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Abstract

Practicum Report: “Gender Strategies in Nepal: Breaking Down the Barriers”
Trina Lasch
December, 2005

Increasingly researchers, policy makers and practitioners are accepting that development affects men and women differently. Although much work has been done to integrate women into development projects, physical, social, cultural and economic barriers continue to impede women’s full involvement in development, particularly in decision-making processes. Often these barriers are overlooked, poorly understood and/or thought to affect all women in the same manner.

This research project, composed of three phases, set out to explore these gender specific challenges to women’s participation in the development. The first phase involved the training of Nepal Community Development Centre (NCDC) staff in gender awareness and analysis tools and techniques. The second included an assessment of the barriers that restrict the participation of Nepali women in development planning decision-making. The final phase focussed on the development of a gender policy for NCDC’s projects and programmes. The project aimed to assist NCDC in developing a community-oriented gender strategy which would increase gender equality in the development process.
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An ode to procrastination: First and foremost, my sincere thanks and gratitude to Anne Marie Dalton for never giving up on me, and to Annette Wright for her unfailing patience and steady assistance. To my parents, I love you for always cheering me on – you help make the impossible, possible. And to Terry, last but not least, I dedicate this thesis to you because your support and incredible encouragement have enabled me to complete this journey. Thank you.
1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

Researchers, policy makers and practitioners increasingly recognise that development affects men and women differently. Although much work has been done to mainstream gender in development projects and programs there are often social, cultural, economic and geographic barriers to the full involvement of marginalized groups such as women, particularly in decision-making processes. Often these barriers are overlooked, poorly understood and/or thought to affect all women and men in the same manner.

This report documents a research project carried out in collaboration with the Namsaling Community Development Centre (NCDC), a non-governmental organisation in Eastern Nepal. Building on participatory development work NCDC has engaged in for the past decade this project assessed the participation of local women and men in the sustainable development planning process. The focus was on barriers or constraints that women, in particular, face in their attempts to participate in community decision-making. Within this context a gender policy was developed for NCDC’s projects, programs, and administration, with the aim of increasing NCDC’s ability to support women as decision-makers and to mainstream gender within their organisation.
Throughout the project, emphasis was placed on designing a gender policy that would be translated into practice. For this reason, the participation of local people, in particular women, was essential. Sex, class, caste and ethnicity can all impact how one is included in and affected by development processes; these factors must be taken into account in the planning stage to mitigate those impacts.

The project, titled “Breaking Down the Barriers,” consisted of three phases. The first involved an assessment of the barriers that restrict the participation of Nepali women in decision-making processes. The second phase focused on the training of NCDC staff and Executive Board Members in gender awareness and the use of gender analysis tools and techniques. The final phase centred on the development of a gender policy for NCDC’s projects and programmes. The entire process was participatory, including NCDC staff and members in the development of a community-oriented gender strategy aimed at increasing gender equality in the development process.

1.2 Discussion of Terms

1.2.1 Gender

‘Gender’ is a catch-phrase often used incorrectly to mean “sex” or “women”. While sex is biologically determined, gender is created by the society into which the individual is born. It includes socially and culturally constructed roles that influence the way in which men and women are expected to behave within a particular society. Mosse (1993: 2) compares gender to the scripted behaviour of actors and actresses,
behaviour which "embraces our appearance, dress, attitudes, personalities, work both within and outside the household, sexuality, family commitments and so on." Women are not born to be domestic labourers any more than men are born to be truck drivers. This is important in an analysis of development because it is necessary to discover our perceptions of male/female roles in order to invalidate myths surrounding these roles.

1.2.2 Empowerment

What does it mean to be empowered? Empowerment has joined the ranks of other over-used and misconstrued concepts that make up development jargon. Countless studies, journal articles, and books by scholars from various schools of thought mention the term, but their definitions are often vague and conflicting. Clearly empowerment is a broad concept encompassing a variety of factors. While most Community, Participatory and Feminist Development theorists accept that achieving empowerment entails gaining an understanding of the conditions of one's subordination, others argue this is just the "tip of the iceberg". Some describe empowerment as a concept beyond simple 'participation' and 'consciousness-raising'. It "seeks to combine and expand both consciousness raising and participation so that individuals not only may understand their society and the place they currently have in it, but may undertake efforts to modify social relations" (Stromquist, 1994: 266). Others suggest the experience of discussion with peers can lead to a form of empowerment much more powerful than a program consciously geared towards reaching that goal; it involves a process of enlightenment in which people 'come into themselves.' They see themselves as autonomous human beings who not only have
freedom from certain constraints but have the freedom to develop new relationships and new access to civil participation – a release from powerlessness and the fear of humiliation. Most feminist theorists stress that empowerment cannot be purchased or given; women must empower themselves. This concept is open to debate; some scholars believe there is a finite amount of available power and, due to barriers to empowerment erected by men, women must negotiate or push for a power transfer. Empowerment on a personal level cannot be bought and sold, but in the bigger picture the political and economic components of empowerment do require transactions. Other definitions, relying less on feminist theory, tend to equate empowerment with its instrumental benefits such as, improved education, health and economic opportunities. According to this definition, empowerment appears more a commodity than an achievement. For the purposes of this research the following definition of empowerment is used:

a ‘bottom-up’ process of transforming gender power relations, through individuals or groups developing awareness of subordination and building capacity to challenge it.

(Reeves and Baden: 2000)

1.2.3 Gender Mainstreaming

Webster’s dictionary defines ‘mainstream’(n) as “the prevailing current of thought; not out of the ordinary”; ‘to mainstream’(v) “to incorporate into a prevailing group”; a destination that can be argued to be the main goal of gender mainstreaming efforts – to change the realm of the prevailing or dominant group(s) in society. The idea being to move the concept of gender as described above from a marginalized and poorly understood way of understanding social relations and structures to an accepted
worldview. From this perspective, true gender mainstreaming necessarily implies a shift in power structures, on the assumption that prevailing social groups are male-dominated. Unfortunately, gender mainstreaming is not so easily defined and there is a broad spectrum of contested definitions. A more in depth discussion of gender mainstreaming follows in Chapter 2; for the purposes of this research the UN Economic and Social Council definition of gender mainstreaming was used:

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

(ECOSOC agreed conclusions: E/1997/L.3014 July 1997)
2 Literature Review

2.1 Gender and Development

This project is based upon the assumptions and principles underlying the Gender and Development (GAD) approach to development. Where did GAD come from? What trends in theoretical discourse and development practice stimulated the creation of this theory? Rather than engaging in a lengthy discussion of the progression of feminist thought, attention will be given to two feminist approaches to development theory out of which the GAD paradigm evolved: Women in Development (WID) and Women and Development (WAD).

WID arose from discussions surrounding the groundbreaking study Women in Development by Ester Boserup (1970) the first development scholar to focus attention on the sexual division of labour and the differential impact that development had on women and men (Connelly et al, 1996; Rathgeber, 1989; Plewes and Stewart, 1991). Investigating the impact of development on women she discovered most development projects ignored women and actually decreased their economic activity and autonomy. Men, not women, were trained in new technologies, often in agriculture, taking over traditionally female tasks. The term WID was coined by the Washington DC chapter of the Society for International Development (Rathgeber, 1989). They challenged the assumption that development would lead to greater equality between men and women;
an assumption made by Modernisation\(^1\) theorists citing that as another aspect of the 'trickle down' effect.\(^2\) Instead, WID advocates claimed, women needed to be directly involved in development if they were to benefit. A result of their efforts was a US law requiring the inclusion of Women's Impact Studies on future US funded development projects. Until this time development studies had lumped men and women together; men's experiences could be generalized to women, development would affect them in the same way. Men, as heads of households, had a vested interest in the well-being of the women in their family, and would share any benefits accordingly. Female-headed households or men hoarding benefits were not considered (Connelly et al., 1996; Rathgeber, 1989; Plewes and Stewart, 1991).

