



Indian Change Catalysts: ACTION-LEARNING PROGRAM

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SYNTHESIS

FACT: gender equality is an unfulfilled promise.

The problem does not lie in a lack of professed government policy or international agreements. The real roadblocks to equality are the attitudes and values of individuals and the norms and unspoken rules of communities and organizations. Values and norms work quietly, and insidiously, to preserve a status quo of injustice and inequality.

This project set out to increase our understanding of these hurdles and uncover practical ways that they could be overcome. Our methodology was to work with a small group of Indian social change organizations using an Action Learning method. Over a period of two years, we documented the impact as they implemented institutional changes.

Our study showed that:

1. The implementation of change projects that made a significant difference to the work on gender equality of four organizations working in India
2. The development and successful test of a method (action learning) for working with organizations to assist them in making change either in their organizations, in their programs or both, that would have a significant impact on gender equality.
3. The evolution of a framework for understanding institutional change for gender equality. What has been missing until now is a holistic, multi-factor framework that maps the changes required in individuals, organizations and their communities and describes how institutional change can happen for gender equality. This project has developed and tested a framework that specifies what needs to change at the individual, organizational and community levels. We have described examples of change at each of these levels and hypothesized key success factors.

All these outcomes have strong implications for future development policy and practice. To start, the Action Learning method gives development NGOs a structure for supporting learning and change in both organizations and their programs. In fact, the Action Learning approach has proven to be so successful that it has been implemented in our work with eleven organizations in South Africa. As well, it is currently being considered by HIVOS (India) and will be used in a two-year project with Oxfam Canada's partners in Sudan. A variant will also be used to change how UN country teams work on gender equality.

However, it is the third outcome... the framework for understanding institutional change... that may hold the most promise. For many organizations, it completely re-defines the gender equality task by offering a *multi-factor* framework that helps them pinpoint the changes required in individuals, organizations and their communities to achieve their goal.

This framework has been received with enthusiasm in a number of workshops and is being adopted as a basis for program development and monitoring in two Canadian NGOs. It was recently used in a training program for United Nations Resident Coordinators and Country Representatives and will be part of a training program on gender equality for UN country teams.





THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

After thirty years of effort, the promise of women's rights remains unfulfilled. This is despite United Nations conferences and agreements, scholarly writing and immense efforts on the part of women themselves (often at some risk). There have been examples of positive outcomes for women's lives but these examples are far from the norm. Governments, NGOs, the United Nations and bilateral agencies all acknowledge that gender equality is critical to development and peace, yet all consistently under prioritize and under fund gender equality work. After all this time, why has there not been more progress?

We believe that while much has been done (particularly in providing increased resources to women (health and education for example), there has been insufficient attention to underlying factors, which hold inequality in place. For many, this requires a focus on institutions¹.

By institutions we mean the rules (stated and implicit) that maintain women's unequal position in societies. The terms 'institution' and 'organization' are often used synonymously, but we find it useful to distinguish between the two. We understand institutions as the rules for achieving social or economic ends². In other words, the rules which determine who gets what, what counts, who does what, and who decides. These rules include values that maintain the gendered division of labour, restrictions on women owning land, limits to women's mobility, and, perhaps most fundamentally, the devaluing of reproductive work. Organizations are social structures, which embody the institutions prevalent in a society.

Our understanding of institutional change has evolved from over a decade of practice, writing and conversations with colleagues in Asia, Africa, North America and Europe. What has grown out of this work is a conception of institutional change that is multi-factorial and holistic. It is concerned with both the individual psychology of women and men, their access to resources and the social structures in which they live. Furthermore, our conception is intervention focussed- it begins from the point of view of an organization attempting to change the institutions underlying inequality.

From this point of view, change must happen in two places- inside the organization and outside in the "community" in which it works. Moreover, change must happen in a variety of areas. The following diagrams are an adaptation of the work of Ken Wilber³. They show the changes required inside and outside the organization. There are two primary dimensions. The first is individual-systemic and the second is formal-informal. These dimensions are the same at the organizational (the inner circle) and the community level (the outer circle).

The top two clusters in both the organization and the community are individual (changes in measurable individual conditions-resources, voice, freedom from violence, access to health) and individual consciousness (knowledge, skills, political consciousness and commitment to change toward equality). The bottom two clusters are systemic. The cluster on the right is of formal institutional rules as laid down in constitutions, laws and policies. The cluster on the left is the

¹ Rao, Stuart and Kelleher, *Gender at Work: Organizational Change for Equality*, Kumarian, 1999; Goetz, *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*, Zed, 1997, World Bank, *Empowering Development Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources and Voice*, World Bank, 2001.

² Naila Kabeer, *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*, London: Verso, 1994.

³ Ken Wilber, *A Theory of Everything*, Boston: Shambala, 2000





informal norms and cultural practices that maintain inequality in everyday practices. Change in one quadrant is related to change in the others.

Figure 1 shows these dimensions from the point of view of the organization. It reminds us to ask, What resources are available to women (promotion, access to training, freedom from harassment, for example) but also shows that gender equality in an organization requires attention to the consciousness and learning of individual men and women (the top left quadrant). However, both of these top quadrants are concerned with *individual* change. What is also required is attention to the *systemic* or social aspects of the organization.

The first of these (bottom right) is the set of formal policies procedures and arrangements such as presence of a gender policy, family friendly human resource policies, an adequate budget for work on gender equality and well-developed programs to further gender equality.

