Women and Local Governance

A Strategy Paper written for the International Union of Local Authorities

On Behalf of the Huairou Commission

By Sangeetha Purushothaman

I. Introduction

'Local government is an integral part of the national structures of governance and the level of government closest to the citizens. Therefore it is in the best position both to involve women in the making of decisions concerning their living conditions and to make use of their knowledge and capabilities in the promotion of sustainable development.'

Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, 1998
Cited in the IULA Declaration

Women are at the center of families and communities. Poor women are engaged in a constant struggle to meet the basic needs of their families. Day to day needs such as adequate food, secure shelter, safe drinking water, appropriate sanitation, public safety, mobility, quality education, affordable health-care and decent employment are central concerns to their existence and all these issues, the productive and the reproductive, are inter-related in the lives of poor women. Meeting these basic needs in a holistic manner is the nexus for partnerships between grassroots women and local government. What distinguishes grassroots women's initiatives from any other is the move away from issue-based interventions to more holistic comprehensive approaches.

Effective governance constitutes a set of institutional relationships driven by the needs of the governed, those that are able to meet those needs and that do so in a way that allows for the participation and ownership of the communities using these public goods and services. Engendered governance goes one step further and center stages the needs and participation of grassroots women in local decision-making and in local governance.

Local government is that level of government closest to communities[i]. Therefore sensitizing them to the needs to poor women and ensuring mechanisms that allow women's effective participation in local decision-making becomes vital to ensuring good governance.

This booklet lays down the basis for such partnerships from the points of view of both grassroots women and local government. It represents the starting point and the principles based on which two major global entities representing grassroots women and local government can ally in a way that models engendered governance. It highlights best practices of successful partnerships between women and local government and from these examples, outlines the principles on which such a partnership can be based, locally and globally. Throughout the report it points to areas where women and local governments have partnered in the past outlining simultaneously successes and the gaps in these areas of work and the basis for future partnerships from a grassroots women's perspective. It draws heavily on the campaigns, initiatives of the Huairou Commission and documentation of these initiatives.

II. The Global Actors

Box 2.1. The Huairou Commission

The Huairou Commission is an international network of global grassroots women's organizations which partners with organizations and individuals committed and focused in advocating and supporting work of grassroots women. Formed in Huairou, China at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995, the Huairou Commission brings a practical knowledge and practice of grassroots women and their communities on their innovative and resourceful solutions to various challenges in improving their quality of life as well as inputting and localizing the global policy development dialogues. Women from a multitude of sectors come together to support this global work.

The Huairou Commission (HC) aims to advance grassroots women's capacities worldwide to create and strengthen sustainable communities by forging strategic partnerships. The HC is thus about:

- Building on, broadening, strengthening and sharing grassroots knowledge and practice.
- Strengthening grassroots leadership to influence decision making processes which shape their communities.
- Transforming policies and institutions by working with partners on engendering community development.

To publicize and transfer grassroots women's groups' proven practices and successful community development initiatives and enlist partners of influence who will help and partner with us to transform policies and programs, the Huairou Commission are working on the following Campaigns:

- Local Governance: Local to Local Dialogues - Women Organize to Engender and Strengthen Local Governance.
- Disaster and Rebuilding Communities: From Disaster to Development - Placing women at the center of disaster and post conflict initiatives: Strategies and Policies That Work.
- HIV/AIDS: Pro-poor, women-centred responses to HIV/AIDS in Africa.
- Land & Housing: Securing Tenure for Women.
- Learning from the Practice: Documentation, Exchange and Capacity Building/Trainings (Grassroots Women's International Academies) to upscale grassroots women's initiatives and innovations.

III. Engendering Governance

3.1. What is governance?

"The term 'governance' refers to the ways in which institutions function. It is how power and resources are distributed and managed within institutional structures. The term encompasses all the traditions, institutions and processes that determine how power is exercised, citizens are given a voice, and decisions are made on issues of public concern.[1] Governance is multi-faceted compound situation of institutions, systems, structures, processes, procedures, practices, relationships and leadership behavior in the exercise of social, political, economic and managerial or administrative authority in the running of public or private affairs."

Governance thus constituted consists of a set of institutional arrangements that seeks to (UN Habitat, 2000):
- Meet the basic needs of communities (such as food, shelter, and water)
- Ensure the provision of public goods and services (such as schools, hospitals, parks, health care and so on)
- Ensure the rights of citizens (to decent employment, to equal opportunities in employment, education, access to health care and so on)

3.2. Good governance and Effective Engendered Governance

Governance is considered to be just effective when:
- Resource allocation, information about public goods and services and the power structures to make decisions is *transparent*,
- When officials and programmes are *accountable* to the publics that they serve,
- When resources are spent *efficiently* with minimizing waste,
- When provision of public goods and services are tailored to and *driven by the needs of communities*,
- When resources are distributed *equitably* between the rich and the poor
- When community *participates* in the decision making processes

It is often argued that governance cannot be effective if it is not engendered. However many a time, evaluations of governance initiatives has been shown to be transparent, accountable, equitable, participatory and efficient although a gender dimension is completely lacking in all such indicators of good governance. Thus in order to explicitly bring out the gender dimension in what constitutes good governance, this report make the distinction between effective governance and effective, engendered governance.

Effective Engendered Governance (Purushothaman and Jaeckel, 2001) is when:
- Resource allocation, information about public goods and services and the power structures to make decisions is *transparent to both men and women*

---

[1]   Suranjana Gupta (UN Habitat, 2004) quoting from the Institute on Governance. "What is Governance? Getting to a Definition" as found in Institute on Governance. 2002 (December).

- When officials and programmes are *accountable to both men and women*,
- When resources are spent *efficiently* with minimizing waste, best done when *women are involved in monitoring* the spending and management of public resources
- When *women's needs* are central to the provision of public goods and services
- When resources are distributed *equitably to both men and women across all sections of society*
- When *women participate* in the decision making processes

Thus steps needed towards engendering governance involves
- The involvement of grassroots women in all local development processes from the planning to monitoring to implementation stages to build mutual trust, confidence and community ownership.
- An essential shift in perspective on the part of partners from viewing women as traditional client or beneficiary to constituent problem solvers and equal partners.
- Gender sensitization of local government, especially w.r.t. building partnerships with grassroots women.
- Building grassroots women's capacities (skills and physical space) in participation in governance and empowering them to influence decision making.
- Creating support structures like childcare facilities, safe transport, community based consultation and leadership support systems to facilitate women's participation
- Ensuring resources and opportunities be made available to grassroots communities to participate in allocation and monitoring of public resources and services
- Valuing everyday life expertise on par with professional qualifications
- Creating direct channels for expertise from the ground to enter local governance
- Opening up opportunities for long term engagement and negotiation rather than one-time consultations

IV. The Rationale for Women being Central to Governance and Development

The need to center stage women in governance and development processes is an outcome of various global trends. *Decentralization* of power and decision making processes to the local level, a major current trend in governments across the globe, provides an opportunity to restructure governments and institutional arrangements and this opening can be used by women for the new structures to take their needs into account. Overall, the entire push towards decentralization makes little sense if women are left out of these processes.

Decentralization goes hand in hand with the need to *localize governance* (UN Habitat 2004). Decision-making at macro (national or state) levels has been proven time and again to be unsuitable to local conditions. The "one size fits all" policy mechanisms have given way to the understanding that policies need to be tailored to the needs of local people and can be as diverse as the communities they are meant to reach and as the varied conditions faced by these communities. Thus the more localized the planning and

decision making arenas, the more tailored the decisions and initiatives to the needs of communities (Halkatti et al., 2003). Creating new mechanisms for strengthening local government provides a local space for women to intervene and make decisions that make sense for poor women and their families. With localizing governance, women's intervention in the political arena can thus been expanded from simple participation in electoral politics and macro legislation to now allow for on going decision making tailored to needs of the particular constituencies to which women decision makers belong. It allows the space for local leadership and more leadership to emerge. Thus localizing governance also implies the need for building partnerships with local women's groups (Purushothaman et al. 2004)

Decentralization in several countries has been accompanied by *affirmative action* in electoral politics. In India for instance the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments swept into power close to a million women locally over night. Thus decentralization has the potential to offer women more space in terms of fostering more and new leadership, many more decision-making spaces which are relevant to address women's needs.

The rapid economic changes that have arisen out of *globalization,* the rise of the informal economy in the first world and third world both and the resultant rise in poverty and inequity have affected women, their livelihoods and standard of living disproportionately. This calls for serious attention on the part of policy and decision makers to take corrective action. Changing economic conditions are both the cause and consequence of changing markets locally and globally. In this context grassroots women who are also producers face serious competition in their products not from other grassroots women, as in the past, but from companies, both local and global.

In the context of *changing markets* and a rapidly growing service sector another new economic phenomena arising out of urbanization deserves attention namely the rise of the peri-urban interface and the fact that in the near future a majority of the population will be living not in the urban or in the rural but in the peri-urban interface. Companies too are steadily relocating to the PUI with an eye on capturing rural markets which till now was an economic space where women and women's groups could still compete. Thus in this context several new challenges lie ahead for women's organizations and local governments, namely repositioning of NGOs to help grassroots women deal with the new markets and the rising service sector, help them gain access to local markets and help civil society re-orient its efforts towards helping women producers develop market resilience in face of rapidly changing markets and economic conditions.

In the face of these global trends a new counter balancing phenomena has emerged namely the *rise of grassroots women's movements* and organizations. The emergence of the Huairou Commission and its accompanying global networks represents the global face of very large indigenous localized movements. These grassroots women's movements have evolved a series of micro and macro level strategies, generic principles by which they partner with mainstream institutions and a range of innovative solutions that work to serve their needs.

The *growth of women's self help groups and federations*, another emerging trend, need to learn to cope with the changing economic conditions and develop new financial instruments that can help them compete with existing producers who are using competitive financial instruments of existing financial markets and institutions. Governments also need to re orient their poverty alleviation and credit programmes to allow for women producers to compete economically with the new global players. These programmes also need to become more service sector oriented and move away from asset based production oriented programmes which are disadvantageous to women since women do not have assets and collateral in their names and design innovative new financial instruments that help women's groups instead take advantage of the new opportunities afforded by the service sector economy. These opportunities for women lie further in the fact that benefits reaped from production based economic opportunities have been often found to be directly proportional to the existing asset base of the producer, unlike the service sector. The latter affords women's groups' opportunities which are not directly linked to their asset base and civil society and government alike need to make the best use of these new opportunities.

This report highlights cases of innovative solutions forged by grassroots women's organizations in successful partnerships with local government in order to highlight the lessons and principles on which future partnerships can be based. This report draws on a series of global campaigns such as the *Local-to-Local Dialogues*, an innovative strategy of the Huairou Commission, which brought together local government and women's groups in several countries and the *Our Best Practices Campaign* to bring out these innovations and examples of successful partnerships. The *Grassroots Women International Academy* is a platform for direct exchange between grassroots groups as well as for interaction with mainstream stakeholders. Unlike many educational settings, where grassroots women are receivers of capacity building, GWIA is unique in that it is the grassroots women's groups who own and teach their knowledge ensuring that the innovators of solutions from the ground are also the ones articulating, naming, claiming and transferring their knowledge. This is supplemented by case studies of IULA, which document sustainable partnerships between women and local governments in several countries.