The primary focus of WID was to integrate women into the development process. This, it was argued, would make the process more efficient, past failures were attributed to the previous exclusion of women. Emphasis was also placed on minimizing the disadvantages and discrimination facing women in the private sector. Although proponents of WID criticized the modernisation process for excluding women, they continued to work within the Modernisation Paradigm. They challenged previous strategies for addressing the exclusion of women but not the assumptions that underlay those strategies; their attention was focused on women's productive labour

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\(^1\) Modernisation Theory: "perceived development as an evolutionary, unilinear process of change which took societies from their pre-modern status through a series of stages toward the final destination of modernity" (Kabeer, 1994:16).

\(^2\) The idea that the benefits of investing in the industrial sector and in new technologies would eventually 'trickle-down' to the poorer sectors and groups of society.
with no consideration given to the value of reproductive work. They measured development in terms of economic growth and the adoption of Western technology, institutions and values. WID scholars saw the male bias and traditional attitudes of development workers, poor health, and lack of education as barriers to women’s participation. Traditional knowledge was considered a sign of ‘backwardness’ and underdevelopment (Connelly et al., 1996; Rathgeber, 1989; Plewes and Stewart, 1991). Development from a WID perspective is a linear process that in the context of women would proceed as follows: women are integrated into development projects, skills are transferred and then gender relations will change because women are now equal partners. From this perspective economic inequality is linked to poverty, not to subordination (Plewes and Stewart, 1991).

A Marxist Feminist critique of mainstream development, known as WAD, or Women and Development, began to emerge in the late 1970s. Stressing knowledge and work it acknowledged the special role women have always played in the development process. Looking deeper at women’s historical contributions it rejects WID’s acceptance of male-dominated social structures and critically assesses the position of women, making the assumption that the position of women will improve only when existing power structures are more equitable. The WAD approach recognized the dangers of integrating women into a patriarchal development process and created women-only projects in an attempt to protect women’s interests from marginalisation and domination (Kabeer, 1994; Rathgeber, 1991; Connelly et al., 1996).
GAD, also known as the Empowerment Approach or Gender Approach situates itself within the Socialist Feminist and Alternative Development Paradigms. It combines lessons learned from past development failures with new ways of looking at underdevelopment to offer an inclusive, holistic approach (Young, 1997). The GAD view of social reality assumes that underlying social and cultural constructs govern the way society functions and human beings, and women in particular, are exploited. Complex interrelated factors shape the world and these mould and shape social, cultural, political and economic structures that influence every aspect of our lives. GAD sees many of these structures as inherently patriarchal and oppressive to women and seeks to transform these structures as a prerequisite to solving development problems.

The GAD approach attempts to legitimise a Southern perspective of development that takes a people-centred and emancipatory approach to development, redefining the goals of development from modernisation and economic growth to the empowerment of women and men (Martinusson, 1997; Kabeer, 1994; Plewes and Stewart, 1991). GAD emerged in the 1980s from the experiences and analyses of grassroots organisations as well as western feminists interested in development issues. The GAD framework goes beyond the market-centred assumptions of the orthodox WID paradigm and the class-based assumptions of the political economy paradigm (WAD), looking at development through a gendered lens.
GAD is concerned with ethnicity and class, as well as gender relations, because it sees these concepts as interrelated variables that are created and can therefore be changed by social, cultural, political and economic structures. While a GAD approach is careful to recognize differences and is aware that gender, class and race relations differ from society to society and as well as within communities, one thing remains the same; women are at the bottom of the social hierarchy because of their gender role. Development must therefore be defined as a process of human advancement that involves the empowerment of women and men; a bottom-up, grassroots approach that initiates change by first attacking social inequality.

Differences of sex, race, class, gender, etc., should not be used to exclude people from participating in development, instead they should be central to any development theory, strategy or approach. Ignoring the importance of differences between men and women, and within groups of women, in order to come up with a universally applicable theory is extremely problematic, particularly in countries of great diversity such as Nepal. A GAD approach accounts for this by recognizing the differences among women and between women and men while proposing an overarching theory that is enduring and flexible. Central to this is the premise that although differences affect the way individuals experience development, the underlying structures of oppression remain the same.

Where other approaches treat women as ‘consumers’ or passive recipients of aid, GAD views women as agents of development and regards their participation in setting the
development agenda as crucial to sustainability (Young 1997). Part of GAD’s strategy for overall change is implemented through involving women in consciousness raising initiatives. This facilitates a process of empowerment that fosters the political will to alter the unequal gender relations that exist in the household, and at the local, national and international community. These patriarchal structures interfere with the development process because they inhibit women’s full and equal participation in society. This is often described as changing women’s practical needs into strategic interests. Women’s practical needs, which include healthcare, food, and clean water, tend to be linked to their gender roles. Strategic interests address women’s subordinate position in society and challenge existing stereotypes of gender, race and class. Increased involvement in decision-making, greater economic independence and increased control over reproduction are considered strategic interests. If they are dealt with as secondary to practical needs, negative stereotypes will be reinforced and women’s subordinate position will not change.

2.2 Towards gender equality: Mainstreaming Gender

This section provides a brief overview of the literature on gender mainstreaming exploring the various definitions, best practices and challenges associated with this approach. Gender mainstreaming has been described as a practice, a strategy, a process and an approach; in the past decade it has become a term favoured by governments, the UN, NGOs and scholars alike. Definitions range from the general and vague, such as “the process of bringing a gender perspective into the mainstream activities of
government at the policy, programme and project levels.” (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1999: 9) to specific and prescriptive:

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy which aims to bring about gender equality and advance women’s rights by infusing gender analysis, gender-sensitive research, women’s perspectives and gender equality goals into mainstream policies, projects and institutions... it brings the focus on women’s issues and gender equality into all policy development, research, advocacy, legislation, resource allocation, planning, implementation and monitoring of programs and projects. (It) is intended to be transformative, changing the very definition and discourse of development to include gender equality as a means and an end.”

Kerr (2004:1)

Confusion about and resistance to gender mainstreaming have led to a broad spectrum of accepted definitions; from the purely technical to the highly political. This is a result of the competing conceptual frameworks being employed. That said, there are some attributes common to most, if not all, definitions of gender mainstreaming. First is the overarching goal of achieving gender equality through a process of infusing a gender perspective into policies, programs and structures by identifying and neutralizing gender bias. Second is the assumption that gender concerns are important to all sectors of development, and a key part of the development planning process. A final quality that defines gender mainstreaming is the ‘mainstreaming’ aspect itself; instead of a special unit responsible for implementing a gender policy and/or strategy, this responsibility is spread across the organizational structure; rather than dealing with gender as an ‘add-on’ (Hannon 2003; Rees 2002; Bridge 2000).

It is at this point that definitions diverge. Feminist scholars and practitioners tend to emphasis the political process, meant to transform the mainstream development
agenda, while many governments and regional organisations emphasize technical aspects, focusing on tools, checklists and trainings.

In order to reduce confusion around gender mainstreaming it is worth touching upon the theoretical underpinnings that inform the various models. These differing approaches are best viewed as a continuum that interact with, inform, and build on each other. This helps explain some of the confusion around gender mainstreaming arising from its internal lack of consensus and the variations in interpretation (Kanji 2003).

Gender mainstreaming strategies emerged during the shift away from WID and equal opportunity approaches to development, which attempted to integrate women into existing processes and structures. As was described in the previous section, these efforts failed to narrow the gender gap as they did not take into account the differing roles, responsibilities, and social, political, cultural structures acting on women and men. GAD and empowerment approaches advocated new ways of understanding gender inequality, focusing on gender bias and power relations which attempted to transform the development agenda. The first advocates of gender mainstreaming understood this as both a technical and a political process which required shifts in organisational cultures and ways of thinking (Baden and Masika: 1997).
As more and more organisations, agencies and governments adopted this approach two forms of gender mainstreaming emerged. The first, more politically acceptable, form employs a WID or integrationist/operational approach and focuses almost exclusively on the technical aspects of gender mainstreaming, incorporating gender into existing structures and processes. The second approach employs what can be described as a GAD or agenda-setting approach and is much more transformative in nature and centered in the political sphere (Kanji 2003; Reeves and Baden 2000; Jahan 1995). Jahan (1995) emphasizes the participation of women as decision makers as a key part of this approach. Through determining the agenda women in effect reorient the mainstream.