The bottom left hand quadrant is about *culture and informal norms and practices*. In the organization, this is what we have called this the “deep structure of organizations” — a collection of values, history, culture and practices that form the basis of organizational choices and behaviour, that are gendered, kept in place by power structures and are often unquestioned⁴. Others have called this dimension of organizations ‘ideology’ (Batliwala) while still others have described the elements of this ‘gendered architecture’ as encompassing organizational history, knowledge systems, culture, space and time, sexuality, authority structures and incentive and accountability systems⁵.

The deep structure may be likened to the unconscious of individuals in that it is largely out of awareness and is unquestioned. Key aspects of the deep structure are:

- Acceptance and encouragement of women’s decision-making and agenda setting
- Values of equality that are exemplified in social, informal and work relationships between women and men
- Acceptance of women’s “triple role” and its implications for participation in the work of the organization
- Belief in the importance of work on gender equality and informal reward structure for this area of work

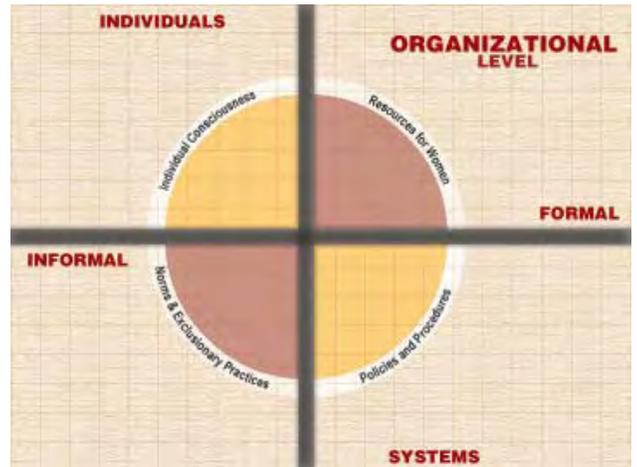


Figure 1 Organizational Level

⁴ Rao et al, op. cit.

⁵ Goetz, A-M., *Getting Institutions Right for Women*, London: Zed, 1997.





These quadrants describe the important aspects of life inside the organization but decades of work have shown that focussing on the organization alone will not necessarily affect the work of the organization in its programs, in its community. Figure 2 extends the previous one to show the same dimensions from the point of view of the work in the community.

The top right hand quadrant is again about *resources for women*. In the community context resources refer to such resources or “assets” as access to health, education or increased security and freedom from violence. For example in Grama Vikas, the G-BIG group was able to increase access to land ownership and through that other land-related resources such as credit and extension services.

The top left hand quadrant is about *women and men’s consciousness*. By this is meant, level of knowledge regarding equality and women’s rights, attitudinal bias toward valuing women’s

rights and finally action to ensure those rights. For example, the *Jathas (journeys)* the Grama Vikas women took from village to village was an example of women who were prepared to act to claim their rights. Similarly, the action of the men in the G-BIG groups to facilitate land transfer to women is also an example of action on the basis of beliefs. Other examples of action would include such gender norm-challenging actions as women building houses or leaving abusive husbands and men doing household chores. This awakening of individual consciousness then tends to impact on the bottom left quadrant

The bottom left hand quadrant is about *culture and informal norms and exclusionary practices*. While work has been done looking at how different aspects of culture affect development⁶, we are concerned with the discriminatory aspects of culture/s towards women.

Values and norms that discriminate against women are shaped and transmitted through social practices and are supported and perpetuated by a web of relationships characterized by differences in power. Different groups of people benefit differentially from cultural practices. But cultural values and practices are contested, are in flux and can be changed. In fact, CEDAW enjoins states to “*modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women*”⁷. In this context, we are interested in how social change organizations can trigger changes in prejudicial customary practices.

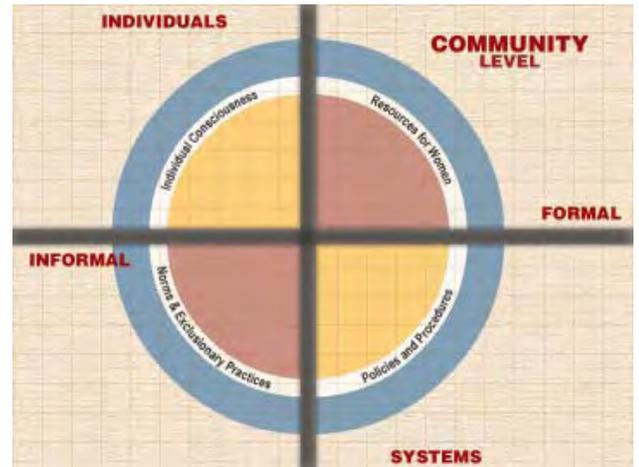


Figure 2 The Community Level

⁶ Our understanding of culture draws on numerous sources including Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton, *Culture and Public Action*, Stanford: Stanford Social Sciences, 2004; Douglas, M., *Traditional Culture, Let’s Hear No More About It.*, in Rao and Walton, *op. cit.*; Don Beck and Christopher Cowan, *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996; Susie Jolly and Andrea Cornwall, *Bridge Cutting Edge Pack on Gender and Cultural Change*, IDS, 2002; and Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay, Gerard Stehouwer and Franz Wong, *Politics of the Possible: Gender and Organizational Change Experiences from the Field*, Oxfam, 2006.

⁷ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>





Our concern is how ideology and cultural norms and practices devalue women, limit choices for women’s exercise of their rights, how they limit intervention for change and how they may override formal laws or constitutions which mandate equality. We are also concerned with how power relations manifested through the threat of violence together with fear of social ostracism inhibit challenges to inequity.