V. Broad Areas in Governance for Partnerships between Women and Local Government

There are many areas relevant to grassroots women, which have been and are being addressed but not adequately. These represent potential areas for intervention and partnerships between women and local government. This section provides an overview of these areas, what is being currently addressed and the gaps that require attention. These broad areas include:
- Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Women in Employment and Education
- Women and Peace
- Measures to Combat Violence against Women and Trafficking
- Equal representation of women in politics and decision making
- Ensuring women's participation in democratic institutions

- Meeting basic needs and involving women in all development processes
  - Women and shelter
  - Women and environment
  - Women and livelihoods
- Capacity Building for women

5.1. Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Women in Employment and Education

The concerns around equal opportunities for women tend to be focused on reform based on the acceptance that women are increasingly outside the formal organized work force. In the stated objectives of European countries (European Commission, 1997), for instance, around the issue of promoting equal opportunities for employment the issues that arise include:
- Professional training reform
- Improving salary structures
- Increasing the level of transparency of the job market
- Adapting to the industrial, economic and technological changes in the workplace

The issues that women specifically face namely child care in the work place, maternity leave, equal opportunities for promotion, mechanisms that prevent gender biases in hiring and promotions, issues related to women's lack of mobility due to their reproductive responsibilities, are not mentioned in the European country declarations.

What is observed is the lack of a grassroots women's perspective in these declarations. Certain gender issues have been mentioned which include:
- Retraining of women for employment after long periods of activities,
- Training geared to the specific needs of women.
- Concerns that women tend to work in non unionized jobs and therefore will not benefit from collective bargaining
- Need to remove sexist wording in job advertisements

Grassroots Women's Perspectives on Employment and Equal Opportunities:

The perspective that is needed here need to begin by recognizing the fact that women, especially women in third world or those employed in the growing informal economy in the first world tend to be concentrated in low skilled, low paid, menial jobs. This specific positioning of poor women in the work space has several implications for governance. For one, the conditions at work are not always safe, in these often times non-unionized positions. They encounter various forms of discrimination from inadequate compensation for their work to sexual harassment to what has been called the chilly environment syndrome where they may face ridicule, sexist language, or simply not being taken seriously in any decision making forum. They are often denied of benefits that unionized workers take for granted such as adequate compensation, medical insurance, bonuses, provident funds, regular lunch breaks as stipulated by the law, preventative measures to limit health hazards, drinking water, clean toilets in the work place or rest rooms for pregnant women (Purushothaman et al., 1999). In both the formal

and informal sectors, women encounter a glass ceiling at the workplace even when they have the same qualifications as their male colleagues.

Despite existing legislation in several countries that guarantees equal treatment of men and women at the workplace (see for example Box 5.1 on legislation in Austria, European Commission, 1997), the fact remains that women continue to face discrimination of various forms and even sexual harassment at the workplace. Therefore there needs to be clear joint initiatives here which include legislative reform around women and the workplace in countries where such legislation is absent and the enforcement of such legislation where it does exist.

The other important recognition for education initiatives in the third world is around the issue of literacy. While education and professional training programmes are being designed in the first world linked to the workplace in countries like India education needs to begin at the grassroots at the level of community needs. Interventions on education here is linked to effective governance, basic access to information and to all development processes. Thus initiatives like Mahila Samakhya Karnataka (Box 5.1b) which itself being a partnership between government and civil society, addresses education in a holistic manner.

Box 5.1a: Austrian Laws on Women and the Workplace

The § 2 of the law on equal treatment forbids any direct or indirect discrimination in working relations based upon gender, particularly any discrimination regarding working relations and in terms of salaries, the granting of free social benefits, training and improvement measures, job promotions, general working conditions and terminating a job contract. Sexual harassment in the workplace is considered as discrimination.

Box 5.1b Mahila Samakhya Karnataka, India: A National Model on Education as a Tool for Empowerment

Without literacy there would have been many problems and complaints in the Panchayat and I would not have known. Laxmibai, a member of a women's collective formed by MSK and member of the village local government

Mahila Samakhya is a national organization and exists in several states. One state subsidiary Mahila Samakhya Karnataka (MSK) is described here. Mahila Samakhya was formally launched in Karnataka in April 1989 and grew to reach out to 19,414 women in 1,057 villages. MSK successfully set up 350 non-formal education (NFE) centers. The vision of the NFE centers was to provide educational opportunities for poor rural children, especially girls denied access to education due to poverty, gender discrimination and the rigidity of main stream education systems. Overall, MS's efforts in literacy have focused on reducing female dropout rates by providing the community with support structures like crèches and NFE centres.

Community Mobilization: The main strategy was to organize women into sanghas or collectives. Sanghas represent a non traditional space and time which enables women to articulate their situation, determine priorities, seek information, and initiate change at their own pace. Through the collective energy of all the women the sangha becomes the vehicle of transformation.

Social Development: Women are given training on legal literacy. Consequently several sanghas have organized anti-alcohol demonstrations and opposed child marriage, practice of witchcraft (Banamathi), Harijan exclusion from temples and the abuse of women by forest officials.

Literacy: Mahila Shikshana Kendras (Schools for girls) are residential schools which give girls from poor, deprived families not only education but a whole new life. Enacting plays on gender discrimination and social evils and learning basic skills like knitting, sewing and cooking… are all in a day's work. For older women, literacy camps and workshops have given many women the skills to read and write. For women in local government these skills have been particularly useful in helping them govern effectively.

Economic Development: Sangha women are trained to start savings and credit activities. Each member puts away a part of her monthly income that is available as loans to members to meet their immediate needs thus getting women out of debt traps and out of the hands of money lenders. Sangha savings have reached impressive amounts. Sangha women's reputation for prompt repayment of loans is so high that whenever there are new programmes information is immediately sent to MS.

Traditional Medicine: A new breed of barefoot doctors has emerged in many villages. One of the focuses in the health program is the use of traditional system of herbal medicine. This is linked to keeping women's knowledge systems alive and giving legitimacy to their skills.

Governance: MSK has had important successes in the field of gender and governance. A total of 35,334 women were elected to the State's 5,641Gram Panchayats. Among the villages where MS works 210 sangha women were elected to panchayat posts. More than 100 are among the most marginalized. Winning elections is only one part of the empowerment process. MS played an important role in motivating women to stand, help file nominations, plan campaigns in pre and post election training. The fact that literacy is not a prerequisite for political responsibilities has further boosted their confidence.

5.2. Women and Peace

In situations of armed conflict men and women have completely different burdens to bear, wherein often men who are the major breadwinners are no longer able to play that role and women are forced into earning livelihoods and to shoulder the responsibility of the entire family. Women remain behind to take care of the children and the elderly. Often armed violence on a community is accompanied by the torture, intimidation or sexual assault of the womenfolk in the community sometimes resulting in unwarranted children who are permanent reminders of the humiliation and psychological trauma they have experienced. Additionally, women face arrest, death, the possibilities of disappearance of themselves or their family members, forced migration, exile or prostitution in the context of war. Women often have to cope with the direct or indirect effects of war on their family members, namely economic hardship and scarcity during times of war or even after if their men folk have been killed or handicapped during conflict. Women's responses have been varied, from passive or overt resistance, to lobbying and peace building efforts at various levels.

In an expert group meeting on "Political Decision-Making And Conflict Resolution: The Impact of Gender Difference" (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 1996) the stark under-representation of women in the political decision making arena of peace, security and conflict resolution was identified as even less than in other areas. This despite the clear differences in the ways in which men and women experience conflict, the completely different roles men and women have played in war related situations and the varied and creative responses women have had to reconstruction and peace building in their countries. It is thus worthwhile to enumerate and summarize the responses of women in order to summarize what would constitute a comprehensive response to situations of armed conflict from a gender point of view (Box 5.2a)[ii].

Box 5.2a. Women's Responses to Conflict

Recent research has shown that women have not always been innocent, passive spectators, but have actively involved in peace building initiatives. It is, nonetheless, fair to say that women have been at the fore in a kind of politics that has helped to limit the effects of the conflict on the fabric of society. Women's activism have included:

- Support to other women during situations of conflict as in the case of Ethopia where women's organizations did not exist.
- Some women have focused specifically on peace and reconciliation as in the case of Ireland.
- Voluntary and community groups devised participatory and consensual decision-making processes as in the case of Ireland.
- Involvement in peace talks as in Ireland.
- Demonstration as in the case of Israel or Argentina (mothers of the disappeared)
- Questioning and holding the officials and authorities (such as the military and parties) accountable for their actions as in Israel and Argentina. Taking case of those who get hurt in demonstrations as in Cambodia.
- The fight for human rights and initiatives to fundamentally reform the judiciary, prison, educational and other systems as in the case of the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO).
- Building of civil society as in the case of Cambodia and Lebanon.
- Rebuilding the community in reconstruction initiatives as done by Women's Association of Deir El Ahmar (WADA) in Lebanon where reconstruction and development after 20 years of war took place within a holistic framework of overall sustainable development looking at women's equality, health, environment, economic development, and cultural conservation.
- Establishment of organizations and mechanisms to fight violence against women at all levels which took place in Cambodia.
- Campaigns on peace and security at local, national and regional levels as led by Nepal to raise awareness on peace, build partnerships and influence policy
- Developing monitoring frameworks to conduct peace audits as in the case of Nepal.
- Documentation of women's peace building initiatives to model best practices as in the case of Nepal.
- Develop advocacy strategies for supporting women's initiatives on peace building as in the case of Nepal.
- Conduct impact assessments of peace building efforts as in the case of Nepal.
- ***Gender-sensitive training*** on peace and security initiatives by providing training on the gender-aspects of conflict resolution, utilising local gender expertise and fostering research on the development of gender-based violence during and after conflicts as highlighted in the European Parliamentary Resolution
- Integrate a gender perspective in the planning of refugee camps as highlighted in the European Parliamentary Resolution.
- Confidence building measures, capacity building and networking initiatives as initiated by Caucasus Women's League` (CWL) in Caucasus after the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- Establishment of women's branches in international peace organizations such as International Alert in Caucasus.

Box 5.2a. Women's Responses to Conflict Continued…

- Engaging government in dialogue with local women's groups on peace and security as in South Caucasus. Increase the representation of women and incorporate gender equality in the municipal government agenda and create partnerships with local government to build capacities of women.
- Mainstreaming and replicating best practices like the adoption in Guatemala of a literacy training component originally developed in Peru.

Grassroots Perspectives on Peace and Security

For the grassroots, peace and reconstruction initiatives inevitably bring up econopmic issues related to survival and basic needs. In Guatemala we see how peace is linked to development, education, and livelihoods.

Box 5.2b: Women Leaders for Peace: Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

This case highlights how a local council can help women in a majority indigenous community to develop local leadership skills, to enhance their own social and economic opportunities and to contribute to peace making and peace keeping.

Quetzaltenango is a city of 200,000 people, many of them from the indigenous population. In the past, ethnic and cultural tensions have exacerbated an already troubled national political situation. The under-representation of women, and especially indigenous women, in civic activities was recognised as a barrier to social harmony and economic development.