Whether using an integrationist or agenda-setting approach certain conditions and tools are important elements of any gender mainstreaming strategy. These have been described as “enabling factors for gender mainstreaming” (CIDA: 2000) or “necessary factors for increased integration of gender” (Save the Children: 1996) and “elements critical to integrating gender into organizations” (CEDPA: 1996) and “necessary prerequisites and facilitating conditions” (Council of Europe: 1998) or basic principles (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung: 2003).

Caroline Moser describes a three stage “gender planning process” that includes the formulation of a gender policy, gender planning and the organization of implementation. The policy outlines ‘what to do’, the planning ‘how to do it’ and the
organization of implementation ‘what is actually done’, the administrative actions undertaken to translate planning into practice (Moser: 1993; p. 6 & 139).

Most common in the formulae developed for mainstreaming gender within an organization, project or program, is the need for commitment from, or the active involvement of, senior management. Without this it is difficult if not impossible to move forward and there will be a direct impact on elements including resource allocation and training opportunities. Others have noted a need for sponsorship, or a champion (Kanji: 2003; Kuhn: 2002 ), who will drive the gender mainstreaming strategy, or dedicated staff such as a point person (Save the Children: 1996) responsible for promoting gender and/or leading the integration/mainstreaming process. Most organizations, agencies and practitioners emphasis the need for sex-disaggregated data 3, the tools and knowledge to use gender analysis, as well as training to increase gender awareness and to pass on technical knowledge and expertise. Moser (1993) views training as a critical component to ensuring the translation of gender policy and planning into practice.

One of the most important gender mainstreaming tools is gender analysis, defined as “the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify, understand and redress inequities based on gender”

3 Sex disaggregated data while viewed as necessary to understanding the differential impacts of development on women and men, does have its limitations with regard to the type of information that gender sensitive indicators can provide; this must be recognized (Taylor: 1999).
(Reeves and Baden 2000). There are a number of different approaches to gender analysis, including the Harvard analytical framework, the Moser (Gender Planning) Framework, the Gender Analysis Matrix, the Women’s Empowerment Framework and the Social Relations Approach. Each model has its strengths and weaknesses; some emphasise the importance of gender roles, while others look at social relations or focus almost exclusively on women’s empowerment. These frameworks raise questions and analyse information but are only a starting point and must be supplemented with additional research to paint a true picture of the complexity of inequality.⁴

Another crucial element to successful gender mainstreaming is the allocation of adequate resources needed to support the training, data collection/analysis and other support practices. As the Council of Europe Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming (1998) note “financial means are an absolute prerequisite for gender mainstreaming, as for any other policy strategy.” Mainstreaming implies a reallocation of existing funds.

The first step in implementing a mainstreaming strategy is the development of a gender policy, informed by gender analysis, to include the above mentioned elements (Hannon: 2003). A gender policy alone cannot achieve gender equality; it complements and provides a focus for other mainstreaming activities. Ideally gender

policy should be developed through a participatory process involving key decision-makers, increasing its potential to help transform gender relations and the gender-biased distribution of resources (Taylor: 1999). As Kuhn (2002) notes, "the process of developing a gender policy is as important as the policy itself".

As failures to mainstream gender begin to outnumber the success stories, feminist scholars have begun to question its usefulness as an approach to gender equality. Joanna Kerr (in AWID, 2004) writes, "gender mainstreaming is being widely criticized as a confusing conceptual framework at best and a force that has totally undermined women's rights at worst".

Despite gains made in terms of research, data collection and policy development, gender is still not being mainstreamed. Where gender concerns are taken into consideration they are often still treated as an "add-on" as opposed to an integral or central cross-sectoral concern. In some cases gender mainstreaming is used as a pretext for saving money by reducing money targeted for gender initiatives or dedicated staff. Whether this is due to an explicit rejection of gender mainstreaming or disappointment following failures from following various checklists and manuals, the problem has come full circle. We are back to our definitions and ways of conceptualizing gender mainstreaming. Mariama Williams (in AWID, 2004) contends there is an urgent need to revisit our conceptualization of gender mainstreaming as development practice drifts back toward integrationist approaches and away from the more transformative approaches needed to achieve gender equality. There is
agreement that the concept itself is unclear, leading to misuse of the term and facilitating tendencies to dismiss gender issues altogether.

Even where gender policies are in place senior level commitment is often absent, resource allocation insufficient, and responsibilities for mainstreaming or integrating gender still tend to rest with a dedicated WID or gender advisor. What this indicates is that in order to truly integrate a gender perspective and achieve gender equality a combined technical and political process that shifts an organisation’s culture, goals and structures is necessary. Technical tools are not a catalyst for change.
3 The Project

3.1 Methodology

This project uses a feminist participatory research methodology, drawing from literature on feminist theory, Gender and Development theory (including gender mainstreaming strategies), and Participatory Development.

Participatory approaches view development as a bottom-up, people-centered process in which participation is both a means and an end. Among the multiple objectives of participatory development is the desire to create self-reliant groups and associations, to nurture a culture of freedom, and to increase local decision-making.

Central to participatory development is the belief that marginalised communities (such as women) must be incorporated into the development process at every level – not just at the implementation stage or intermittently throughout the process but at every stage. Who participates is a central issue because communities are not homogeneous; the same power struggles that exist regionally also exist at the local level.

Another difficulty is that these differences do not occur equally in all communities around the globe. In some areas participatory development practitioners focus on bringing together or mediating between groups with competing or divergent interests, in order to facilitate a more equal development process. In others the emphasis is on involving marginalised groups or individuals, facilitating their involvement in the local
decision-making process. Different as the various strategies are, all Participatory Development endeavours share similar goals and objectives: to de-alienate participants and empower the unempowered.

Participatory research attempts to democratize the research process and decentralize the production of knowledge by validating and making use of the skills, knowledge and perceptions of those participating in the research project. As Stoeker (1997: 3) notes, "this involves legitimizing forms of knowledge, such as folk culture, not normally seen as valid." Participatory research is also about transforming social relations and power structures. It aims to help "those with less power get more power, helping those with fewer resources get more resources-by transforming the economic, cultural, racial, and governmental relations that promote inequality" (Stoeker, 1997: 4).

Unlike traditional research paradigms, participatory research aims to involve marginalised groups or individuals in the research process with the ultimate goals of consciousness-raising, empowerment and social transformation. There is also greater acceptance of the use of qualitative data and research methods as opposed to the purely quantifiable (Maguire, 1986: 22). "Whereas conventional research leaves research subjects passive and powerless in defining the research topic or mode of research, there is greater potential for research subjects involved in a participatory project to be empowered in the process" (Diane Wolf, 1996: 37).
Feminist research methods share many attributes of participatory research with the added objective of improving the position and condition of women in a community. According to Patti Lather, feminist research means, “put(ting) the social construction of gender at the center of one’s enquiry (Lather in Holland, 1995:295). Feminism is referred to as a lens through which a researcher views the social world and asks questions that aim to uncover patriarchal power structures and facilitate a process of empowerment and social action. “The overt ideological goal of feminist research in the human sciences is to correct both the invisibility and the distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women’s unequal social position” (Lather 1995: 295).

Differing from the (so-called) ‘value-free’ approach to research offered by traditional methods, feminist research is committed to the emancipation of women, often through processes that involve developing a close relationship with those participating in the study or project. It is accepted that research is not value-free and objective and that a close and transparent relationship with those being researched can result in a better understanding of a given situation and more meaningful data. Feminist research explicitly recognises the value of subjective knowledge, puts emphasis on qualitative methods, attempts to empower or raise the consciousness of research subjects, and is concerned with power relations between researcher and researched.