The following aspects of culture are particularly relevant:

- Threat to women of social ostracism or violence in the face of non-conformity to discriminatory social norms
- Valuation of women’s needs such as health care or education
- Men’s support to women’s actions and endeavours and guarantees of women’s safety
- Women’s participation and voice in community and family decision making

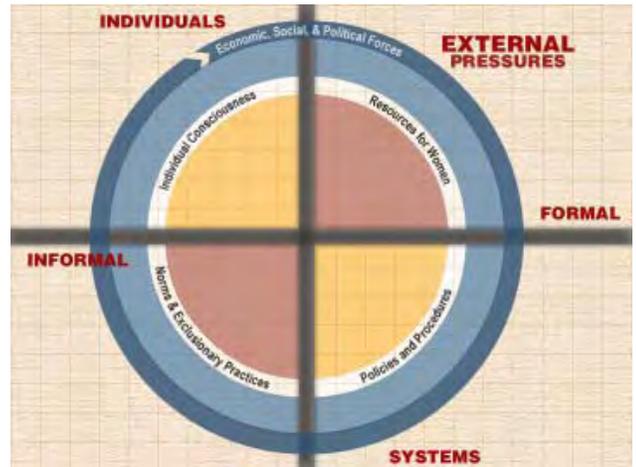


Figure 3 External Pressures

Finally, both the community and the organization are subject to a variety of forces from the environment which affect the various aspects of gender inequality and may be regional, national, or global (Figure 3).





Evolution of this framework over the life of the project

The basic dimensions of this framework were part of our thinking from the beginning of this project. It has evolved in two ways over the past two years. First, the discussions with partners and our team have given much more concreteness and specificity to the variables within each quadrant. For example, we realized that a documented, planned and budgeted program was an example of a procedure formal arrangement that belongs in the bottom left hand quadrant of the organizational level. Similarly, the bottom left quadrant at both levels is considerably better defined as a result of our discussions. One could say that the dimensions of the framework have become operationalized.

The second evolution came when our team insisted that we integrate what had previously been two frameworks—one for programmatic work in the community, one for inside the organization. Among other things this allowed us to see the direct connection

between organizational capabilities and the potential to do certain kinds of work in the field. For example, in Figure 4, we show how we might analyze the capability of an organization to promote gender equality. The diagram shows an organization that has done considerable work in the top quadrants—possibly doing intense gender training with men and women staff and also ensuring that women in the organization have access to resources (promotion, safety, etc.) Women may be well represented in management. But the organization (like many) has done little to ensure change in either policy and procedures or the deep structure. It may be that while there is considerable individual interest in promoting gender equality—there are not enough systems for doing so (programs, budgets, accountability mechanisms). Looking at the underdevelopment at the bottom left of the matrix, we would also hypothesize that there is little organizational valuing of work on gender equality.

Not only does this lead us to a diagnosis of the organization, it shows what kind of work the organization is capable of doing to support gender equality in its programs. This organization would be inclined to do training and resource provision, as these are the two areas where they have first hand understanding. This is a situation often encountered: an NGO doing gender training and micro credit work for example. What often happens is that the work is limited by the cultural norms in the community which maintain the web of norms and informal arrangements which maintain women's subordinate position. If an NGO wanted to intervene to affect the community culture it would need to work on its own organizational cultural and deep structure.

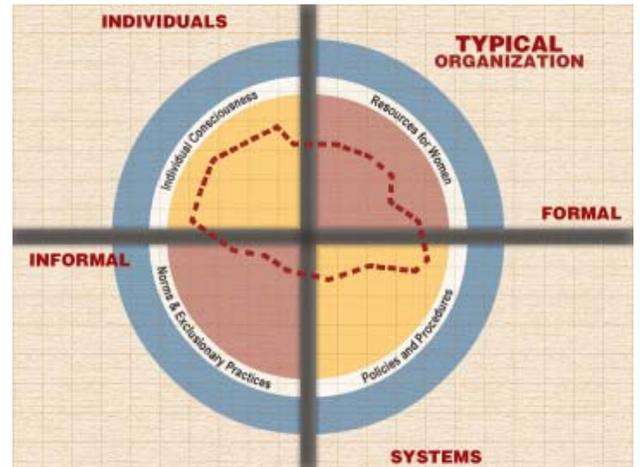


Figure 4 Typical Organization





RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section begins with an overview of the primary changes in each of the organizations and then we ask, in terms of the framework described earlier, what changed, what does this mean, and what questions arise for further inquiry? Further information on findings are contained in the scientific report (appended).

The table below displays the organizations and the key aspects of the change processes in a summary fashion.