The inclusion by the Municipality of Quetzaltenango of gender equality in its municipal agenda set this project in motion. The project is aimed primarily at poor rural women, but also includes women from urban and peri-urban areas. The City works with local NGOs, including women's groups, to train women in many subjects, from basic literacy, health and general education, to specialised capacity building and development-related skills. Training emphasizes civic engagement, participation in decision-making, and the creation and maintenance of networks. There is also discussion about past civil conflict, the consequences of violence and the techniques of peace negotiation. A further key element is the training of women in small business management. The City encourages women to participate by providing childcare facilities, often combined with special courses for children on the topics that their mothers are following.

Between 1996 and 2000 this training reached more than 500 women and a women's development association has been formed. The literacy element of the training, using a methodology developed in Peru and aimed at stimulating development awareness, has been a particular success. The training has offered women new skills and new insights into civic and economic engagement. There have also been cultural benefits, with a strengthening of indigenous organisations and activities. This project has advanced Guatemala's quest for peace and social harmony. The next steps will be a national event and the support for networking with like-minded groups.

Recommendations of the expert group on women, peace and security (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 1996) relevant to grassroots women included the following:

- A greater involvement of women at the grassroots level in conflict resolution and the peace process to ensure that peace agreements reflect gender concerns.
- Women from the locality should be involved in identifying problems, and in designing and implementing solutions as a means of more effective development of local confidence building measures
- Indigenous initiatives and processes for conflict resolution and peace-building, especially those initiated by women, must be supported and integrated in the peace process; the persons who are most directly affected and involved must be the major interpreters and resolvers of problems of peace and security.

Thus from a grassroots perspective peace initiatives (Boxes 5.2b and 5.2c) must

- Adopt a holistic perspective that goes beyond reconstruction to sustainable development
- Build on local initiatives and local strengths
- Engage the grassroots in decision making on peace and security issues

The most relevant practice which models a grassroots women's perspective to a situation which requires reconstruction is the response of the award winning best practice of Women's Association of Deir El Ahmar (WADA)[iii] in Lebanon (see Box 5.2c), which has conducted its initiatives on reconstruction within a holistic framework of sustainable community and economic development.

Box 5.2c: Women, Reconstruction and Sustainable Development, Deir El Ahmar, Lebannon

In 1991, volunteer women in Deir El Ahmar, Lebanon, decided to contribute to the development and reconstruction of their country after twenty long years of hard war. The organization's mission is sustainable rural development and its focus was to empower women to help her family and increase her income. The strategies are (a) to provide help and support for rural women (b) to have awareness programs to Protect the Environment and Care for Human Health, (c) promote Eco-Tourism, and (d) to establish a community center serving all the strategies.

Training for 300 women took place on production of handicrafts and agro-food products, to establish cooperatives to give them access to credit and markets. Women can now produce high quality goods, but still need to seek new markets. Women gained confidence, sold their products, which paid for scholarships and treatment for health for their children. Women's products valuing 50,000 US$ was sold locally and exported. Twenty hectares of wheat was cultivated through training in 2001 to produce grilled wheat (freek) which has increased since to 150 hectares in 2002. About 500 women get access to credit from Caritas which had linkages to WADA. The organization succeeded in providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities generated by their local agricultural products.

Health and environmental awareness protected people, their health and the natural resource from damage. The awareness of environmental programs give the youth and children and all the society sectors a chance to collaborate in planting green areas. They are educated to respect nature and its biodiversity. Farmers are trained to use organic substances in agriculture. The environmental solid waste project targets on re-using, reducing and recycling. Environmental awareness and eco-tourism go side to side.

The community faces many problems especially the lack of water for irrigation, solid waste management and poverty. An integrated development program covering all sectors such as health, education, agriculture, tourism is necessary. It was a hard and long job to convince families that a woman could play the role of income generator and decision maker. But the competence and the strength of rural women helped.

The woman's organization is a member of the executive committee with the municipality, NGOs, institutions and school representatives which has the responsibility to decide on area priorities supported by Creative Associates (U.S.A.I.D.), Union Cities and other partners. In 2001, the committee decided to execute canals for irrigation. In 2002, sewer installations and treatment factory to save water from pollution has been executed.

A leadership training programme helped raise women's political awareness on running for office, public private partnerships, and so on. W.A.D.A. is a member of the 'Lebanese Women Council' whose basic goals are equal opportunities for men and women and legislation on women. The LWC influences policy regionally and nationally.

5.3. Violence Against Women

There can be no real democracy as long as there is violence against women. Violence experienced by women cuts across all classes and nationalities and it has gone on for centuries. It could take the form as described in the section above, of violence against women during situations of conflict. Even in situations of peace, violence could take the

form of rape and assault by complete strangers making it difficult for women to travel alone and independently at night. Towards fighting for women's safety in cities in Montreal, Canada community women got together and created an initiative called Between Two Stops (Box 5.3a)

Box 5.3a Safe in the City: Montréal, Québec, Canada

The City of Montréal, through its "Women in Cities" programme, is working with women's and community organisations, the police, public transport authorities, health and social services departments and universities to improve the safety of women in the city and to reduce the fear of molestation. Surveys have shown that two out of three women are afraid when outside alone at night, especially when using public transport. Their fears include physical violence and "mugging", but especially sexual attack or molestation. These fears limit women's freedom of movement and are an obstacle to their full and equal participation in the life of the city.

In 1992 the City of Montréal, the police, the public transport authority and a range of women's and community groups created a strategic partnership. This "Action Committee on Women and Urban Safety" (CAFSU) has launched a number of projects, including (a) the "Between Two Stops" service, which allows women and girls traveling at night to get off the bus between stops, so as to be closer to their destination and (b) the integration of safety guidelines from the women's point of view during the renovation of several metro train exits in Montreal. All CAFSU partners, including the City, the transport system, the police and the Coalition of Women's Centres, have contributed staff time and other resources.

The Between Two Stops service has proved popular, with about one hundred requests per night for the facility. □The promotion of the service to female passengers has also sensitised men to the reality of women's insecurity and its impact on their freedom of movement. □On the metro, the visibility guideline ("see and be seen") identified by women as of vital importance has resulted in new stations having large glass facades and optimal lighting. Improved signage has helped all passengers. These successes have increased partners' confidence in cooperation between local public authorities and community organisations. The partnership is ongoing and further initiatives are developing. A continuing information and advertising campaign promotes the Between Two Stops service to all women, especially those from ethnic minorities. Training sessions on safety planning from the women's perspective will be offered to all municipal services and all partners in city public projects.

Here the partnership allowed a change in the quality of life experienced by women with no extra expense to the city whatsoever.

Violence often takes more personalized forms experienced within the four walls of a woman's home. The impact of this form of violence may be "long-term, affecting emotional adjustment, physical health and subsequent relationships." (Astbury et al., 2000). Domestic violence can take many forms the most common being where the perpetrator of violence on a woman is her own partner, but it could also take the form of elder abuse or child abuse. As defined, "Domestic violence is an abuse of power. It is the domination, coercion, intimidation and victimisation of one person by another by

physical, sexual or emotional means within intimate relationships." (Romans et al. 2000).[iv] Violence in the lives of poor women is intrinsically linked to several issues, particularly the issue of women's financial dependence on their spouses. Violence against women within their homes can also, for instance, be linked to other issues such as dowry in India where not just their spouses but their in laws are involved or could take the form of honor killings as in the case of Pakistan.

A range of mechanisms exist (Box 5.3b) to deal with domestic violence have included:
- Legislative measures where countries have enacted laws making domestic violence illegal.
- Legal strategies which relate to ensuring the laws are properly implemented
- Counseling for couples on the part of general practioners, nurses and psychiatrists and treatment programmes whose effectiveness to date remains questionable.
- Spiritual interventions
- Awareness raising and media campaigns on violence against women

---

Box 5.3b: A One-Stop Women's Centre: Quito, Ecuador

This is a joint project between the Municipality of Quito and relevant local NGOs and institutions. Its aim is to assist poor women, especially those struggling against social problems such as family break-up or domestic violence. Many women from Quito's poorest communities are disadvantaged not only by their poverty, but by bearing a disproportionate share of family and childcare responsibilities. Domestic violence, drug and alcohol problems, unemployment and lack of education are all key factors. Among such women there has, unsurprisingly, been little tradition of civic engagement.

Using funding from the European Commission, the municipality has created a one-stop centre, known as "Las Tres Manuelas", for vulnerable women. It has a special police facility to help battered women. Legal aid is available to those unable to afford access to the legal system. There is medical care, counseling for those struggling with drug or alcohol addiction and professional help for those with psychological problems. Childcare, including help with behavioral or learning difficulties, is available for children between six months and twelve years and young people receive training for employment. The centre also plays an important role in raising awareness of women's concerns and encourages network formation to combat domestic violence. □The centre offers coordination between women's groups and public institutions to promote women's participation and to secure productive credit for women and their families.

Thanks to the comprehensive services offered, this one-stop centre has had a major impact on the lives of many vulnerable women. Users stress the importance of the integrated approach, which addresses their problems in a coordinated way and in one location. Training received at the centre has enabled some women to empower themselves by forming their own organisations with legal status.

The centre has been active in lobbying and raising awareness of gender equality issues. The City Council has drawn upon its advice and experience in developing a new mainstreamed municipal gender policy.   This venture combines the resources of the local authority with the enthusiastic involvement of committed local organisations and professionals in a sustainable partnership.

- Creation of crisis intervention centers or shelters for women trying to flee a situation of domestic violence, even through churches and religious centers[v].

However what is required is a new vision at the center of which lies a very strong role for the community and the need for public education programmes for the widespread teaching of human rights and the principles of democracy and it is within this vision that lies the basis for a strong partnership between civil society and government (Box 5.3c).

Box 5.3c: A New Vision for Addressing Violence Against Women

In order to develop and sustain a democratic society, there has to be deep, rapid and fundamental change on a number of levels. In line with this has to be the recognition that we cannot legislate for change. Social justice and social change requires more than laws and policies.

The Community's Role: The most influential people in communities are as much a part of the body of people on the sidelines as the people on whom they exert influence. Community leaders are responsible for moulding characters, developing ethos. A community's sense of morality, accountability and entire values systems are in the hands of community leaders such as these. It stands to reason they should be drawn very closely into all programmes for social change.

Male involvement: The involvement of men in the work to eradicate violence against women is imperative. Strong accessible Public Education programmes which have great depth and which aim to create awareness among men and women but which instill the values necessary to build and sustain a human rights culture and democracy are required. This is a huge and expensive task.

Role of Partnerships: Government must recognise that social movements will be the driving force to effect the changes. The strategy to address domestic violence is best affected by an inter-departmental and inter-agency approach or partnerships. Greater co-operation between government departments and NGOs is necessary with Government taking responsibility for encouraging coalition building between NGOs, Community Based Organization's (CBOs) and government structures at the local, provincial and national level.

Based on an article on Domestic Violence in South Africa by Lesley Ann Foster Masimanyane Women's Support Centre.

Here again, in efforts on combating violence against women from a grassroots point of view both the economic and social unequal power relations between men and women need to be addressed. Thus violence needs to be addressed within a larger context of holistic community development where the causes of violence are addressed simultaneously, where women who are the victims of abuse are not just rehabilitated in shelters but the entire community is involved in addressing the issue of domestic violence, where economic development and sustainable development also takes place which allows women the economic independence to make independent decisions for herself and her family.