While these frameworks assume that barriers to participation, it is the identification of these hindrances in concrete situations that remains a crucial factor in increasing
women’s participation in development (Moser, 1993). This process becomes a form of consciousness-raising, increasing women’s understanding of the social, political, economic and cultural structures that impede their full and equal participation in society.

This project employed a participatory process that engaged both women and men in a ‘gender needs assessment’ and gender role identification activities. The aim was to recognise women as active participants in development and community processes while identifying the ways in which their participation is subordinate to that of men. This assessment was supported by gender and caste desegregated data on participation and decision-making in community groups; resource allocation and control data collected by the researcher during the project and NCDC in past PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) workshops. The resulting information was used to formulate a gender policy for NCDC, aimed at strengthening NCDC’s capacity to use an increasingly gender-aware approach in its projects and programs.

3.2 Context

Nepal is a multicultural society. A variety of ethnic groups, whose agricultural practices and lifestyles have been adapted to fit their environment, dominate each region. Despite this diversity the population of Nepal can be divided into two broad cultural groups, Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan. The former generally inhabit the high and middle mountains, while the latter tend to the lowlands and Kathmandu Valley.
Religions include Confucianism, Buddhism (Mahayana and Theravada), Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and various Animist and Shamanistic faiths. Although Nepali (spoken by about 58 percent of the total population) is the official language, up to 100 other languages are spoken (Matles Savada: 1991; CIDA: 1989; Nepalnet: 1999).

Power is very hierarchical in Nepal; social relations are based on the rigid caste system in which an individual’s position in society is determined by birth. Lower castes in particular are constrained by their occupational birthright, the job you do, where you are permitted to live, and the social positions open to you are often predetermined. Women are not only constrained by caste but by their sex as well. Social taboos, against associating with members of the opposite sex, for example, laws restricting women from owning or inheriting land, and socio-cultural norms all interfere with women’s ability to actively participate in many development initiatives (Matles Savada: 1991; CIDA: 1989; Nepalnet: 1999).

Nepal is a rigidly patriarchal society. In virtually every aspect women are subordinate to men. Their relative status, however, varies from one ethnic group to another; in Tibeto-Burman communities it is higher than in Indo-Aryan communities. Women from lower caste groups also enjoy relatively more autonomy and freedom than higher caste Indo-Aryan women. Mountain women, in general, enjoy higher status than women in lowland and urban centres, are afforded more autonomy, freedom of movement, and opportunities to influence important household and community
decisions. They also play a more active role in both the formal and informal economy (Acharya: 1995; Government of Nepal: 1998).

Senior females play a commanding role within the family by controlling resources, making crucial planting and harvesting decisions, and determining expenses and budget allocations. Often, they assume male-like positions of power and authority that can be used to oppress less-powerful women in the family and community. Women’s lives remain generally centered on their traditional gender roles which include taking care of most household chores, looking after children, collecting water, fuelwood and animal fodder, and doing farm work. Their standing in society mainly depends on their husbands’ and parents’ social and economic positions. They have limited access to markets, productive services, education, health care, and local government. Male family members are more likely to be involved in the formal economy and usually make large budget decisions such as the sale or purchase of land, animals etc (Gurung: 1997; Acharya: 1995).

In most areas women are excluded from some rituals or positions of religious or political authority. Even in the Tibetan Buddhist communities of Nepal, women are not allowed to serve as high lamas. As well, women’s participation in the highest levels of decision-making within governments is absent in all but a few places (Gurung: 1997; Acharya: 1995).
This study was conducted in Ilam District in Eastern Nepal. The two ethnically
different communities, Mabu and Namsaling, are representative of Nepal’s ethnic
diversity. The only similarities between the two communities is their location within
the same political district (Ilam). Mabu is north of Namsaling, predominantly Buddhist
with pockets of Hindu, Christian, and Kirat (animist) religionists; the main ethnic
group is Gurung. Namsaling is a largely Hindu community with a few Buddhist and
Kirat households scattered throughout. These differences provided an interesting
contrast as the varied challenges to women’s participation in each of the communities
was influenced by ethnicity, religion, caste and class.

3.3 Host Organisation

The Namsaling Community Development Centre (NCDC) is a non-governmental,
non-profit organization founded in 1985 to encourage community self-reliance. NCDC
works in partnership with community members and organizations, local and central
governments, other Nepali NGOs and international partners. Governed by an 11
member volunteer Executive Board that meets once a month. Of the eleven positions,
three are reserved for women. The organisation is composed of 30 lifelong and 92
general members who meet annually to take major decisions affecting NCDC, and to
elect the Executive Board for a two year term. The organization employs 10 full time
staff, three of which are women.
NCDC was selected after a six month search of Nepalese NGOs as the most appropriate subject for this research project. A small organization with excellent community contacts, it has a reputation for using participatory methods to facilitate local solutions to development challenges. The proposal was developed through email and telephone over a four month period, with one meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, on November 28, 1999, with Hom Nath Adhikari (Programme Director of NCDC), and Kathy White a past NCDC Volunteer.

At the time of the research NCDC was involved in two major projects: the Nepal District Environmental Planning Project (NDEPP) and the Community Health Initiative (CHI). The goal of NDEPP was to put in place an environmentally sound development plan for Ilam District. The CHI provided an integrated health programme in eight Village District Committees (VDC) in Ilam District.

3.4 Data Collection/Activities

Several techniques were used to gather information utilising both primary and secondary sources. First, a review of the literature on gender and development theory, empowerment, women’s participation in decision-making and gender mainstreaming was undertaken, primarily in Canada. The second phase took place in Kathmandu and Ilam District, Nepal where gender training manuals, and gender policy and planning literature relevant to Nepal were examined. This was followed by a review of reports and PRA data collected by NCDC in recent years. The third phase included qualitative
primary data collection, building on secondary data already collected. These methods included in-depth, unstructured interviews with village leaders, local women and men, NCDC staff and Executive Board members; focus groups with local women and men, both separately and together; a survey questionnaire; a series of gender training workshops with NCDC staff and Executive Board members and participant observation. Participant observation took many forms including observation of PRA workshops, NCDC staff and Board meetings and community meetings in Mabu and Namsaling facilitated by NCDC field staff.

This qualitative study consulted women and men associated with NCDC and its programs in order to gain a better understanding of the level and quality of women’s participation in community development activities. Barriers to participation in decision-making were also analyzed with the intent of developing a responsive gender policy for NCDC. It was important to evaluate whether NCDC’s programs successfully engaged women. Did community members believe that both men and women benefited from NCDC’s programs? If not, what barriers were present and how could these barriers be eliminated or reduced? Identifying barriers is an important step toward increasing understanding of the social, political and cultural structures that restrict full participation. The interviews and focus groups centred on three lines of discussion: decision-making in community development decision-making; barriers to women’s equal involvement in that process and developing strategies for overcoming these barriers. This information was analysed by the researcher in consultation with NCDC staff and incorporated into a series of three gender training workshops.
involving NCDC staff, with the goal of assisting NCDC in formulating a responsive gender strategy. During this final phase, a gender training workshop was also conducted with NCDC’s 11 member Executive Board.

This study included two Village District Committees (VDC): Mabu and Namsaling areas in which NCDC is active. Each VDC is made up of nine wards; comprising several villages and hamlets.