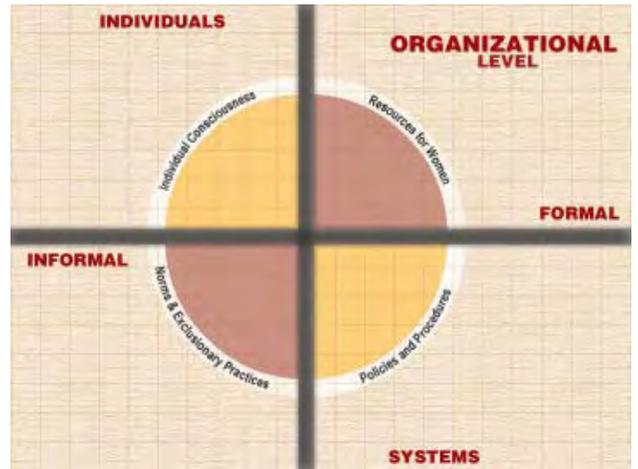
Organization	Change project	Major Results	Change Strategy	Key Factors
Grama Vikas	G-Big Groups (groups of men in 6 villages which worked on gender equality projects)	Changes in women's land ownership Increased access to school for girls Effects on the organization itself	Mobilizing groups of men, providing training and support for their efforts to identify and change important aspects of inequality	GV's strategy of "gentle and sustained change" over 27 years has built trust in community Intensive sensitization at the village level before setting up the groups.
Hunger Project	Pre-election voters awareness campaign (PEVAC)	Revised strategy for electoral politics focussed on women's leadership particularly marginal women.	Re-thinking strategy, advocacy, capacity building workshops with local partners.	Hunger Project's skills as a learning organization and experience in previous elections Supportive legislation reserving 50% seats for women
Yuv Shakti	Gender Ambassadors (25 young leaders who would receive intensive training in gender equality)	Clear changes in the consciousness of the participants Some changes in family dynamics	Intensive, experiential training program and support for action in the community	High quality training Trust in the organization and its own respect for local cultural sensitivities.
DBSU	The strengthening of DSS (Dalit Women's Organization)	Legitimacy of women voices, and their presence in leadership – moved from the periphery to the center of the organization	Building support in state and national networks Workshops and mobilization	Support from senior members of the union Gender audit as part of donor eval. Strong individual leadership High levels of discontent of women members





What Changed (organizational level)?

In mapping the various changes on the framework, it was clear that at the organizational level, there has been change in the top left hand quadrant (individual consciousness). For examples, the learning of Hunger Project staff regarding the key role of social and cultural norms and the importance of social learning as well as individual learning of women. Similarly there was learning in this quadrant as the Yuv Shakti participants crafted individual views of gender relations that replaced previously held culturally-based views. In Grama Vikas, staff deepened their understanding of gender equality and used that understanding to support work in the community and to challenge the Grama Vikas organizational culture. Finally in the DSS there was considerable gender training that raised issues of the condition of Dalit women. All of this “learning” had knowledge, attitude and action components. The action resulted in changes in the other quadrants. At THP, learning led to a revision of program strategy and development of a quantitative/qualitative monitoring project; at YS and GV, learning led to challenging family and community understandings of gender relations regarding such issues as family violence, dowry and household privilege. This is interesting because this is an example of how individual learning can challenge cultural norms in the community but no one is claiming to have “changed the culture”. This certainly leads us to speculate as to how culture changes in this circumstance. At this village level, is it a question of qualitatively more discussion, deeper personal learning or more examples of counter cultural behavior until some sort of tipping point is reached? We are inclined to think that this may be the case as the cultural differences are quite striking between villages where Grama Vikas has a long history and villages where they have been working a shorter length of time.



Organizational Level

Looking at the right side of the top of the organizational diagram, resources for women increased in DBSU as a result of DSS’ work—more women in senior positions, but by and large our organizations did not focus on this quadrant.

Looking at the bottom right quadrant, formal policies and arrangements we saw major changes: the creation of DSS, new policy for women members on the Core Committee of DBSU and at THP, the creation of a new program strategy. The new program strategy led to learning for partners and ultimately learning for women candidates and once again challenged cultural norms in some communities regarding women’s role in leadership and even a woman’s right to have a life outside of her home.





Finally, looking at the deep structure of organizations the most prevalent example is DSS' success in bringing women's issues and voice to the heart of the union decision-making. Other examples of impact on the deep structure are similar to the earlier examples of effects on culture in the community. The work in Grama Vikas and in Yuv Shakti although ostensibly about work in the community challenged the cultural functioning of both organizations and opened up debate on gender relations within the organizations—although there is no data to suggest the debate has changed the deep structure of those organizations.

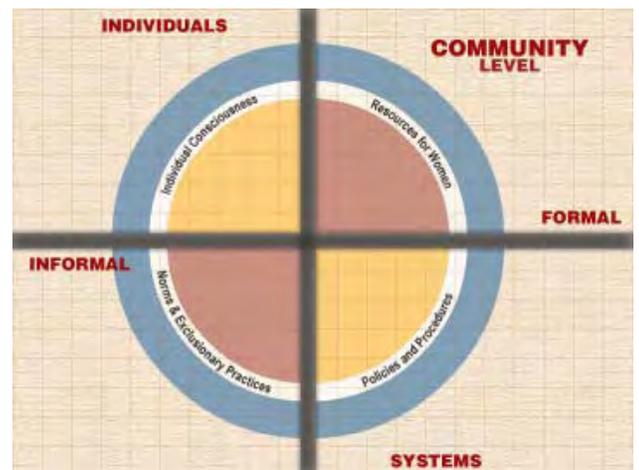
To summarize, many of the changes at the organizational level have been in the individual consciousness change quadrant leading to challenges to cultural norms within and outside the organizations. Learning also led to programmatic change which did lead to change at the community level including challenges to cultural norms. In the case of DBSU, change of the deep structure resulted in a new space for women to exert leadership in that organization.

What Changed (Community Level)

At the community level, beginning with the top left quadrant, the G-BIG groups at Grama Vikas learned about and took action on a number of issues: land ownership, school textbooks, and school buses for girls. They also opened up community discussion and counter cultural behavior in such areas as dowry, family violence, and sharing of household chores. The G-BIG groups also have had an impact on resources available to women (the top right quadrant) joint land ownership, membership in the Primary Land Bank.