Bantay Banay is a community based model that comes closest to this vision in practice (Box 5.3d)

Box 5.3d: A Community Based Approach to Safety Issues for Women
Bantay Banay, Philippines

A survey conducted by Lihok Pilipina in two urban poor communities indicated that six out of ten women were victims of abuse and 60 percent of incest victims were 15 years old. Battery and abuse resulted in a self-perpetuating cycle of destruction with many victims reliving their childhood experiences. Among battered women more than half the husbands are on drugs. Violence has resulted in homelessness, poverty, and sickness.

These findings were presented to representatives from government institutions, NGOs, POs police, church, lawyer's groups and Barangay Captains in 1992. Bantay Banay, a community-based program, initiated and operated by grassroots women, was formally organized in coordination with government, NGOs, the Philippine National Police and with legal assistance from FIDA. Bantay Banay Program (BBP) emerged from the realization that economic power alone was not enough to free women from conditions that prevented them from active participation in the community and improving their lives. The BBP (in 50 communities in eight cities and twelve municipalities with planned expansion to 13 cities and 2 municipalities) works with a range of partners including local and national government, NGOs and the church. BBP has reached out, vertically and horizontally, to respond holistically to the needs of physically and sexually abused women and children. The national, provincial, municipal, and city government agencies as well as village leaders have shown great support for the Bantay Banay groups.

Through involving different sectors (health, social welfare, religious, police, law and private sectors) with communities and government agencies to provide a range of services for victims and their families, alternative resources have been tapped to sustain local initiatives. Communities continuously educate themselves and find innovative ways to care for each other through intervention, referral and monitoring systems.

BBP broadened to include family and livelihood concerns such as Water and Sanitation program, Social Credit and Livelihood program, Women's Education and Organizing. Groups begin self financing economic ventures such as cooperatives. Women, especially, are encouraged to put up small businesses. Some groups use income from their cooperatives to support community projects.

Women now participate in politics through advocacy. Examples include lobbying at the barangay level to create a Women and Family Affairs Committee with corresponding budget allocation, support for campaigns against rape and gambling, information dissemination on child abuse and domestic violence. They address land tenure, slum improvement and infrastructural improvement such as cementing of footpaths and street lighting, provision of health and sanitation services, Clean and Green projects, water management schemes for water cooperatives, drainage systems, and conducting watershed tours to promote environmental awareness.

> **Box 5.3d: A Community Based Approach to Safety Issues for Women (continued…)**
>
> BBP conduct a spectrum of interventions to alleviate/eliminate domestic violence and violence against women (VAW). It organizes women across sector and trains them to access resources and facilitate referrals for services like temporary shelter, immediate medical check-up, legal assistance, counseling and livelihood.   It influences policies and local budgets in local government units (LGUs) on VAW. One program objective is to make LGUs recognize issues of family violence by establishing desks in their offices and allocating a portion of their budget for training and honorarium for volunteers. The Bantay Banay experience has changed the face of local governance. DILG the lead government agency on Gender works together with Bantay Banay to provide support services such as shelter, organizing, livelihood, counseling, training, legal assistance, law enforcement, medical services, and youth involvement. BBP through training law enforcement officers transformed their attitudes making them more responsive to women. It forced government agencies like Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor (PCUP) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to acknowledge their equal contribution as a partner and recognize its expertise.
>
> At the forefront of focusing enlightened attention on women and child victims are Bantay-Banay groups in partnership with government agencies, NGOs and POs. They have motivated medical practitioners to provide patients with personalized treatment, care, interest and follow-up. Laboratory fees, medical certificates, examinations are free for these patients. The importance of issues like VAW, special pediatric care and child abuse are being institutionalized through integration in the curriculum. Other NGO partners have integrated Bantay Banay to train communities resulting in new effective innovations such as the establishment of Women's Centers in barangays, telephone counseling, home based shelters and preventive measures like family home sessions. Minimal legal fees make legal services more accessible to disadvantaged women.
>
> Bantay Banay youth groups address issues on children's rights awareness and child abuse. Increased awareness in communities captured the attention of local officials overcoming their initial reluctance to support the project. Barangay captains now even provide funds for BBP and some have successfully tapped the private sector for resources. BBP has shown women and men, the importance of knowing and fighting for one's rights. Legal literacy has become an important source of confidence and empowerment. Traditional perspectives on disciplining wives and children are changing as well as traditional perceptions of gender and motherhood.

5.4. Women and Disaster Management

Women play an important role in the community in reconstruction effort be it due to conflict, war or natural disasters.   Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW) in Turkey and Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in India are both forerunners in ensuring the active involvement of women in relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts (Box 5.4a). Turkey and India both experienced devastating earthquakes which destroyed entire communities. In Turkey in the earthquake region, program related partnerships between FSWW and the State Social Services Administration provided legitimacy and quickened bureaucratic procedures.

Box 5.4a: Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW), Turkey

FSWW began in 1986 to support poor women's initiatives through community organization so that the women themselves could identify and produce solutions to problems in their communities, develop self advocacy skills and become active participants in local decision making processes.

Partnerships with local authorities to provide child care and educational services resulted in child care centers being established and in political leadership being forced to address women's priorities namely child care. Four alternative child care and women's centers and two marketing facilities were established in the city of Istanbul. After the earthquake eight more centers were set up in the earthquake affected areas, to provide temporary housing, quality child care, educational services and a common public living room for grassroots women. FSWW strategies were to

- provide safe comfortable places for women and children in tent cities or temporary housing areas in earthquake hit areas,
- house support programmes for children to meet their health, nutritional, recreational and educational needs,
- serve as information clearing houses to women and communities about relief and reconstruction activities
- offer capacity build programmes and leadership support for women to get organized and play a proactive role in the relief and reconstruction process
- provide income generating opportunities, micro credit and support programmes for women

FSWW were able to service and reach out to 1,350 women and children. It has tried to institutionalize the neighborhood mothers programme and micro credit for poor women. FSWW is an example of how organizing around basic needs has helped grassroots women and helped transform local government attitudes towards women's priorities.

5.5. Equal Representation of Women in Politics and Decision Making

> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his/her country. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life.
>
> *The Platform for Action at the Fourth World Women's Conference (1995)*

International Commitments

Women's equal participation[vi] in all spheres is a basic human right. Three areas have been specifically highlighted here as defined by Ghanea-Hercock:

- *Participation in political life* includes participation as, "elected representatives, trade unionists and public officials in the various branches of government, including the judiciary."
- *Participation in sustainable development*, through the full involvement of women in policy and decision-making processes, and as both participants and beneficiaries. This is in, "all aspects of production, employment, income generating activities, education, health, science and technology, sports, culture and population-related activities and other areas".
- *Participation in public life* including both formal (public responsibility and public office) and informal activities (voluntary activities at the community level), both of which should feed into public policy. The premise is that public policy is enriched and made more representative through the contributions of women, as women's, "ideas, creative solutions and concern for the cohesiveness of society can help change the quality of public life"

The Platform for Action[vii] also stated that achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men was necessary to strengthen democracy and take women's interests into account. Furthermore in the assertion that women's right are human rights, lies women's rights to decision making.

Decision-making, as defined here, is associated with appropriate and continued level of access to centres of influence and power. Indicators listed by Ghanea-Hercock[viii] to assess whether indeed women in different national contexts have this access include:

- Quantitative representation at all levels from municipal to national levels of government and in all professional positions
- Women's voices being heard at *all* levels where the decision-making is based on close relations from grassroots to top policy levels.
- The accountability of those in privileged positions to women and taking women's needs into consideration in the decision-making.

On all these indicators it is still found despite international commitments made by governments that women are largely underrepresented at most levels of government.

Global Campaigns: WEDO launched a major global campaign to tackle the issue of women's political representation called the 50-50 campaign (Box 5.5a).

Box 5.5a WEDO Primer 50/50 Campaign

In June of 2000, during the UN five year review of the Beijing Platform for Action, WEDO launched the global campaign 50/50 by 2005: Get the Balance Right. This campaign underscored the need for a critical mass of women in leadership positions at the local, national, or international level. The 50/50 campaign is not just about numbers; it is also about women making a difference. Every issue—social, economic and political— affects women and that all women's issues involve and reflect the concerns of society as a whole.

The 50/50 campaign is also about transforming institutions. Access to power and decision making for women is sought to transform the policy agenda at all levels of government and the male- centered structures, practices, and culture of governing institutions.

The 50/50 campaign, endorsed by more than 170 organizations in 52 countries, has been designed to confront the structural and cultural barriers that impede women's access to decision-making and leadership positions. It sets targets for governments: 30 percent representation of women in cabinet ministries, legislatures and local government by 2003, and equal representation by 2005. WEDO will help support these goals by galvanizing public opinion in support of women's participation and by disseminating strategies for gaining a critical mass of women in decision making.

IULA through its global gender campaign has also intervened at national levels working however through local authorities within countries like Ghana (Box 5.5b).

Countries like France are at the forefront where there are as many women as men in decision making positions. As recently as in the 1980s in France, women made up only 5 percent of parliament. A movement for gender parity came into being and in 1999 France updated its constitution towards this objective. For the local elections all lists had equal numbers of men and women. The movement succeeded because it was supported by grassroots women across France.

Box 5.5b Women in District Governance and Development
The National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana

NALAG represents all Ghana's local governments. Committed to addressing the under-representation of women in all aspects of local governance, NALAG has begun a programme of research, awareness-raising and training, with the support of IULA's Association Capacity Building (ACB) Programme.

The District level of governance is important in Ghana and is a focus for development activities. Women have been under-represented at this level, both in the decision-making and the development processes. Gender-disaggregated statistics from the 1990s revealed that fewer than 10 percent of District Assembly members and slightly less than a quarter of administrative staff were women.

IULA's ACB programme provided NALAG with resources to undertake field research involving both women and men in local government, and to develop a policy paper on the position of women in local government. The analysis identified problems leading to and arising from the under-representation of women in local governance, and highlighted a range of training needs.

In partnership with a local gender expert, NALAG developed a training manual to support women elected representatives and potential candidates. The design of the manual benefited from the insights and experience of the training officer of the Botswana Association of Local Authorities.

Gender is now a core issue within NALAG and many more women participated in its most recent annual conference than in former years. The training manual was circulated to all district assemblies and women councilors. NALAG is conducting training programmes for women at the District Assembly level, focused on leadership, debating and advocacy skills and on drafting project funding proposals.

NALAG's constitution has been amended to facilitate the nomination of councilors to the Executive Board, which has brought in many more women. The current Vice- President of NALAG is a woman, a crucial role model. □NALAG's Executive Board ratified and circulated the IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government. Many individual districts have now committed to the Declaration.

In collaboration with other national and local bodies concerned with development and democracy, NALAG continues to promote greater gender sensitivity among men, especially those in traditional leadership roles. International contacts, including with IULA and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, have also helped this gender campaign.

<u>National Initiatives</u>: Like wise there are country specific examples of measures taken by national governments as in the case of the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian constitution which brought one million women into power in local bodies over night and in Uganda through electoral quotas (Boxes 5.5c and 5.5d).   India, however, is still fighting for the right to quotas for women in parliament where representation is very poor.