3.5 Results

When determining appropriate measures for supporting the equal participation of women and men in development planning and decision-making it is necessary to obtain information about gender roles and responsibilities, access to and control of resources, and to perform diagnosis of the constraints to achieving gender equality through gender analysis. This helps highlight measures which can be incorporated in a gender policy which will form the basis of a strategy that addresses both the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men. Although it was not possible to monitor the implementation of this strategy, my observations of the process involved in developing NCDC’s gender policy, as well as interviews and focus groups with NCDC staff and local women and men, enabled me to draw preliminary conclusions in regard to gender mainstreaming and related constraints on women’s participation in decision-making.
3.5.1 Barriers to participation

Marginalised peoples, and women in particular face a variety of social, cultural, economic and political barriers that inhibit or negatively impact their ability to participate in community decision-making processes. But, it is important to note these barriers are not static and can change over a person’s lifetime depending on one’s condition and position within the community and household. As Cleaver (2000) notes, culturally and socially defined gender roles “may be more flexible than at first appears and subject to negotiation and change”. In studying what factors determine how successfully, or fully, one can participate in decision-making processes, it is necessary to divide structural and institutional barriers from circumstantial and physical ones. This uncovers the strategies that can aid mitigate and or neutralize these socially constructed obstacles while keeping practical gender needs and strategic gender interests under analysis.

Research began with discussions with NCDC staff about the challenges facing women and men according to their roles and responsibilities, and access to and control over resources in the context of various social, cultural, political and economic factors. This served as a key step towards better understanding the structural limitations on NCDC’s programming as well as the social and cultural norms imbedded in NCDC’s structures and hierarchies. Analysing this information in collaboration with NCDC’s staff helped us in framing the gender policy.
Although the combination of factors limiting participation in decision-making is complex some common trends were evident. A common barrier is a lack of education, reflected in a lack of reading, writing and numeracy skills. In Mabu VDC women not only have lower levels of literacy they do not speak the official language (Nepali) as well as men, contributing to men's disproportionate representation of the household in public matters and organizations. Literacy rates for women are lower for a variety of reasons: the previous generation did not want girls to go to school – there is a Nepali proverb that says a “If a daughter studies she will become a witch.” Girls are needed at home to take care of the household, and schools are located too far away. Focus group members asserted this lack of education stands in the way of a woman’s ability to contribute to decision-making and leads to an undervaluing of the contributions women can make to a discussion.

Social and political leadership has therefore traditionally rested with men. Women have less experience dealing with public matters, outsiders and formal organizations. Especially in the predominantly Hindu households of Namsaling, women were expected to avoid public life. In situations where women do have permission to leave the home to attend community meetings, they often lack the confidence to do so. Women who do attend usually lack the confidence to voice their opinion. A lower caste Hindu woman said she never dreamed of attending a community meeting as this was the role of men. The Chair of the local Savings and Credit Committee, a Buddhist

5 Interview with NCDC staff member (November 2000).
woman, convinced her husband to let her attend. She added: “it is not good to appear too talented before your husband”. When asked why, she replied: “My husband doesn’t stop me from attending these meetings, but we discuss everything together first. My husband is a greater person than I am; he is God. This is the culture of Nepal.” Many rural women, especially lower caste Hindus, are very aware of their social standing both in relation to men and to higher caste women. In some cases, mostly in predominantly Buddhist Mabu, a few strong, engaged women were tasked with inviting other women to join community groups, and succeeded in recruiting lower caste and poor women who admitted they would not have sought out these opportunities on their own.

Staff and community members identified the difficulties that arise from the reproductive role of women. Women able to break through cultural, social and economic obstacles often found themselves held back by their reproductive roles and related household responsibilities. When it came time to decide who could attend a meeting or participate in a development related activity, men’s participation was seen as more valuable than women’s. As one women said, “we are too busy with household chores to go to meetings the same as men”.

The socially and culturally determined positions of individual women within the household (and community) and the consequent lack of power and independence, restricted women’s involvement in decision-making. In some case, husbands directly forbade their wife or daughter from participating. As one staff member explained, “we
often are faced with restrictions by the head of household”. Power in Nepali families is held by the male; men withhold power from women and often restrict them from leaving the house”. A second level of power is that of older women/mothers-in-law who while subject to the men in the family hold power over the younger women and often restrict their daughters-in-law from leaving the home other than to perform household chores.

In the more remote areas of Mabu VDC women often complained about the distance of meetings from their house and the time at which meetings were scheduled. One focus group participant said, “meetings are too far from the house so only men can attend,” another added, “meetings are held at night to accommodate men’s work schedules, but it is not considered appropriate for women to go out at night”. Practical measures, from providing child-care facilities (Mabu VDC), to considering the choice of time and place for meetings, to providing safe transport, made it easier for women to attend. In most cases men continued to set the meeting time and location.

During the course of the research NCDC staff, both women and men, were very helpful and interested in the idea of developing a gender strategy for their organisation. At the same time they had little experience with using a gender approach to development and held many traditional ideas about gender roles and responsibilities.

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6 For women to attend NCDC’s environmental planning PRA meetings.
Naturally women feel weakness and they can’t do hard work – like digging in the road – so they stay at home and cut grass, cook rice, care for children. Men are naturally courageous and can go far from the house.

(Interview with male staff member, October 2000)

This particular staff member was very interested in learning about conducting gender analyses, contributing to the formulation of NCDC’s gender policy and reducing inequality in his community. But he had very little exposure to the concept of gender and still subscribed to the socially and culturally constructed understanding of women and men.

Staff were quick to point out that while gender inequality was a challenge in Nepal, attitudes are slowly changing in Ilam District regarding what is and is not acceptable for girls and women.

People are giving their daughters more opportunities than they were afforded in the past, such as a chance to attend school. Also one woman (during a PRA exercise) said that she will give property to her daughter something that would have been unheard of in the past.

(Interview with male staff member, January 2001)

Systemic gender bias exists in various forms, including domestic workloads that impose severe time burdens on women, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that confine women mostly to the domestic sphere and impede their access to credit, education, information, and community decision-making. In some cases a technical solution, such as training, provision of services (i.e. daycare, income generation etc.) may be beneficial, however, in order to obtain true gender equality a political solution involving a transformation of these unequal structures and systems is required.
Solutions or strategies for removing the identified barriers were discussed in focus groups, individual interviews and with NCDC staff through informal conversations. These generated much discussion and interest from both women and men. In some cases, low-caste, middle aged women in particular, articulated expressions of resignation to their fate and position. The women with the most power and confidence were generally young, unmarried women and older married women who were either head of their household, or had power over other women in their household.

The focus groups gave NCDC staff the opportunity to listen to the concerns of their members. One male staff member was surprised to learn an important factor in encouraging women to participate in community meetings is to schedule them when the women are relatively free during the day. He had assumed the low turn-out of women was due to a lack of interest or education. Additional suggestions included issuing reminders about meetings and, if scheduled meetings conflicted with market day, or other important community functions, women could be consulted and an alternative time or day found.

Female and male-female focus groups were facilitated; dividing participants into male and female groups created a "free space" where women could participate unimpeded by the presence of men. Observation of community meetings and focus groups showed men's decisions often override women's when a consensus needed to be reached, men tending to dominate discussions at the community level and within
NCDC as an organisation. Through dialogue with local men and women and NCDC staff and board members it was decided a protected space was needed where women could speak out.

The savings & credit focus group of NCDC decided they could mobilize women to join by convincing families to allow female members to participate in community meetings and development activities.

NCDC staff gained valuable information concerning the needs of their members. The women involved in Savings and Credit groups started with the help of NCDC have requested further training and other women within the community, who attended the focus groups, have requested assistance in starting groups of their own. Both women and men had an opportunity to learn more about the NCDC-run projects and programs operating in their VDC, in particular the NDEP environmental planning project.

Barriers to decision making varied among women. NCDC staff, mainly high caste Hindus from Namsaling VDC, were surprised by our interview results, possibly because they had less of an understanding of other ethnic groups’ needs and a tendency to assume that all VDCs had the same challenges as Namsaling. The tendency was to group all women or all “poor” people together, without an understanding of the different challenges faced by the various ethnic and caste groups. For example, Rai women living in Mabu explained how difficult it was for their
children to succeed in and stay in school. They learn Rai language at home and are only introduced to Nepali at schools where the teachers, without exception, were high caste, native Nepali-speaking, Hindus. This limited the number of Rai women and men who became literate and obtained a formal education – which in turn affected their confidence to actively participate in community meetings (Focus group, Mabu VDC, January 2000).