THP facilitated the learning of partners who in turn worked with local women who learned intellectually about electoral politics, psychologically about their own empowerment and in turn challenged cultural norms (the bottom left quadrant) regarding women's leadership in the community. THP's partners' work of puppet shows, posters and processions in villages also challenged cultural norms in some communities.

In summary, at the community level, much of the action began with consciousness change efforts which in turn led to increased resources for women (in the GV cases) and a variety of cultural challenges to issues such as girls education, dowry, women's leadership and family violence.



Community Level





Looking at this picture of changes, some issues stand out:

1. Three of the four projects grew out of individual learning and consciousness change. Close observation of GV and YS in particular shows us the depth of learning required for both women and men to come to new understandings of gender relations. Our work in South Africa documents this process of personal learning in even greater depth⁸. The work there has led us to believe that individual change is what roots institutional change and what is required in order to bring about changes in practices and culture. In particular, what is generally seen as 'consciousness raising' or 'conscientization' was approached differently in both these cases – the facilitators, organizations and participants in the process 'negotiated' change in strategic ways: GV's term for it was 'social cost benefit analysis' (where men moved from understanding why gender equality was critical for themselves as men, to analyzing how to support women) whereas in YS, the Gender Ambassadors explicitly talked about how they chose appropriate moments in which to challenge their family or their peers about gender relations; at no point was there an outright and immediate rejection of prevailing social norms and values.
2. These were four successful projects, which invested significant resources in well-conceived programs and although they have had positive impacts no one would believe that the work in these communities was finished, that the problem was solved. This gives us renewed understanding of the magnitude of the task of fulfilling the promise of gender equality.
3. Yuv Shakti, Grama Vikas and DBSU demonstrate that men's learning to be advocates for gender equality is certainly possible. The process in each case was different. In DBSU men stepped forward at a political moment and supported women's rights in the union. Most were committed beforehand but political alignments made it possible for a majority to support this new movement. In Yuv Shakti, it was as a result of an intensive training program, reinforced by the example of Yuv Shakti and its community credibility. In Grama Vikas, there seemed to be less effort on training and more on analysis and problem posing. As a result of the previous work of both Grama Vikas and the Women's Federation the ground was prepared, and men were willing to be part of a process which they believed would benefit the community and to some extent themselves.

This analysis also leads us to a number of questions:

1. All the projects started in one area and had effects on other areas—yet we are also aware that programs are often implemented that not only do not affect other areas but are ultimately sabotaged by the forces of reaction from other areas. What was it about these projects that allowed them to "cross over"?
2. All of these projects "challenged" cultural norms but none would have claimed to have changed the culture—what is that mechanism? Is it more consciousness raising, more material inputs, more dialogue, more programs, more courageous individual action until some sort of tipping point is reached? Or, is there another type of intervention required?

⁸ Friedman, M., & Meer S.,
Change is Like a Slow Dance,
Gender at Work Change
Catalyst Program in South Africa,
www.genderatwork.org, forthcoming.





These organizations' stories allow us to reflect on what is helping cultural change. First, neither Grama Vikas nor Yuv Shakti defined their community as an "object to be changed" in some predetermined way. On the contrary they reached out, defined trust and relationship as central and worked with their communities to evolve new cultural practices. Both organizations exemplified a way of being equitable and just while respecting the people in the community. A good example of this is Grama Vikas leaving the choice of B-BIG members to the communities. Yuv Shakti was careful to not overstep the boundary that they imagined the community had set for them. They didn't, for example, discuss family violence or rape in the training programs for Gender Ambassadors.

3. Although there was little discussion of the concept of "power" in the descriptions of the process offered by the participants, shifting gender relations certainly must deal with issues of power. Perhaps that is most evident in the descriptions of pre-election violence against women candidates in Bihar where the Hunger Project was working. The team at DSS also faced powerful opposition in their work within DBSU. How can we better understand the way power can be wielded by the apparently less powerful for positive ends? Certainly, all the organizations exemplified a very sophisticated understanding of power and sought out and engaged with powerful figures. DSS also exemplified more traditional exercises of power such as demonstrations and land occupations.





FULFILMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The general objective was to provide a reflective space, facilitative and conceptual help to organizations endeavoring to improve their practice of institutional change for gender equality and to use that process of collective organizational learning to simultaneously build knowledge of institutional change for gender equality.

The first aspect of that objective of providing a reflective space was accomplished with a high level of success for four of the organizations. Our meetings with the organizations included an “enrolment” workshop which allowed the organizations to understand the project and choose to be part of it, a two day meeting with the change team to hear the story of the organization and explore options for change, and three workshops with all of the organizations in a peer learning environment to share conceptual frameworks, and discuss the progress of their projects over the year. (The notes from the final workshop are appended to this report. Earlier workshops are described in interim reports).

As well, we met with each organization to study their change project and to understand the dynamics of change in that setting. Finally, a Gender at Work facilitator worked with each organization providing support in whatever way was needed. Each of these interactions was evaluated at the time by the participants and was highly rated.

Participants at the final meeting made the following comments:

“When you are an activist on the field, we do come across so many dilemmas and we spend time on reflecting on these dilemmas. Sometimes it’s also worth asking if this is a luxury or a necessity. ...is it worth it when we should be back in the field? But then, there are all kinds of pressures and maybe it is important to make this process a necessity. We need new ideas, we must step back and think and regenerate ourselves.”