Box 5.5c: Democratic Decentralisation of Local Governments in India:
The 74th Constitutional Amendment

The Constitution of India, in force from 1950, made detailed provisions for ensuring democratic functioning of the parliament and the State legislatures but not for urban local government. In consequence, democracy at this level has not been stable. In 1990-91 dialogue between local political leaders as well as grass root level functionaries were organised in India, as part of a consultative process to discuss the strengthening local bodies. The Government of India in response to the crisis of municipal governance accorded urban local bodies constitutional status to provide legislative parameters for State Governments to enact municipal laws to strengthen local democracy. The 73rd Amendment bill introduced in 1991, followed by the 74th Amendment Act of 1992, to the Indian constitution represents the boldest initiative anywhere in the world for spreading local democracy, both in rural and urban areas.

The major objectives of the **74th Constitutional Amendment Act** are to increase representation of weaker sections (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and backward classes and women) in municipalities. To empower women, one-third of Municipal seats, including Mayoral seats were reserved for them. To ensure fiscal autonomy, State Finance Commissions also Constitutional authorities, designed principles for tax assignments, sharing of taxes and grants-in-aid. To ensure free elections, State Election Commissions were set up. People's representations would have full say in all planning. The constitution requires Ward Committees with elected representatives perform the twin roles of governance and a utility organization with scope to involve non governmental and community based people's organisations, for public-private participation, privatization of civic services and the advocacy and action roles of citizen groups.

The democratic decentralization initiative in India is extremely significant to transfer successful innovations and it provides for sustainable urban and regional development based on partnerships in which national, provincial, and local Governments and the citizens at large have the widest possible space to decide, initiate and innovate. However it has been found that the 74th amendment has not been nearly as successful in implementation as the 73rd amendment as civil society in the rural areas is stronger, women's groups more widespread and aware and NGOs here are playing an active role in training the village elected representatives. The same is not true in the urban scenario.

In Uganda, women in parliament have been extremely powerful in instituting engendered mechanisms at the constitutional level and in fighting and winning to right to electoral quotas for women in local government.

One of the keys to the success of the Women's Caucus was its early acknowledgement of the need for alliances. The group forged links with grassroots women's organisations,

high-level women in the public and private sector and women intellectuals, as well as the link with youth and persons with disabilities delegates in the Assembly.

Box 5.5d: The Uganda Women's Caucus

The Uganda Women's Caucus formed brought together women of all walks of life who spoke with one voice and who had common objectives. They strategized to entrench in the Constitution clauses that will have an impact on the lives of women and other marginalized groups. Constitutions made earlier lacked women's participation and so their interests were not specifically catered for. With the affirmative action measure decreed by the NRM Government, 51 women delegates out of 284 were members of the Constituent Assembly (CA), and they formed the Women's Caucus.

The Women's Caucus was formed in 1994 with the purpose of increasing the women's political clout and to broaden the support base for women's issues. Within the Assembly, women allied with youth, workers and persons with disabilities delegates, and with impetus from six women delegates calling themselves the "Gender Working Group" formed a caucus known formally as "The Constituent Assembly Women's Caucus, Working with Youth, Workers, and People with Disabilities." The caucus was strictly non-partisan in nature, taking positions only on issues of fundamental importance to women, youth or persons with disabilities and avoiding any issues that would create disagreement amongst the members of the Caucus.

The Women's Caucus worked effectively as a minority in the Assembly. The Constitution was written in gender-neutral language; an explicit statement of equality before the law was included in the new Constitution. The Caucus successfully lobbied for an Equal Opportunities Commission to guarantee enforcement of the constitutional principles. The Caucus also successfully lobbied to increase the affirmative action quota from one in every nine local council positions to one in three, guaranteeing women one-third of local government council seats. Totally women have 45 affirmative action seats guaranteed in Parliament while they can also contest other seats. The latter provision has provided more women with political experience, and has given them an increasingly important role as decentralization of political authority progresses.

Arising from the Women's Caucus, visible and invisible outcomes have been noted. The women delegates, through concerted caucus action enhanced the significance of the gender agenda in the politics of Uganda. The Women's Caucus enabled women and the other marginalised groups to gain a feeling of self-esteem. An increasing number of women have become involved in the political running of the country at various levels and in different capacities as a result off the efforts of the Caucus.

After the Constitution making process, the gender working group of the Constituent Assembly Women's Caucus formed an NGO called FOWODE that now promotes gender equality in all decision-making through advocacy, training, research and publishing. Through FOWODE activities, parliamentarians and the local government councilors have been encouraged to form caucuses.

Another vital ingredient of the Caucus success was its leaderships' insistence on a non-partisan approach. This was not easy, as many Caucus members had different political backgrounds and convictions. The Caucus leadership found that constantly identifying and articulating the Caucus' common agenda helped to counter these tendencies, as well

as to remind members not to attempt to press the Caucus on issues on which consensus cannot be reached. When issues proved potentially divisive, the Caucus opted not to take a public stance, rather than jeopardise its unity.

5.6. The Role of Community Based Movements in Local Governance and Democratic Processes

Today some of the strongest and most innovative partnerships are those between *local authorities and grassroots movements*. At this historical juncture especially, local authorities themselves are undergoing a transformation by decentralization of state power and are being strengthened.

The nature of problems faced by women in industrialized societies is different from those in the developing economies. The experience of motherhood is marginalised, and the mother child relationship is experienced under isolation. Children experience decreasing access to peer contacts and to public space, due to the rise of single child families and increasingly dangerous environments. Parents also often lack peer contacts. Parent education and outreach programs typically reach only a small segment of the middle class, not the poor. The work world and public culture function on the basis of full-time availability of workers, both male and female, for the labor market, leaving family obligations up to others. For men, these are usually their wives, for working and career women these are other women, grandmothers, daycare workers, nannies, or teachers.

The overall market orientation of highly industrialised societies has marginalised all those who fall outside of the labor market and its achievement standards. This has heavy consequences on the development of these societies, on the quality of life and of social relationships, on the social and spiritual quality of the neighborhoods. Sustainable neighborhood networks and neighborliness are drying up in northern societies.
The mother centers confront this central issue of underdevelopment in the North. Women who stay at home while their children are small, can be seen as a left over phenomenon of the individualization and modernisation processes in the north. In this respect mothers turn out to be the ones still keeping together the families, the communities and the neighborhoods in industrialised societies, the ones still having time resources to put into maintaining a humane quality to social and community life. In the mother centers women own this quality of their lives and go public with it (Box 5.6a).

Box 5.6a: The Story of the Mother Centers in Germany

Most women in Germany do not follow the male pattern of total availability for work. When they have children, they choose to stay at home for a period of time or to cut down on working hours and career aspirations in order to create space in their lives to tend to children and to family life. Mothers describe a process of loss of self-confidence, which they experience when living isolated with children, a life with norms contrary to public norms. On the one hand, mothering demands an incredible responsibility, competence and self-reliance. On the other hand, they are cut off from public values based on earning money, on principles of success and competition in (full-time) labor market participation.

In the mother centers women break their isolation. The mother centers create public visibility for female life styles. The name itself, "mothers center" validates motherhood. They create a public space to voice issues that prevail when "looking at the world through the eyes of a woman with a child at her hand" and where mothers raise their self esteem and confidence to claim participation in designing neighborhoods and communities. Mother centers are a place where women organise without being clientalised. Women there experience themselves as experts on their own lives. They create strategies to solve their problems with the common vision of increasing the influence and leadership of women in their communities. Women here have the freedom to confront and challenge ideologies that marginalize motherhood and to collectively build their identities and images of motherhood on their own experiences.

The core of the mother center project is a daily drop-in coffee shop, which includes childcare. Activities in the centers involve:
- Provision of goods and services that help lower expenses for families like: second hand shops, hair-cutting, midday meals, sewing classes, repair services;
- Crisis counseling and support;
- Know-how on parenting (breast feeding, nutrition, what do I do when a child does not stop crying, and so on);
- Training in languages, computer courses;
- Relaxation and holistic health services like reflexology, massages;
- Job training and retraining.

First and foremost, the mother centers contribute to the empowerment of women in the communities. In the mother centers, women do not have to leave their communities to develop their self-confidence and to participate in public life. The centers also function as a stepping stone for women to reenter the labor market. They also contribute to raising the visibility and recognition of women's reproductive work by paying for it in the centers. The mother centers have also proven to be successful locations for retraining and job reentry programs. Training conducted in the setting of the centers can depend on the infra-structural support services of the centers like childcare, lunch services, ironing and laundry services, pick-up and transport services for children, home-work support for children and so on. The mothers centers movement spread across Europe into other countries including the Czech Republic, Holland among others.

Post-socialist societies and societies with histories of military rule, typically have weak civil societies. Part of reweaving a new civil society fabric is to imbibe values and practices of tolerance, trust, acceptance of difference, celebration of diversity and cooperation among its members. The Czech mother centers have created a channel for

people in former communist countries to relearn democratic behavior and to engender democratic processes. They represent a new type of civil society, which is community-based and women-led. It provides women a forum to express themselves in the public arena, take responsibility and lead. Involving children at a very young age teaches them to participate and learn the value of a rich civil society. It simultaneously enables women and the larger community to unlearn totalitarian practices of previous regimes helping them overcome internalized fears and assert themselves. These are training grounds to learn to dialogue across different opinions and deal with local authorities.   Overall the role of women's organizations in all development processes has been illustrated below especially around basic needs such as

- Housing
- Environment and health
- Water
- Livelihoods

5.6.1. Housing Land Tenure and Slums

The importance of secure, safe and adequately serviced housing for all citizens remains a central issue for good governance. Housing needs to be more tailored to the needs of women who are still primarily responsible for reproductive work in families. In the first world, therefore, women are now demanding that their needs be taken into consideration in the very design of housing by involving women architects and planners (Box 5.6b)[2].

However in the third world, housing needs are far more basic where women fights for housing range from basic improvements in the structure and design of their homes (Box 5.6e) to the struggle for tenure and a roof over their head (boxes 5.6c and 5.6d).

---

[2]   http://www.bestpractices.org/cgi-bin/bp98.cgi?cmd=detail&id=18720&key=ElAtyrkbfah

Box 5.6b: Frauen-Werk-Stadt - A Housing Project by and for Women in Vienna

Women make up 52% of the Viennese population. The housing project "Frauen-Werk-Stadt" is a first step to take women's daily needs and experiences into consideration on a larger scale. Women architects and planners will exclusively design a piece of the city as part of the urban expansion programme in Vienna. After preliminary talks with politicians, the approval of the Vice-Mayer of Vienna and the Executive City Councilor for Housing and Urban Renewal, the search for a suitable lot was initiated in April 1993. The City of Vienna and the building cooperative of the Trade Union of Employees - the only nonprofit housing cooperative of Austria managed by a woman - were selected as builders.

A group of young feminist women architects was entrusted with the task of formulating the requirements of a women-friendly public housing project based on the guidelines of the Viennese Housing Promotion Act and the Building Code. The Women office elaborated a guide focusing on criteria for women's needs in housing and the urban environment. Several Women s Offices in Europe are launching similar projects by taking the guide "Frauen –Werk - Stadt" as an example.

Until mid-1993 there was not a single women amongst the architects invited to develop projects and plans. Thus another key objective of the Municipal Department for the Promotion and Coordination of Women's Affairs is to stimulate the public interest in and the visibility of women planners and architects. At the same time the needs and requirements of women as users of the city should be taken into account more strongly than in the past.