3.5.2 Development of gender policy

NCDC was focused on reorienting programs and in some cases developing entirely new initiatives to augment equality within the organization. While interest in and awareness of the need for women’s equality was present from the beginning, there was little understanding of the concepts of gender and gender mainstreaming.

With the assistance of NCDC’s Director and staff members a schedule of interviews, meetings and workshops were set up, with the goal of providing a space within which a gender policy and the beginnings of a gender mainstreaming strategy could be developed. The results collected from the community surveys, interviews and focus groups were used as a basis for these discussions. The first workshop (using a Gender Training Manual translated and adapted to reflect the Nepali context by Save the Children-Nepal), aimed to sensitize the staff and Executive Board members on gender issues. It clarified basic concepts such as gender and sex, the factors and causes of gender discrimination, gender roles and gender stereotypes. This was followed by an
exploration of the concept of gender and development through a social analysis using a gender lens. Various gender mainstreaming tools were introduced and discussed. A variety of concepts such as the gender division of labour, the 'invisibility' of women's work, access to and control over resources, subordination and empowerment, and practical needs and strategic interests were covered. This was the first time staff had attempted to apply a gender perspective to social analysis but had a cursory knowledge of participatory developments methods and approaches to development. This made it easier to explain the purposes and approaches of the various gender analysis frameworks.

The next step was to draft a gender policy for discussion among staff and Board members. This was based on a previously drafted women's policy that formed part of NCDC's constitution, as well as discussion with and guidance from NCDC's Director. The policy and beginnings of a gender integration strategy (Appendix) were adopted by the Executive Board and sent to the general membership for review. Changes were made and the policy was incorporated into NCDC's Constitution at the Annual General Meeting in March 2001. The main achievements of the gender policy included the formation of a Gender Team consisting of one male and one female staff member, and one male and one female Executive Board member, and a commitment from the

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7 Such as gender analysis frameworks, seasonal and daily calendars, the Gender Analysis Matrix, and gender disaggregated data.
Director and Executive Board to allocate resources towards gender mainstreaming activities.

A dialogue has begun between and among staff, Executive Board members and general members on issues including maternity/parental leave, the number of seats that should be reserved for women on the executive committee, hiring practices, how to increase the number of women staff and general members etc. The most positive impact of the new gender policy is that it has been adopted by the general members and is now part of NCDC's constitution; this is significant as NCDC follows its constitution carefully.
Conclusion

This research examined the barriers to women’s participation in decision-making with the objective of formulating a gender strategy for the Namsaling Community Development Centre, a Nepali local NGO active in community development planning.

In Nepal traditional values, cultural norms, and laws reinforce the concentration of power in the hands of men. As literature and research shows, women’s limited access to resources, restricted participation and decision-making opportunities inhibits their ability to transform entrenched gender inequality.

To neutralise and transform these socially, culturally, economically and politically constructed barriers a combination of gender mainstreaming and women-specific processes are required. Organizations such as NCDC are well-placed to support women as decision-makers and to advocate for gender in their community.

The project succeeded in achieving its stated goals and objectives however, the greatest success was the interest shown by NCDC staff in continuing a dialogue on gender equality within NCDC and its target communities. Interaction between NCDC and community members was often extractive and de-politicised, focusing on specific tasks or technical training (i.e. building a water tap, silkworm cultivation). The research project provided NCDC staff an opportunity to discuss alternative approaches to development programming and, according to staff members, gave new insights into
the needs of their community and the challenges of including marginalized people in the development planning process.

The research gave NCDC staff an opportunity to share views on empowerment, participation in decision making, and women's equality and equity. A space was made available for both men and women staff to voice concerns about issues they had thought about in detail but had not had an opportunity or arena in which to voice their opinions.

Project activities made it possible for NCDC to strengthen and renew strategic liaisons with its local user group members (Savings & Credit, Agro-coops, Sericulture groups), INGOs (Save the Children US), the government of Nepal (Ministry of Women and Children) as well as Canadian NGOs (CECI Nepal), and the Tribhuvian University-Gender Studies Program. This flow of communication from stakeholders provided NCDC with a network of gender-friendly organisations and individuals from which it can draw expertise and information. This transmission is important as it helps those working for gender equity to build on the experience of others and to share best practices as well as new resources and ideas. This is particularly relevant when these organisations are working in remote rural areas.

In an ethnically diverse country such as Nepal the class, ethnic and religious structures to which organizations and communities are subject to must be taken into account
when implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy. During discussions on the
details of the gender policy NCDC staff noted organizations must consciously avoid
perpetuating caste-based biases while pursuing ensuring gender equality.

One meeting or focus group or PRA exercise in a village is not sufficient to bring
about change in society's view of women's role and status. A longer period of working
in each community is needed to sensitize men to women's situation, and to
simultaneously empower women to demand their fair share of development benefits.
Follow-up in each of NCDC's target communities is very important in order to respond
to the challenges highlighted by the research. In this context it would be interesting to
explore the issue of the dependency of organizations and gender mainstreaming as a
process on change agents. Once gender strategies are set in motion can they maintain
independent momentum, or will they always require a gender champion or focal point
to monitor and encourage their progress?

As the literature and research suggest, resource allocation, ongoing training and
sensitization of staff, as well as senior level commitment need to be addressed and
ensured to fully integrate gender within an organization. However, "redistributing
power in social relations and challenging male privilege in economic, social and
cultural life is a long, difficult and uneven process" Nazneen Kanji (2003: 16). It is
important to return to the heart of gender mainstreaming which is the equitable
distribution of power and resources, and appreciate that this transformation will
require time, struggle and negotiation.
Bibliography


Appendix A: NCDC Gender Policy, March 2001 (English)

1.0 Introduction
This document is a gender policy and strategy that applies to the Namsaling Community Development Centre (NCDC) as an organisation (staff, Executive Board and members) as well as to all of NCDC's projects and programmes. It is based on comments and suggestions made by NCDC staff, members, project participants and a previously drafted WID policy. The strategy sets out the goals and expected outcomes for integrating gender within NCDC and its programmes, as well as a projected schedule for implementation. This strategy is in line with the goals and objectives outlines in HMG's 9th Five Year Development Plan and compliments the Gender Equity and Women’s Empowerment National Workplan (HMG 1998) based on the 1995 Beijing Declaration.

1.1 NCDC’s Objectives:
- To improve the socio-economic status of the community
- To improve traditional knowledge, skills and attitudes of local people through the transference of new technology for increased economic well being
- To improve professional skills
- To improve activities for community development
- To manage agro-product marketing
- To improve women's development and decision-making ability through increased women’s leadership

1.2 Background to gender policy:

NCDC has been involved with women and development since 1985 in such sectors as Health, Education and income generation schemes. Although both women and men are

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5 Kamal Nepal (May 2000) NCDC WID Policy

9 From: Makotomaki Girls Scholarship Program document
benefiting from NCDC’s development programmes, the participation of women (as staff, members and project beneficiaries) has been consistently lower than that of men. NCDC is addressing this problem through the development of a gender policy that will increase the overall participation and decision-making opportunities of marginalized women and men (lower caste, poor, landless) in NCDC as an organisation; including NCDC’s projects, programmes and administrative practices.

2.0 Gender Equality Policy

2.1 Goals:
(1) To promote equality between women and men, and
(2) To support the empowerment of women.

2.2 Objectives:
(1) To increase gender awareness and sensitivity among NCDC staff, Board and General Members
(2) To enhance the equality within NCDC: including staff, Members and projects and programmes.

2.3 Policy Statement:
NCDC, its programmes, staff and members will work towards these goals and outcomes in three ways:

- By developing (within NCDC) an understanding of gender relations in development
- By integrating a gender component into all aspects of projects and programmes
- By integrating a gender perspective into all aspects of NCDC’s management systems and administrative practices

3.0 Gender Equality Strategy

3.1 Activities for integrating gender: NCDC will integrate a gender perspective on three (3) levels: through its members, staff and programmes.