“The G@W space is a chance for us to mull over and see where and how the action and the thoughts fit in. This space is something very interesting and helps us make the effort to review, plan and put in inputs. This combination is something else. The level of trust and warmth has been generated very quickly. In some activist worlds, the tenderness disappears, especially when dealing with violence and it’s really hard to get soft again. But this space makes me wonder if tenderness is an essential ingredient in gender equality. Especially where women need to be heard and how they assert their need for power. How we can stop feeling powerless and not lose the tenderness that we find so special. I am convinced that this is important. I am excited about looking at this understanding as a product that we value.”

“This process has been special since it is about peer learning but in an uncompetitive environment. We come from across so many states, regions and countries. Yet, this is not like a seminar. Here we are creating a learning environment and learning from it. That has kept one going – made us feel energised – this is the oil to the whole thing.”

“I feel like this is home. This is a wonderful combination of friendship and work. I am struck by how difficult the work is but also about how much people have moved forward. I am happy about the relationships we have built with each other. This support is visible and helps us. It’s such a wonderful place to be.”





“G@W was a catalyst - through providing methods – tools and a common space that broadened perspectives.”

“You provided us with knowledge and information – and a space to grow together – widening the spectrum from different contexts – empowering peer learning - this group provided us that space – a sense of freedom along with accountability – it challenges us to reflect on work our work ethic and organizational cultures and brought diverse groups together.”

“Helped us be disciplined to the work and accountable to group and process – challenged us without being judged – provided us with a space for reflection – gave us opportunities for course correction and planning.”

“We felt as if the patient was longing for milk and the doctor prescribed the same – when we came across G@W.”

“It has been great you have joined our canoe and rowed with us. Have given us freshness. Thanks so much for this.”

“I am privileged to come here – hear and share your stories.”

“Look at the Mountain and River as a place of nourishment and learning. After 2 - 3 years of working in Gender@Work I still find it nourishing and it still refreshes energies.”

“I feel I have found my voice and the lyrics have been written collaboratively.”

In the Memorandum of Grant Conditions, the objectives of the project were stated as follows:

1. To simultaneously build organizational capacities to promote gender equality and generate knowledge on useful conceptual approaches and development practice in three selected Indian organizations
2. To document a change project in each selected organization that will be planned to improve at least one aspect of the organizations' capacity to promote gender equality
3. To hold a series of project workshops over the life of the project to discuss: the conceptual approaches and development practice for institutional change, to further develop the methodology of the project and to share the ongoing results of the outcome of the change project
4. To hold an inter-regional meeting to share the results between the Indian case studies, and a parallel project in South Africa. To pull together the learning from all the organizations.
5. To produce a final report on institutional change for gender equality which is geared to influencing international thinking on supporting efforts for gender equality.

The table on the following page evaluates the accomplishment of these objectives.





As can be seen from the table, all the objectives save one were accomplished. The inter-regional meeting was thought to be not possible after re-allocating the budget to increase the number of Indian organizations from 3-5. This budget re-allocation was approved in an amendment to the grant conditions dated 28 February 2005.

We are pleased that at least part of the objective of the meeting was achieved by bringing the South African program Manager to the last workshop of the Indian organizations. She was able to tell the story of the change efforts in South Africa and we later had a session to understand key factors in change in the projects in both India and South Africa.

Objectives	Accomplishment	Evidence	Notes
Build organizational capacities to promote gender equality and generate knowledge on useful conceptual approaches and development practice in three selected Indian organizations	Done	Participant success in planning and carrying out projects with demonstrable impacts which has resulted in new knowledge as described in this report.	Often "capacity building" refers to training to improve knowledge. Our use of the words refers to a process in which outsiders collaborate with insiders, providing a reflective space, advice and conceptual help to make change happen.
Document a change project in each selected organization that will be planned to improve at least one aspect of the organizations' capacity to promote gender equality	Done	This report and previous technical reports have documented the change processes carried out in each organization. Each process improved the organizations' capacity to promote gender equality	
Hold a series of project workshops over the life of the project to discuss: the conceptual approaches and development practice for institutional change, to further develop the methodology of the project and to share the ongoing results of the outcome of the change project	Done	Workshop reports and participants evaluations.	Over the course of the project we held three peer learning workshops which mixed conceptual discussion, project reporting and analysis, and re-planning. The participants evaluated these workshops as being very helpful and energizing. We are convinced they were an essential element in the change processes.
Hold an inter-regional meeting to share the results between the Indian case studies, and a parallel project in South Africa. To pull together the learning from all the organizations	Not done. We brought our South Africa Program Manager to the final Indian workshop to share the experience of South African organizations and it was highly valued by the participants.	The final workshop analyzed change processes in both the Indian and South African organizations	We didn't hold an inter-regional workshop for two reasons: 1. The two programs started at different times and were out of phase 2. At the beginning of the project we decided to increase the number of organizations we were working with in India from 3-5 and re-allocated the resources accordingly.
Produce a final report on institutional change for gender equality which is geared to influencing international thinking on supporting efforts for gender equality.	Done	The current document	We believe that the results of this project are very persuasive. Our finding of the importance of a holistic and multi-factorial method of intervention for gender equality has found resonance with development professionals.





PROJECT DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

The project design was intended to allow us to do several things simultaneously:

- Make a contribution to the change process underway in India by being of assistance to a strategically chosen set of organizations. Our contribution was to provide a variety of reflective spaces, a peer learning environment, new ideas about gender equality and institutional change and facilitative help from local professionals.
- Watch change happen and learn from the experience of leading Indian NGOs.
- Build a network of NGOs and experts that could continue to learn from each other
- Produce materials that could benefit audiences as diverse as community based organizations in India to policy makers and program managers in multilateral organizations.