Women's needs were taken into account in planning and construction. There is no other known project in Europe that enjoys the same degree of formal recognition within any government administration. Women-adapted housing thus became a precedent will be incorporated in other projects and, above all, in the amendment of relevant provisions of the Viennese Building Code.

The "Frauen-Werk-Stadt" acts as a catalyst in supporting women's needs and rights in urban planning. More and more female experts have been invited to attend urban planning evaluations and several have been able to convince the board of their abilities. Before now, only a few women were part of evaluations of this kind.

One of the most crucial problems faced by the urban population is secure tenure. In the third world for the slums secure tenure is the fulcrum around which all issues revolve. A slum constitutes an under serviced settlement be it unauthorized occupation of land, congested inner city built up areas, fringe area unauthorized developments or peripheral villages within urban areas.

Secure tenure along with lack of basic services, are the primary problems faced by slum dwellers and women in particular. It is women in the slums who face the demolition squads, cannot get access to banking and other formal sector services whose prerequisite is a legal permanent residence. The women being the primary caretakers are the ones who have to face the brunt of the problems related to inadequate clean water, services for health, sanitation and basic amenities. It is vital therefore that they be equipped with the

capacity to defend their habitats in terms of both security and adequate services. Equally important is that women be able to have a say in the design of their homes and communities in case of resettlement.

Box 5.6c: A Gender-Sensitive Approach to Shelter: SPARC, Mumbai, India

Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) formed in 1984 acts as a support organization to mass-based people's organizations, the National Slum Dwellers' Federation and Mahila Milan, to find workable solutions for pavement and slum dwellers. SPARC built the capacities of women to design their homes and communities, design, construct and maintain their own toilets, to save and provide themselves a flexible source of alternative credit. SPARC and its partners have sensitized policy-makers and the city administration to the plight of pavement-dwellers, especially women pavement-dwellers and have lobbied and negotiated with government over settlement issues. It helped organize people to deal with demolitions in a more humane collective way. Its main strategy has been to build women's groups and center stage women's leadership. It has built women's capacities with the help of professional architects and engineers to analyse existing space and resources and match them to the needs of families ensuring adequate light, space and ventilation in their design. It facilitated a dialogue between the government and people on resettlement and to find land and space towards this. Full-scale model dwellings were built by women and demonstrated to government using first timber, cloth and paper and later, other materials such as brick and concrete. Women were trained in building materials, design, construction techniques, and have been negotiating with the state authorities for land - the most valuable and scarce urban resource. Thus it demonstrated women slum-dwellers' capacities to articulate their needs and design their own solutions. The pavement dwellers also saved Rs 16,00,000 used as flexible credit when needed with each family having about Rs 5,000 saved towards their future homes.

Boxes 5.6d: Organizing for Land and Housing, Social Inclusion and Human Development Samahang Maralita Para sa Makatao at Makatarungang Paninirahan (SAMA-SAMA)

It was the housewives who were the backbone of the organization. Men went to work, the women worked for their futures and families.

Manuel MaÒosa, architect and urban planner in the Philippines

SAMA-SAMA, Philippines, succeeded in getting 150 hectares proclaimed for onsite resettlement. It designed and implemented a social housing innovation called the People's Housing Alternative for Social Empowerment (PHASE) which was adopted, revised and institutionalized the right of the people's organization to participate in the decision making in the National Government Center Housing Committee. It also organized 18 day care centers, facilitated the installation of legal electric and water connections to the communities within the 700 hectares NGC settlement, established a credit and savings cooperative for its members. It formed the core of an anti-eviction federation in Metro Manila of poor families threatened with evictions. Its women members supported the first political party of women that won a seat in Congress in the last election.

SAMA-SAMA started as a neighborhood mutual assistance group helping in construction of newcomers' houses, aiding widows to bury their husbands, raising funds for day care centers, resisting demolitions, constructing schoolhouses, and conduct advocacy work with legislators to support their struggle for secure land tenure. It confronted the police and military to keep its community from being demolished, negotiated successfully to transfer the site of a building to avoid demolition. The organization saw their struggle for land was closely connected to the struggle for freedom and democracy in the country. The general membership and leadership of SAMASAMA is almost 100 percent women who are supported by their spouses and families. They analyze, decide and implement projects and mobilize people. Women who were once housewives have found themselves working as office workers, daycare teachers, field interviewers, aides for lawmakers, government workers and as organizers for elderly groups.

Access and control of resources is the root of many problems experienced by women. Several basic urban services are linked to ownership of assets such as land and housing. Therefore promoting women's access to housing and other assets is an important factor to be kept in mind in designing gender sensitive urban policies.

Also like in the case of Mabati[3], Kenya, women have been able to tackle structure and design of their homes in the face of scarcity and changing availability of traditional housing materials used because of urbanization (Box 5.6e).

Box 5.6e: Mabati Women Groups, Nyeri, Kenya

The Mabati Women groups constitute a movement by poor women in the central province of the republic of Kenya who in the 1960s came together as groups to address the immediate needs of members. The women wanted to improve their houses as a sign of development which was supposed to come about after independence. Their main preoccupation was housing improvement. After the houses were improved, the women undertook other activities according to their felt needs. Such other activities include purchase of building materials for water tanks construction, construction of rental houses and conducting sewing and knitting classes.

Traditionally women were in-charge of gathering roofing materials for house construction. Roofing was mainly done with grass, which is normally not a durable building material especially in areas with a lot of rainfall. In Nyeri, the roofs had to be replaced every year, an activity that was both tedious and time consuming for the women. Further, grass became scarce due to increased population, land consolidation and the spread of cash cropping. This meant that less land was left fallow and the grass used for thatching was becoming increasingly scarce. In essence, land consolidation, cash cropping and the inability to gather thatching grass at random contributed to the accelerated formation of Mabati groups. They realized at this point that the only way to survive was to join hands with other women in similar circumstances.

The activities of the women groups have significantly improved the housing conditions in Nyeri district. Most groups in agricultural rich areas of Mathira, Othaya and Tetu divisions have completed roofing their houses after which they have undertaken other development activities. Some of the groups are even starting a second round of housing development by financing construction of new structures. The groups that have been in operation for a long time have engaged in other shelter improvement activities like fencing homesteads, buying utensils for members, making/purchasing water tanks for members, planting trees, utilizing improved energy saving jikos, among other measures.

One visible benefit is the progressive improvement of shelter and related services. About 126,000 people have benefited in terms of improved housing and related services. Evidence lies further in the fact that in the district there are very few houses with grass thatched roofs left. In addition, the process has empowered an estimated 18,000 women in Nyeri to be able to plan and implement projects of their own choice. The confidence gained from these activities has enabled these women to not only change their situation but that of their families.

The groups have also addressed poverty issues and funds obtained from these efforts have educated children, bought property and met other basic family needs. Their efforts have enhanced community development in the sense that they have been actively involved in many development activities within their area. Some women have also been able to access credit from revolving loan funds with their group as collateral for borrowing funds when they need.

---

[3] http://www.bestpractices.org/cgi-bin/bp98.cgi?cmd=detail&id=18506&key=ElAtyrkbfah

Women are the ones who spend the most time in the home and responsible for managing the home. Thus involving them in decisions on their homes and communities is key to engendering urban governance.

5.6.2: Environment Management and Health Services

The most serious urban environmental problems include broadly air pollution, water pollution, management of solid waste and noise pollution. Besides these, cities are also at risk from natural hazards or disasters. Poor women and children are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation of habitats. Water and air pollution in communities and habitats affects the health of women and children in particular. Housing design looking at the SPARC case (Box 5.6a), shows how ensuring adequate ventilation and access to water are important to ensure minimum sanitation and environmental standards and to protect the health of the community. For women, health is linked to a variety of other issues including violence (Box 5.6f). In Davao, for instance while the entry point was health case and gender sensitization on health, this led to

---

Box 5.6f: From Healthcare to Engagement: Davao City, Philippines

This project started as a drive to improve the city's healthcare system, but broadened into the adoption of gender-responsive policies in all the city council's departments. During the 1980s, amidst a climate of general political and social unrest, dissatisfaction grew with Davao's healthcare system, which was seen as sexist, inappropriate and failed to address the issue of violence against women. An NGO, the Development of Peoples Foundation (DPF) was asked to head a Task Force on Reproductive Health in Davao City.

At national level a new Local Government Code provided for the civic engagement of citizens' groups, while a new ordinance adopted the Beijing Platform of Action for Women into Philippine national policy. ☐At the local level, organised groups of women were encouraged to join district health and development organisations. Davao's City Development Council adopted a Reproductive Health Care Strategy in its Comprehensive Development Plan and included the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the city's Social Reform Agenda. ☐The city authorities organised gender sensitivity training and workshop activities for local government service providers and law enforcement agencies dealing with domestic violence. This led to wider consultations on civic engagement, women's development and networking among a broad range of civil society institutions.

In 1997-8, a woman Councilor, supported by successive Mayors, promoted the "Women's Development Code of Davao City", which passed into law as a City Ordinance in March 1998. This Ordinance created the "Integrated Gender and Development Office" (IGDO), a city government structure within the Mayor's office, composed of representatives of local government and NGOs. IGDO is co-chaired by a Councilor and a representative of the civil society sector. ☐ Davao City Council has adopted gender responsive policies in all departments. About 30% of official development assistance and 6% of the city's annual development fund are now devoted to gender-sensitive services. This programme has adopted a cross-sectoral, multi-level approach that has succeeded in stimulating a gender-focused approach among the city's public service providers.

broader consultations and demarcation of development funds for gender sensitive services across all sectors.

Environmental, waste management, health and water problems are intrinsically linked and a community-wide approach needs to be adopted where these problems are dealt with holistically and creatively. More importantly in the third world in particular livelihood and survival issues are at the forefront of all problems and therefore solutions need to be designed that center stage this consideration. This implies that all solutions that involve the possibility of income generation and payment for services should try and retain the flow of funds within the community. Therefore, where women or local populations can earn incomes from providing services they should be given the option to do so (Boxes 5.6g, 5.6h, 5.6i and 5.6j).

Box 5.6g: SEWA, India

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has assisted in forming cooperatives among women to develop alternative skills to waste gathering and sorting. Despite difficulties arising out of secret deals and corruption in the trade of waste paper from government offices to contractors, women have persevered to advance themselves beyond picking scarps. The women are concentrating on gaining more autonomy from paper contractors, agents and mills because at present they are still paid only 10 percent of the price that contractors are able to obtain when they resell the paper to the mills. The women have acquired a warehouse in the hope of bypassing the middlemen. Their long-term goal is to own a paper processing plant.

In the examples of SEWA, Kukatpally[4] and Tulewane, women and the youth from the community earned their livelihoods from solid waste management and environmental management in their communities and neighborhoods.

The Tulewane case is one which exemplifies rehabilitation of scavengers and the restoration of their dignity. This is relevant for many third world countries where the poor handle solid waste. These instances show generic community based examples and initiatives to handle local problems through the creative use of local skills and resources. It demonstrates a neighborhood ability to reverse environmental degradation. It has become a model for other communities who have replicated their efforts. The Exnora example also show the capacity of communities and political will on the part of local government to support environmental management from below.