3.1.1 NCDC Members
a. Two (2) Executive Committee Members (one female; one male) along with two (2) staff will form a Gender Action Team (GAT). They will meet monthly to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the gender strategy.

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10 Based on Nancy Peters (June 2000) Draft-CECI Asia/Nepal Gender Equality Strategy

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b. Within 3 years all members, including Executive Board, Lifelong Members and General Members will be given an opportunity to attend gender awareness workshops in Namsaling.

c. Before distribution of general membership, an equal number of new seats will be reserved for women and men.

d. Participation of lower caste and ethnic groups in the General Assembly should be encouraged and supported by NCDC.

e. The number of women on the Executive Committee will be increased to 50% in the next five years.

3.1.2 NCDC Staff

f. All staff will be given an opportunity to attend gender training workshops every six (6) months to contribute to an increased understanding gender issues.

g. Two (2) staff (one female; one male) will be selected to act as gender advisors and trainers. They will provide gender awareness and training workshops and support the implementation of the gender strategy as part of the Gender Action Team. They will monitor all phases of the project cycle and will support the implementation of a gender analysis of NCDC’s project’s and programmes.

h. Recruitment of new staff: priority will be given to hiring female staff until a minimum of 50% of staff are women.

i. Academic qualifications: female staff with lower academic qualifications but significant field or technical experience will be considered equal to male staff with higher academic qualifications for hiring and salary considerations.

j. Child birth leave: Female staff will receive 60 days paid leave after the birth of their first child and 45 days leave for all other children. Male staff will receive 15 days paid leave after the birth of all children.

k. At least 20% of NCDC’s administrative budget will be used to support gender mainstreaming activities until a gender fund is established.

l. All workshops given by NCDC will include an equal number of female and male participants whenever possible.

m. A gender fund will be established within two (2) years of the adoption of this policy to support gender awareness and technical training and other mainstreaming activities.

n. Both women and men will receive equal opportunities to participate in exposure and study visits to other organisations and/or projects within Nepal and abroad.

o. A strategy will be developed by the GAT to hire and/or promote a minimum of two (2) female staff to senior or decision-making positions.

3.1.3 Projects and Programmes

p. Human and financial resources needed to fulfill NCDC’s Gender Equality Strategy will be allocated in all new project proposals.
q. Each new project will include a gender strategy explaining how equality (including caste, class, gender) will be promoted through the project and how support for women’s empowerment will be provided.

r. All socio-economic studies conducted by NCDC will include gender disaggregated data and a gender analysis.

s. Staff will ensure that women have access to all project resources, including project information.

t. A minimum of 30% women will be included in the formation of any new user-group.

u. A minimum of one female staff member will be included in all phases of the project cycle for each of NCDC’s projects: including proposal writing, project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

v. Terms of Reference (TOR): gender objectives will be incorporated into all TORs.

w. An annual gender report will be written by the GAT. It will include the amount of money allocated towards gender mainstreaming, sex-disaggregated data on the participation of women and men in all projects and major meetings.
Namsaling Community Development Centre (NCDC)
Gender Equality Strategy

DRAFT WORKING DOCUMENT

Prepared for NCDC
By Trina Lasch, Gender Advisor and
Indira Ghimire, WID Coordinator
March 2001
एन.सी.डी.सी. ड्राफ्ट जेनडर पोलिसि
मार्च २००१

१.०. परिचय:
सबैभन्दा लैैगिक नीति र ब्यूरोजनाको एक मस्तिष्क हो जुन एन. सी. डी. सी. लाई एउटा संस्थाको रुपमा कर्मचारी, कार्यकारिणी र सदस्यहरू का अथिरित एन. सी. डी. सी. का सबै योजना र कार्यक्रमहरूलाई लागू गर्नु उद्देश्यले तथा परामर्श गरेका हुन। यो प्रलेख एन. सी. डी. सी. का कर्मचारी, सदस्यहरू र योजना सहभागीहरूले दिएका टिका टिप्पणि र तथा सुचारू र यस अधिको लैैगिक नीति मस्तिष्क आधारित छ। यस योजनाले एन. सी. डी. सी. भित्र यसका कार्यक्रमहरूको लैैगिक नीतिलाई सुलभ र आसाम को सारैर परिप्रेक्षा नालहरू हालिल गर्न तथा लक्षित तलालिका लागू गर्न असाइन लागि तथा उल्लेखनीय ठेका दिन्छ। यसले राष्ट्रिय लैैगिक समानता तथा महिला सशक्तिकरण कार्यक्रमहरू (भर्म ५) को सरकार १९९६ लाई प्रस्ताव गरेका हुन। यसैले घोषणापत्र १९९६ मा आधारित छ।

१.१. एन. सी. डी. सी. का उद्देश्यहरू:
१. समुदायको सामाजिक सम्पदा सुधार गर्न।
२. स्वास्थ्य र भक्तित्वका पर्यास र बल, शीर्ष र धारणालाई आधुनिक प्रविधिका माध्यमारू दुरुस्त आधुनिक अवस्था उपलब्ध गराउन।
३. इलामती सीलहरूको सुधार गर्न।
४. सामुदायिक विकासका विधिलाई पुस्तकहरू सुधार व्यापार गर्न।
५. कृत्रिम उत्पादको बनार्थ व्यवस्थापन गर्न।
६. महिलाहरूको नेतृत्वमा विदेश सहभागीता गराउने महिला विकास तथा महिलाहरूको निर्यात गर्न लाभात्मक अभिलक्षित गर्न।

१.२. लैैगिक नीतिको पूर्णभूमिका:
एन. सी. डी. सी. महिला र विकासका क्षेत्रहरूमा जस्तै स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा र आयुर्वेदको कार्यभार (कोष संबन्धमा) मा १९८६ वटिका सम्पन्न हुदै आएको हुन। इलाम जिल्लाको महिला र पुरुष एन. सी. डी. सी. का विकासकल कार्यक्रमहरूत २०५७ र पाटिका लाई आएको हुन। यसलाई साइट र आयोजनालाई लाभान्वित व्यवस्थाहरूको मस्तिष्क तुलनात्मक रुपमा धेरै कम पाइएको हुन। एन. सी. डी. सी. मा यो सम्बन्ध तथा सबैभन्दा लैैगिक नीतिको विकास माध्यम र प्रमाण विद्वान लागेका (उपलब्ध) महिला पुरुषहरू जस्तै, जरिया, गरिब/सुधकृत, इत्यादि को संसन्धान गराउने प्रयास गरेको हुन। यसलाई एन. सी. डी. सी. का आयोजन, कार्यक्रमहरू र प्रशासनिक अभिलक्ष लागेका सबै पश्चात समेटिएको हुन।

२. प्रस्तावित लैैगिक समानता नीति:

२.१. लक्ष्यहरू:
१. महिला र पुरुष विचरण समानता प्रवर्धन गर्न।
२. महिला सशक्तिकरणलाई ठेट दिन।

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2.2. उद्देश्यहृत:

1. एन. सी. डी. सी. का कर्मचारी, समिति र साधारण सदस्यहार भाग लैंसिक चेतना र सम्बंधित साधनों को अभिलेखित गरने।

2. एन. सी. डी. सी. भित्र कर्मचारी, सदस्यहार र कार्यक्रमहार / परियोजनाहरूमा सम्भावना र समाप्ति को अभिलेखित गरने।

2.3. नीति कथन:

एन. सी. डी. सी. मात्र कर्मचारीहरू, कर्मचारी र सदस्यहारहरू यी लक्ष र परियोजना प्रति ध्यान दिइ तिन
तरीकाबाट काम गरने छन्:

> एन. सी. डी. सी. भित्र महिला र पुरुषको समबन्धहरू सम्बन्धित साधनहरू र लैंसिक विकास गरेर।