To date, it is safe to say that we have provided a valuable service to four of the five organizations we began with⁹. (See participant comments in previous section.) These four organizations have all embarked on interesting and successful change projects in which we have been participants and witnesses. This has left us with a corpus of data including interview notes, presentations by the organizations, meeting notes with their partners, documents from their projects or campaigns and photos of drawings and collages they developed to understand and communicate their contexts, programs and strategies.

Although the overall design of the project was ours, the design has meant that our partner organizations have been embarked on their own change agenda and have been co-researchers with us as to what they are learning, how change is happening and what is to be understood about change in this nexus of gender studies, organizational change, personal development and community change. Our work with organizational partners has been a combination of observation, interviews, and workshops using both rational and projective techniques.

The activities supported by the project are shown in the table on the following page.

⁹ One of the organizations discontinued their participation due to scheduling and other difficulties





TIMELINE OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity	Date	Purpose	Comments
Staff Teambuilding Meeting	August 2004	Build staff team, decide on criteria for organizations, discuss project approach to change	With the help of colleagues in India, we were able to recruit a very experienced, well-connected staff team.
Recruitment of organizational partners	Fall 2004	Locate 5 organizations that were at a stage of their own development which could benefit from our partnership.	This is a key success factor. Organizations were approached who were known to our network and who were at a point of change or development of their program.
Enrolment workshop	November 2004	Build understanding among potential partners regarding the program in order to make for informed choice to participate	The workshop allowed organizations to meet each other as well as Gender at Work. This laid the foundation for the peer learning so critical to the program.
Organizational Story Meetings	March 2005	Stimulate an organizational reflection on their work on gender equality	This meeting also allowed the G@W team to understand the organization and begin to build a relationship.
Workshop 1	May 2005	Share key ideas and frameworks, provide support for organizational planning, build a peer learning environment.	Organizations left this workshop with a change plan which they had developed and shared with others.
Facilitator support	May to December	Support the change process and maintain its momentum	Facilitators played different roles in different organizations—leading workshops, consulting on the phone, and helping with planning and strategizing.
Research Visits	October 2005	Each organization was visited to collect information on the progress of their change project.	
Workshop 2	November 2005	Similar to workshop 1, the participants discussed the progress of their projects, conceptual ideas and had time to plan next steps.	This workshop included a presentation by Srilatha Batliwala on women's empowerment and Anita Gurumurthy on information technologies and change.
Facilitator support	December to May	Once again, facilitators were available to support the organizations in whichever ways needed.	
Research Visits	April 2006	The final research visit was intended to understand what had happened, what strategies were employed and what were the key factors in change.	This visit met with the change team in each organization as well as their partners in the project.
Workshop 3	May 2006	Wrap-up meeting in order to share the stories of their projects and reflect on the change process	This meeting also had an extended discussion of how they would share their learnings more broadly. The group developed plans for a DVD which would include the stories of change in local languages and include the stories of those affected by the change.
Data analysis and writing	May 2006-	Review all the data and develop "knowledge products" that can be used by NGOs, governments and donor agencies to think about institutional change for gender equality	
Publishing	Fall 2007	Disseminate the findings to a wide audience.	We are in discussion with Zubaan Publishing in India regarding a book and with an Indian film maker regarding the DVD. We are also re-positioning our web site so that it can be a vehicle for disseminating findings.



PROJECT OUTPUTS

The project outputs will include knowledge built in this project in India and the findings in a similar project in South Africa where we worked with an additional six social change organizations. A study of the first three South African organizations' change process is just being completed.

We anticipate two major project outputs:

1. Book, DVD, website that describes the findings about institutional change, provides tools for use in the field and tells the stories of the organizations' projects.
2. Use of the findings in work with other organizations concerned with gender equality and institutional change.

The first dissemination mechanism is to create a production that has three interrelated strands: a book, DVD and web site. We want to use each of these three media to their particular advantage to tell as complete a story as possible. We see them as follows:

- Book—analysis, conceptual chapters that draw heavily on the work of the organizations. For example: a chapter on institutional change in the community would include framework discussions and an analysis of the work of Hunger Project, Grama Vikas, Juv Shakti, JAW, TAC, and SACCAWU. A section on personal change would draw heavily on the stories from Yuv Shakti, Grama Vikas and some of our African organizations. The book would also refer people to the web site for such material as the manual of the Gender Ambassadors program, or the study that followed women leaders in panchayat elections in Bihar. The book would also link to the material on the DVD. We hope that the book will be published jointly by Zubaan (a popular Indian feminist press) and IDRC. The audience for the book would include NGO leaders, policy people, academics, and UN agency staff.
- DVD—the focus here is on experience; the DVD is a chance to use a variety of media to tell the stories in a more immediate way and to appeal to an audience that is more likely to look at a DVD than read a book. It could include interviews, and photos and could include many voices and many languages. We would hire a media person to work with organizations and weave all their material into a coherent whole. The DVD would be bound into the book and would refer to specific chapters in the book as well as to the web site.
- Web site—the web site would be a place to feature longer written pieces such as a methodology manual or studies such as the Hunger Project study of women panchayat candidates or the pieces written by the South African organizations, CALS, JAW and CSVN. We could also feature short summaries of key frameworks. All of which could be downloadable for free or for a fee. It would also be possible to buy the book on the web site.

We have already received a small amount of money from HIVOS for travel to fill out the stories of the organizations; we are fundraising in India for the DVD and are hoping that IDRC will contribute to the funding of the book itself.