Long term sustainability namely the *maintenance of health and environmental resources* of a community requires that polluting elements be removed and the living environment maintained. The Tuelewane Group, Kenya, cleaned out what were previously breeding grounds for diseases. An improved living environment, regular collection and disposal of garbage and un-blocking of sewers has improved the health situation of the entire community. They have provided access to clean and affordable water and people are

---

[4]   http://www.bestpractices.org/cgi-bin/bp98.cgi?cmd=detail&id=11720&key=ElAtyrkbfah

able to now use toilets. There is now clean public space for families and children. Incidence of Cholera has also been drastically reduced.

Box 5.6h: Integrated Approach to Women's Empowerment, India

Kukatpally in the state of Andhra Pradesh in Southern India is a town with the worst of sanitation systems. Inadequate, ill motivated and apathetic staff and irregular clearance resulted in poor solid waste management and accumulation of garbage all over the city, community dissatisfaction, complaints, and protests by citizen groups.

The initiative on empowerment of women in Kukatpally is aimed at mainstreaming urban poor women. Women groups undertook contracts for the provision of civic infrastructure. Accumulation of capital through savings enabled women to undertake economic activities and get involved in regulating the planned development of the city, thereby making them active participants in city's governance. The project is a product of partnership between local authority, women groups, community, state government and financial institutions.

Once the groups were formed, they selected local men and women to undertake the job. To mobilise financial resources, a project report at a cost of Rs. 3.24 lakhs ($ 7534) was prepared to purchase a tractor, implements and so on. Under SJSRY - a joint scheme of state and union governments - Rs. 1.25 lakhs ($ 2900) was provided as subsidy, Rs. 1.86 lakhs ($ 4325) was sanctioned by a financial institution i.e., Andhra Bank as loan and women contributed about 5% of project cost i.e., Rs.16,000 ($ 375) as their share. Women made decisions with consultation regarding the procurement of tractor and tools like improve brooms, and cleaning equipment.

Community Contracts: Hitherto execution of civil works was entrusted to contractors where quality, costs and community involvement were major issues. To overcome them Kukatpally municipality started community contract system wherein women groups were entrusted with the task of identifying and executing the infrastructural services. Quality of works executed by the groups was comparable to professional contractors.

Social Audit: Women groups were trained in planning and zoning regulations to facilitate community policing of unauthorized or illegal constructions, encroachments on public land, deviation from approved plans among other regulations.

Regular and effective garbage clearance, roads sweeping and desilting of drains has made substantial and significant impact on the environmental sanitation in the areas covered. Latent leadership potential among its members is being constructively channalised to implement the initiative effectively. The empowerment of the communities has enabled them to become active partners in urban governance. With improved family income, there has been perceptible change in their quality of life and families have gained respectability and recognition. There is a positive and perceptible change in the people's attitude from apathy to initiative and involvement, and from protest to partnership and participation.

The impact is so impressive that the Government has decided to entrust environmental sanitation work to the women self-help groups in all the urban local bodies in a phased manner. There is also a proposal to give legislative recognition to the self-help groups and community development societies to strengthen urban local bodies in the State and improve urban governance. Achievement of positive results from the Kukatpally initiative prompted the government to adopt integrated approach to human and habitat development.

Box 5.6i: Women's Self Help Initiatives in Environmental Management, Tulewane, Kenya

The Nairobi City Council used to provide essential basic services to Mathare, one of the largest informal slum settlements in Nairobi, just like any other formal settlement. Services such as garbage collection and disposal, provision and cleaning up of toilet facilities and proper sewerage maintenance receded with an ever-increasing slum population. One pressing problem was toilets, which turned into dangerous garbage disposal sites, criminal hideouts and a breeding ground for disease. The community, especially women, could no longer stand the situation and in 1995, formed a group called "Tuelewane", a Kiswahili word meaning "let us agree", to deal with the toilet and sewage issue.

The solutions were to remove garbage, clean the toilets and un-block the drainage system and sewers and charge for services for a clean environment to be sustained. First women got permission from local authorities to rehabilitate toilets used by about 35,000 people. They confronted local criminals inhabiting these spaces. Each woman discussed the issue with her own sons, relatives and neighbors involved in crime. Some youth agreed to forego their criminal hideout for healthy living environments, but shifted bases elsewhere. Women then offered the youth an alternative use of their time by engaging in productive activities. Members contributed KSh 10 each (equivalent to 1/7 of a dollar) a day to hire the youth. The youth, some previously involved in criminal activities, dug up the garbage that filled the toilets, transported it in wheelbarrows and carts to a distance, were now earning an income and had no time for criminal deeds. A few were employed as night guards. Some criminals persisted to use force to "reclaim" their hideouts by assaulting women members who were forced to seek police protection. After lobbying, today, armed police are a part of the community and the crime rate has drastically reduced. The money obtained pays for the night guard, the personnel who clean the toilet, iron sheets for roofing, timber and water pipes for further development of toilets. To further support the youth, Tuelewane organised a fundraising drive. The money was spent to buy wheelbarrows and protective clothing for the youth who has opened up an account for their savings.One major achievement is the physical improvement of sanitation and access to clean water. Areas, previously breeding grounds for diseases, were cleaned thereby reducing the spread of diseases. Regular collection and disposal of household garbage and un-blocking of sewers also improved the health situation in the surrounding houses.

Tuelewane Women's Groups are now affiliated to a number of organisations and networks. They are founder members of "Mungano wa Vikundi vya Kujisaidia", a network of 52 self help groups with 3,500 members from different slums. The current co-ordinator of this network is a founder member of the Tuelewane group. Participation in workshops has given members leadership skills who are no longer afraid to speak out. Earlier group members would not vote women into electoral positions and perceived men as sole decision-makers. They now realise that they themselves, can become leaders. During the last election, five groups even contributed 600 KSh for a woman candidate, the chairperson of Tuelewane Women Group, to attend a management course and compete effectively with men at the Kenya Institute of Management (KIA).   They negotiated with police and local councils. The Chair of Muungano participated in meetings of the Nairobi Informal Settlement Committee hosted by Nairobi City Council and was elected to head the sub committee on Environment and Health and the village committee of the Mathare Division Health Committee. Sustainable partnerships have developed at local levels with community members, other self-help groups and local authorities. Since its inception, the Tuelewane Women Group has been involved in many negotiations with local authorities. They have convinced the City council to view them as an entity that provides essential services in place of the institutions. Here "ex-criminals" now are gainfully employed as night-guards whose incomes were generated by fees charged for use of the toilets. These initiative points towards partnerships that can create holistic community based and designed solutions where a series of issues from health, environment, sanitation, crime, employment, and gender concerns can be addressed simultaneously.

There are also instances of state initiated partnerships like Exnora which can generate successful community participation to deal with solid waste management.

Box 5.6j: Community Participation for A Clean Environment:
Exnora, Madras

Over the past decades, Madras has witnessed a rapid growth of its population and accompanying growth of urban slums with inadequate infrastructure. The lack of basic amenities has created such problems like contamination of water supply, the overflow of sewage systems and the presence of informal garbage dumps.

Exnora International was formed in 1989, with the basic premise that community participation is essential to transform urban environments. The main objective is to inculcate civic consciousness and organize civic amenities on a self-help basis and thereby creating a healthier environment, and to lobby for appropriate legislation to improve civic standards. Exnora concentrated its efforts on solid waste management

The Corporation of Madras developed made hydro-containers available in every street for waste collection. The experiment failed as residents found it inconvenient to carry the waste from their houses to the end of the street. Exnora introduced the concept of the *street beautifier* who takes the solid waste from individual households to the containers. This proved rag pickers employment and dignity of labour by giving them specially designed tricycles to collect the waste and sweep the streets daily. Exnora's demonstrated a successful partnership with rag pickers, community and government in urban environmental management. The success resulted in the birth of the 900 functioning Civic Exnoras in Madras with each comprising 75 to 100 families. Each household contributes Rs 10-25 for the salary of the street beautifier, maintenance of the tricycle and purchase of materials for waste collection. The Civic Exnoras operate in all sections of the city including the slums. Besides solid waste management, Exnora has initiated other environmental management activities. Exnora trains the street beautifier to separate waste at source. S/he can earn additional income by selling recyclables like plastic, paper, glass and metal scraps to agents and by using vermi-composting technology for producing and selling manure from organic wastes. Exnora through its Waterways Monitoring Program (WAMP) sensitize citizens and lobbies government on entry points of pollutants into waterways. Exnora through dialogue with slum dwellers found that they willing to offer free services to lay sewer lines if materials were provided to them. The Civic Exnoras in the city were instrumental in planting up to 10,0000 trees to beautify roads, parks, playgrounds, burial grounds etc. with the larger perspective of environmental protection. Exnora's other activities are Rain Harvesting, Student Environment Programme, Educational Advancement Programmes, Exnora Women's Guild, Exnora Naturalists' Club, Sustainable Madras Urban Project (SUMUP).

Exnora has successfully inculcated civic awareness and community participation on preventive environmental protection. Each Civic Exnora functions as a grass-root-level autonomous non-governmental organization, which chalks out its own local programme to meet its own specific needs. The Madras Exnora example has been replicated in other cities in Tamil Nadu, in Bangalore, Pune and Vijayawada and replicated internationally in University of Rochester and initiated its activities in Sri Lanka.

In rural communities women in partnerships with government are instrumental in reforestation initiatives as in Morocco[5] (Box 5.6k).

---

5   http://www.bestpractices.org/cgi-bin/bp98.cgi?cmd=detail&id=18361&key=ElAtyrkbfah

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Boc 5.6k: One Woman, Two Trees: Planting Trees for Improving Living Conditions, Morocco

Deforestation was a serious problem in Morocco. The progressive denudation of the country had led to desertification, which undermined the agricultural productivity of the land. This project describes an initiative of an NGO in Morocco with the aid of a governmental agency which aimed to plant around one million trees in Rabat and its vicinity by women to combat the problems of deforestation and desertification in Morocco. Other partners were involved in the project such as school children, school supervisors and handicapped children. As a result of the project, school children have developed an awareness of environmental issues.

Women from Maghreban Forum for Environment and Development organised an information campaign on deforestation. The group mobilised women and financiers to initiate a tree-planting project. A tree-planting project was launched to create and protect green spaces and to integrate environmental issues into formal and informal education. Five hundred women participated in planting trees in public areas and at schools throughout the Rabat metropolitan area. In the primary schools, the school children were responsible for planting and nurturing the trees. Handicapped children also participated in the plantation activities organised by the group.

The day after the inauguration in Rabat, the Forum organised a similar event in Benslimane, a small village adjacent of the capital, in order to launch the rural phase of the tree-planting project. Each woman in the rural area was encouraged to plant two trees - one for fuelwood and one for the enhancement of green space. This had symbolic as well as practical significance.   Many trees were planted in the cities and rural areas of Morocco. The project raised consciousness among women and others in the participating communities.

</div>

5.6.2 Water

Timing, quantum and duration of water supply affect women's work in the homes more than men's work. If the timing of water supply is at night or during her work hours this affects a woman's ability to work and earn. The quantum and duration of water affects her ability to complete her household work and the health of the entire family. Policies that only look at increasing water supply and do not adequately address the issue of untreated waste water will result in increased water pollution.