> प्रयोजनकारीहरू र कार्यक्रमहारू लैंसिक तन्त्रहरूमा समन्य गरएर।

> एन. सी. डी. सी. को व्यवस्थापन प्रणाली र प्रशासनिक अभावहरू सबै पक्षकृत लैंसिक परिवर्तन
समन्य गरएर।

3. लैंसिक समानताको व्युत्पन्न:

3.1. लैंसिक मूलधारकरणका क्रियाकलापहरू:

एन. सी. डी. सी. ले तीन सरणामा आफ्ना सदस्यहार, कर्मचारी र परियोजना / कार्यक्रमहार लैंसिक
परिवर्तन भएर।

3.1.1. एन. सी. डी. सी. का सदस्यहार:

(क) २ कार्यक्रमार्थी समितिका सदस्यहार (एक महिला र एक पुरुष) स्थापित २ कर्मचारीहरूले लैंसिक
कार्यक्रम गठन गर्न। तिनिहरूले लैंसिक नीति कार्यक्रमालाई यूनिवर्सल तथा समितिको निर्माणी दैनिक
सभामा गर्नु।

(ख) ३ वर्ष भित्र कार्यक्रमार्थी समिति, आदी का सदस्य र साधारण सदस्यहार लगायत सबै सदस्यहारहरू
नामांकन लैंसिक सत्ताको कार्यक्रममा सहभागी हुने अवसर उपलब्ध गराउने छ।

(ग) साधारण सर्वसामान्य सभाको समस्त (अपरिषुक्त तथा) वितरण गर्नु अधि बराबरी र तिनहारू
महिलाहरूलाई लागि आधिकृत गरिने छ।

(घ) कार्यक्रमार्थी समितिमा एक जना महिलालाई सचिव, कोषाध्यक्ष, उपसभापति र सभापतिमा
प्रारम्भिकता गरिने।

(ड) एन. सी. डी. सी. का कार्यक्रमार्थी समितिमा महिलाहरू बराबर राख्न सादृश्य गर्ने।

(ढ) तल्लो जातजातीय लागि प्रतिनिधित्व गराउने।

3.1.2. एन. सी. डी. सी. का कर्मचारी र प्रशासन:

(क) सबै कर्मचारीहरूलाई प्रयोजनी ५ महिलामा लैंसिक प्रशिक्षण कार्यसर्वहारमा भाग लिन भौका विद्यानुभुने छ जसले
विकास कार्यक्रमलाई प्रणाली सम्बन्धित ध्रुवन सहयोग गरिन्।

(ख) २ कर्मचारीहरू (एक महिला र एक पुरुष) लाई लैंसिक सत्ताहरू र प्रशिक्षकहरू यौगिक छानिने छ।
तिनिहरूले लैंसिक चेतना र प्रशिक्षण कार्यसर्वहार संचालन गरेछन् जसले लैंसिक नितिको वरिष्ठ परिचालन र

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कार्यन्वयनमा सम्पन्न पुनर्निम्नाने लैसिक सम्बद्धता तथा लैसिक विश्लेषणार्थ एच. सी. डी. ली. का उपयोग र कार्यमाणमा सबै चरणहरूको अनुप्रयोग गर्नुहोस् ।
(7) नयाँ कर्मचारी नियुक्तिले भएनुका कर्मचारीको सङ्ख्या कमीमा ३० प्रतिशत नपुगे सम्म महिलाहरूलाई नियुक्तिलाई प्रयासले दिने छ।
(8) शैलिक योजनाले महिलाको लैसिक योजना कम भएका यस प्रकार कार्यक्षेत्रको भएका खोजिमा नियुक्तिले उल्लेख मानिन्छ हामी यसको दिन सकिन्छ।
(3) प्रयोग विवाहले महिलाले कर्मचारीहरूलाई पहिलो बच्चा जन्माउँ ५० र व्यस्तपुर्ण २ बर्ष सबै बच्चा जन्मा १५ दिनको विवाह दिने भएको पुनर्निम्नलाई सबै बच्चा जन्माउँने।
(9) एन. ऐन. ऐन. ऐन. को तर्कीमित बनाउँ ३० प्रतिशत रूपमा लैसिक गव्यावर्धन तथा प्रयोग गरिन्छ।
(10) ऐन. ऐन. ऐन. ऐन. लाई चालू संचालित सबै कार्यालय गोदामहरूमा तथा ऐन. ऐन. ऐन. ली भएको लाई चालू संचालित कार्यालय गोदामहरूमा महिला तथा पुरुषको सङ्ख्या सम्बन्धमा प्रभावहरू बराबर हुने।
(11) ऐन. ऐन. ऐन. को लैसिक युवा लागायत युवा संचालन भईरहेको कर्मचारीलाई तथा लैसिक संबंधहरूको प्रयोजनका निति २ वर्ष प्रवर्तन एउटा लैसिक कोष सामग्री गरिन्छ।
(12) महिला तथा पुरुष दुईले अर्थ संस्थाले परियोजना भर्ने तथा अध्ययनका देश विदेश दुईमा बनाउँ तथा पैदा प्राप्त गर्नु।
(13) कमीमा २ जना महिला कर्मचारीहरूलाई उल्लेख अथवा नियुक्ति गर्न सक्ने पता पुनर्निम्नलाई गर्न छ तथा तालिम दिन। / बढ्या दिने नीतिको विकास गरिन्छ।

3.1.3. परियोजनाहरू / कार्यक्रमहरू:
(1) ऐन. ऐन. ऐन. ऐन. को लैसिक समान्त व्यवस्थापनका लागि आवश्यक मानवीय तथा आर्थिक अनि सबै नयाँ परियोजनाले प्रयासले दिने छ।
(2) प्रत्येक नया परियोजनाले लैसिक नीतिलाई सामान्य गरिन्छ जसले समानता (लैसिक, लागायत, आर्थिक अनुपात लागायत) को हो भने प्रस्तुत गरिन्छ।
(3) ऐन. ऐन. ऐन. ऐन. लाई चालू संचालित सबै सामाजिक आर्थिक अध्ययन कार्यहरू अधारभूत लैसिक तथाकार्य प्रमाणपत्र सामग्री दिने छ भने लैसिक उपर्युक्त विश्लेषण सामग्री दिने।
(4) कर्मचारीहरूले यस तर्क धारा विनेशले को महिलाहरूलाई परियोजना सम्बन्धित जानकारी लगायत सबै प्रथम उपलब्ध हुनेछ।
(5) शैलीपत्र उपभोक्तालाई सम्पूर्ण गटन गर्न कमीमा ३० प्रतिशत महिलाको सहभागिता रहनुहोस्।
(6) ऐन. ऐन. ऐन. ऐन. का सभै परियोजनाहरूका चरणमा: प्रत्यावर्तन लेखन योजना, योजनाको तुलना कार्यवाहन, अनुप्रयोग, संस्कृति र सामाजिक सभै कुरामा १ जना महिलाहरूलाई सामग्री राखाउँ ।
(7) टी. ऑ. अ.अ.: भने सबै ती. ऑ. अ. अ. सूचना लैसिक उद्वेद्यहरू सामग्री गरिन्छ।
(8) एउटा लैसिक नीतिले लाइन छ: यसलाई लैसिक नियुक्ति खर्च भएको रूपमा, सबै परियोजनाहरू महिलाहरूलाई सहभागिताको तालिकाहरू, महत्त्वपूर्ण बैठकहरू लगाउँ (जसले पी.ए.सी. बैठकहरू, स्थानिक योजना बैठकहरू, साधारण सभा इत्यादि पहिल), महिला कर्मचारीहरू लिका संस्था, साधारण सवालहरू, कार्यकारिणी समितिको लिका सवालहरू सामान्य रहनुहोस्।


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Appendix C: Photos

Focus group: Mabu VDC – Women only.

Focus group: Mabu VDC – Women and men.
Gender training workshop: Namsaling VDC – NCDC Executive Board