The second major output is the use of the findings by other organizations as we work with them in training programs and consultancies. Already the frameworks have been well received by organizations such as Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Mozambique, The Gender Encounter (Sudan), GROOTS, The Aga Khan Foundation Canada, The Primate's Fund for Relief and Development (Canada), World Vision Canada, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

We are hearing from them that this is an easy to understand but comprehensive picture of what must be done to achieve gender equality. It has helped people understand why their existing program isn't as effective as it needs to be. Organizations are also finding the framework helpful understanding gender and development issues in a new light and therefore finding it a useful tool for strategic planning.

Over the next few months the findings will be presented and used in a variety of for a including, a plenary session Oxfam International Popular Campaigning Forum; a two year action learning project with Oxfam Canada in Sudan, an analysis and monitoring tool for the Aga Khan Foundation Canada, and training packages for the United Nations Development Group that will be used to train UN country team members. The material has already been used in a training program for UN Resident Coordinators and Country Representatives.





CAPACITY BUILDING

There were two sets of beneficiaries of the capacity building associated with the project:

1. The organizational partners, their partner organizations and beneficiaries
2. Gender at Work itself

The organizational partners built capacity by participating in an intensive reflection on experience and being in a dialogue with the G@W team. Some of the outcomes of this were:

- THP re-thinking their orientation to election preparation
- Grama Vikas developing greater understanding regarding gender equality and how to work with their communities to move that agenda forward
- Yuv Shakti developing a program to train “Gender Ambassadors”
- THP developing a documentation process for their election work
- DBSU being emboldened to set up a new organization to work on gender equality issues across the organization of 200,000 people.

When asked about the contribution G@W staff made to their learning, participants replied:

- Providing a space to think
- Asking good questions
- Challenging assumptions and beliefs about change
- Providing concepts and ideas
- Providing personal support
- Leading particular workshops in organizations’ change processes

Of course all of this was in the service of gender equality and much of it with marginalized groups (Dalits, Muslim women).

The project has also built the capacity of Gender at Work. We have built and implemented a model of action learning/capacity building and research that will have applicability in many contexts in the world. We have brought together conceptual material from integral theory, feminist theory, organizational change, adult education and community change to fashion a multi-disciplinary tool that can simultaneously support social change agendas and build knowledge.

As individuals, the Indian staff and the project leaders have also gained valuable knowledge of institutional change and the task of facilitating social processes. Our Indian staff have already been approached to do similar work with other organizations in India.





PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Gender at Work has been seen as a good example of what has been touted by modern management books as a light, flexible, low overhead and networked organization. G@W has no office; it functions as a network of colleagues in many countries led by the Co-Directors and Board. All staff are part time and project based. We are well connected to development leaders and networks in many countries. These relationships were responsible for allowing us to recruit top staff people and find excellent organizations that were willing to work with us.

However, this lean, focussed research organization has also been described as all teeth and no tail—meaning that our focus has been almost entirely on the task before us and not enough time on our own process as a team or organization. It is clear that we did not budget enough time for conversations throughout the project that would allow us to think about emerging issues. For example, we should have been able to have much better discussions about the role of the facilitators with the organizations.

Regarding the scientific management of the project, we think we have found great people, who built strong relationships with our partner organizations which has in turn made possible the collection of very good data. The difficulty is that we drastically under-budgeted the time required for data analysis and development of knowledge packages.

Regarding technical and administrative support from IDRC, we have appreciated the intellectual contributions and the flexibility that was required as we got into the project and had to make changes.





IMPACT

We believe that the knowledge developed in this project has strong potential to influence development thinking and practice with regard to gender equality. As mentioned above, leaders in UN and NGO agencies have been very welcoming to these ideas and see immediate application. As well as the orienting value of the overall framework, the findings speak directly to important issues in gender and development—including for example, the importance of individual learning and the place of men. As described in the scientific report our findings have real potential for clarifying both these issues.

We also believe that this impact will be quite broad-based due to the space that Gender at Work occupies linked to important thought leaders through our founding organizations (AWID, Women’s Learning Partnership, CIVICUS, UNIFEM) our staff and our current consultancies with such organizations as WEDO, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNDG, Oxfam, and Aga Khan Foundation.





OVERALL ASSESSMENT

We believe the project can be proud of the following strengths and accomplishments:

1. Grew out of a process of analysis and partnership building in India and was designed in response to what we learned in that process
2. Built an exceptional team of Indian change agents and researchers
3. Attracted a group of high quality and diverse organizational partners
4. Implemented an action learning process that was highly valued by participants and produced four important social interventions that will improve work on gender equality
5. Produced an understanding of institutional change for gender equality that is being well received by other organizations.
6. Going forward we have strong momentum to publish a variety of materials growing out of this and our South African work. Our South African team are just finishing an analysis of the work with the first three organizations, our Indian partners are eager to publish their own stories in a variety of formats and we have a team of researchers and writers eager to start on a comprehensive production which will bring together the learning from the South African and Indian action learning programs as well as our on-going consulting in this area.

We believe that the weakness of the project has been in project management—we underestimated the time required for a project of this complexity and as a result, staff made contributions of time well beyond expectations. This often meant that we were unable to give staff the support they deserved, nor were we able to spend the time we would have liked in analysis and discussion with staff.

That said, we feel that the project has been successful in delivering on its prime objective—knowledge of institutional change for gender equality and we expect that this knowledge will make it less likely that 30 years from now we are still asking, “Why has there not been more progress?”

