively more mobile than women, and they have greater access to basic facilities and services, e.g. health care, education etc. Women

are constrained in their mobility due to the observance of 'purdah' or veiling, and their entry into the public sphere is limited, as is their decision-making power both in public and personal lives. Women's mobility is traditionally influenced by the belief that the honour of a family lies in its women and that women must not stray too far from home in order to minimise influences that may threaten this honour. In a society with feudal values, women's importance is gauged by the number of sons they bear so that property can be kept within the family. The extreme control over women's actions and their mobility is a manifestation of these feudal values. Men on the other hand have a very strong 'public' role, and 'jirgas' (traditional village council of elders which takes most decisions pertaining to community life and personal issues) are dominated by men (Khan 2000; Sidiqi 2001).

However, the status of women and the quality of their lives varies greatly across the province. In areas inhabited by Pukhtun people, e.g. Charsadda, Kohot, Hangu and Battagram, gender roles and related cultural values are much more defined and hence more resolute. On the other hand, regions which are non-Pukhtun – such as the Hazara belt which includes part of Mansehra region and all of Abbottabad region – are more relaxed as far as women's mobility is concerned, and they also have higher literacy rates among women and girls (Sidiqi 2000).

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What actually happens to organisations during gender and organisational change endeavours? This book takes an in-depth look at the experience of seven Novib partner organisations in the Middle East and South Asia who undertook the challenge of the Gender Focus Programme. It recounts their analysis of their organizations, and the routes they chose to follow. The book presents field experiences of managing the politically sensitive agenda of promoting gender equality in NGOs, and negotiating the contradictions between using Organisational Development tools and promoting gender equality.

In doing so, it shows how organisational change for gender equality is an integral part of gender mainstreaming processes. As a decade of evidence suggests, gender mainstreaming is vulnerable to becoming technocratic and ineffective. These seven organisations, unable to separate entirely the internal change process from their external work as NGOs, experienced a spillover of gender justice concerns into their work in the field, with a variety of programme results.



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