- Quantum, duration, timing and water quality are the four critical factors in planning water supply delivery. Women should be involved in the planning and monitoring of water supply systems in communities, as they are the primary users of water in communities for domestic consumption.
- A community-wide approach is needed to deal with urban environmental management issues in a community with women involved at every stage.
- The link between gender, waste management, water management and livelihoods needs to be assessed, recognized and policies put into place where the health and safety of those involved are ensured.
- Partnerships between women and local government have been shown to be most successful in the maintenance of water resources. (Box 5.6l)

Box 5.6I: Piped Supplies for Small Communities in Malawi

The Piped Supplies for Small Communities (PSSC) Project started in 1988 to address the lack of water supply service in the peri-urban communities by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Community Services and the Centre for Social Research of the University of Malawi together with the Water Department of the Ministry of Works. At the community level, community representatives joined Central Water Councils, whose function was to assist in mobilizing communities, selection of sites for construction of water points and generally support operation of tap committees and monitoring operation and maintenance activities.

The institutional structure formed by the Project Working Team (Ministry representatives), the Project Team at implementation level (1 project officer of each of the three Ministries), the Local project Coordinating Teams (field staff and government extension workers and one university representative), Auxiliary Project Committees (with regional and district ministry representatives); Central Water Councils in each demonstration centre and formed by community representatives (members of parliament, party leaders, councilors, chiefs and village headmen); Tap Committees (at each water point, communities elect a ten-member committee to manage operation and maintenance activities directly answerable to the Central Water councils).

In Malawi one aspect that soon became clear was the need to tackle the relationships between men and women in water management. Initially, 80 to 90 percent of the water committees were men who were not performing satisfactorily, as most men were outside the neighborhoods during the day. Not consulting women during planning also resulted in poor location, inconvenient design and subsequent wrong use of the water points. To increase women's involvement in the management of water points, a new strategy was developed: (1) guidance of the committees to ensure free participation during voting for committee members; (2) development of positive attitudes of men to the involvement of women; (3) separate consultation of women during meetings: (4) use of male and female extension workers; (5) involvement of women in design and location of the communal water points. The results were encouraging. More women occupied key positions in the committees. Special training programmes were organized for women, which aimed at increasing their leadership/management capacities. The committees became more active, membership of the water points improved, as well as financial management and maintenance of the water point surroundings.

The intervention succeeded in raising the percentage of women in tap committees to over 90%. These committees became more active due to the women's constant presence and direct interest. With appropriate training, women gained self-confidence and became effective managers of the communal water points, including their operation and the maintenance. One major factor contributing to the sustainability is that the communities play a bigger role in the maintenance of the water supply system. These schemes have been successfully developed in nine urban centers in five regions of the country. There has also been a remarkable improvement in community financial management with the result that all tap committees have big surpluses which are kept in bank accounts to be used for maintenance. Through a series of training courses for Tap Committees and local leaders, and for project staff, cadres of skilled people have been developed to sustain community based water management in the absence of donor funding.

5.6.2: Livelihoods

For poor women, self-employed women and women in the informal sector the lack of access and control over resources and to finance and credit is a major problem. Many are

in debt and pay exploitative interest rates. Women do not have the required experience, self-confidence, nor can they meet the regulations and procedures of the formal financial institutions to obtain credit from them.   Increased access to financial resources enables women to earn a higher income, have control over their money, integrates them into the economy (Box 5.6m) [6].

Box 5.6m: Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Bank:
Women's self-help for poverty alleviation

SEWA, Ahmedabad was established in 1971. In turn, bout 4,000 self-employed women formed the Shri Mahila SEWA Sahakari Bank in 1974 as a cooperative bank to provide credit to self-employed women, empower them and reduce their indebtedness. Qualified managers hired by the Board professionally run the bank and its operations are supervised by the Reserve Bank of India.

Initially the SEWA Bank concentrated on attracting deposits from self-employed women. It next served as an intermediary between nationalized banks and the poor to get loans. Thus 6,000 members received nearly Rs 25,00,000 in credit at a low 4 percent interest rate through SEWA's lobbying. In 1976, the SEWA Bank began giving loans to its depositors from its own funds. Today it has lent 100 million rupees to 22,538 poor women for economic activities. Women are encouraged to save with the bank and register their savings account and assets in their own name. Members themselves apply for loans, usually unsecured, or through the bank's field staff. The bank processes the application through a loan committee by carefully reviewing the applicant's income-generating ability, financial status, soundness of working conditions and ability to repay. There are no subsidies or grants. The Bank borrows and lends at market rates. It provides loans with a repayment period of three years for *productive* purposes such as for working capital, buying tools of trade and capital investments like a house, a store or work space.

The first step is to extend bank credit to highly indebted women to end their indebtedness. Once a woman is free from exorbitant interest rates, the second step is to use her new credit productively to generate more income to repay the bank loan and build up working capital. Before borrowing, while repaying and after repayment, SEWA encourages its members to save. Around 10 per cent of women face difficulties in repayment, especially in times of crises. SEWA has learned that support rather than harassment strengthens the Bank's image as a friend of the poor and results in better repayment and is flexible in rescheduling installments at these times.

The SEWA Bank breaks the vicious circle of indebtedness and dependence on middlemen and traders, and increases women's bargaining power. They can organize themselves into cooperatives and develop the skills and confidence necessary to deal with formal and non formal institutions. Gradually, members are trained in banking and this inculcates a sense of thrift. The SEWA Bank provides a parallel flexible banking infrastructure to serve the self-employed and the small businesses. A large number of members now have their own hand-carts, sewing machines, looms and working tools. Many have upgraded their skills, developed more business and increased their income.

---

[6]   Source: http: cwis.usc.edu/dept/elab/oconnell/sewa.html

It enables women to acquire adequate shelter and space for production and storage, their own tools and other means of production and to upgrade their skills and improve their businesses. It builds self-esteem and self-confidence among women, improves their health, nutrition and education, raises their status in their communities, increases entrepreneurship among the women, builds individual and collective capital, and promotes assets creation.

Of late initiatives have begun to increase grassroots women's access to markets as one means of improving livelihoods. This too requires capacity building on the part of poor women to develop the skills to understand the market and then produce based on that understanding. Such initiatives also aim to develop market resilience among the poor so that while globalization and urbanization may result in rapidly changing markets women will have the skills to change as the markets change.

Overall community based initiatives need to be multi-pronged in their approaches to development. A successful partnership model with government can be illustrated by the case of BRAC[7] in Bangladesh, one the largest community based organizations in the world, in the enormous resources it brings to its negotiations with government (Box 5.6n). However this document illustrates how grassroots organizations on smaller scale have also brought quality and innovation to development initiatives and processes, especially in partnership with local government.

---

[7]   http://www.bestpractices.org/cgi-bin/bp98.cgi?cmd=detail&id=20113&key=Elnakfjgbc

Box 5.6n: BRAC, Dhaka Bangladesh

Bangladesh achieved liberation through armed struggle in 1971. BRAC started as a relief organization in 1972 but after a year realized that relief and reconstruction-oriented activities could serve only as stopgap measures for development. Thus in early 1973 BRAC adopted the community development approach. Finding the outcome of this approach unsatisfactory, as the poor was exploited by the rural elite, BRAC adopted the 'target group approach' to development in 1976. One hundred women from households, either landless or owning less than half-an-acre of land and at least one of their members selling manual labor for not less than 100 days a year, are targeted for development through the mobilization of people into village organizations (VOs).

A Village Organisation (VO), with 35-40 poor female members, is the nuclei for all BRAC development activities. The VOs hold a microfinance transaction related to weekly meeting and a monthly meeting dealing mainly with the socioeconomic problems/developments of the members/villages. The VO initiatives are channeled through management, social action and law implementation committees. These are elected committees from among the members for a fixed tenure. The objectives of VOs are:
- Make proper use of locally available resources.
- Take up programs to create employment and increase income of members.
- Make available the locally available government facilities to the members.
- Create awareness, protest and oppose against illegal, unethical and unsocial practices in the village
- Participate in ongoing and introduced social activities in the village
- Play a leading role in the power structure of the village.

Two major goals of BRAC are to alleviate poverty and empower the poor. BRAC works with the people whose lives are dominated by extreme poverty, illiteracy, disease and other handicaps, especially women and children. BRAC is committed to making its programs socially, financially, and environmentally sustainable using new methods and technologies. BRAC firmly believes and is actively involved in promoting human rights and dignity, and gender equity. To achieve these BRAC strives to bring about change in macro-level policy environment.

The Government Oraganisations-BRAC collaboration has variety of implications in the development initiatives. BRAC is increasingly participating in the government's development planning and implementation. For example, BRAC represented the National Steering Committee for Extended Program on Immunization (EPI). Through this representation BRAC assists Government in formulating an EPI for Bangladesh. Joint ventures are often taken by Government and BRAC based on their strengths and weaknesses. For example, in EPI BRAC is in charge of mobilizing villagers for immunization whereas government staff immunizes them.

The VOs in achieving their objectives not only come in contact but also influences the decision making process of the local communities, organizations and institutions'. For example, the members often participate in the village out-of-court settlement of disputes and influences its verdict based on their legal education received from BRAC.

Box 5.6n: BRAC, Dhaka Bangladesh

With the passage of time Government and donors increasingly acknowledged the effectiveness of BRAC in reaching the poor thus eradicating their poverty. These observations concomitantly led to the scaling up of cooperation between the government and BRAC in variety of areas including education, health and fisheries.

Realizing the urgent needs of the poor in Bangladesh, BRAC, however, felt that credit without education and health care was an insufficient intervention. As such, BRAC initiated Health, Nutrition and Population Programs in 1973 and a Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) program in 1985. Thus BRAC switched from minimalist to maximalist approach to development believing that underdevelopment was a multi-faced problem to be combated from all directions.

BRAC has set up an NGO Co-operation Unit (NCU) with an objective of developing synergistic relationship between BRAC and other local NGOs. As of 2000 a total of 74 NGOs received support from NCU to run credit programs and NFPE schools were given to 303 NGOs. Besides, a good number of NGOs also adopted BRAC's model with or without BRAC's help in Bangladesh and in a number of countries in South Asia and Africa.

BRAC has always taken a holistic approach to poverty reduction that is reflected in the breadth of its programmes. BRAC's Development Programme addresses the socio-economic development of underprivileged rural women through access to credit, capacity development, savings mobilization, institution building and awareness raising. The Education Programme provides for the unique needs of the children of poor families while the Health and Population Programme addresses the health and nutritional status of women and children at the national and community

VI. Innovative Global Strategies to Engender Governance: The Huairou Commission Global Campaigns

Thus examining the different global initiatives that strengthen the innovations of grassroots women in historical context would help to harvest the lessons learnt from each campaign and show how each has built on the last campaign.

Global campaigns of the Huairou Commission include:
- Our Best Practices Campaign (2000-2002)
- Learning from the Best: Documentation, Exchange and Training Campaigns (Grassroots Women's International Academies) to Upscale Grassroots Women's Initiatives.
- Women Organize to Strengthen Local Governance: Local to Local Dialogues (2003-4).

6.1. The Huairou Commission Our Best Practices Campaign (2000-2002)[8]

---

[8]   This section draws on the document *Advancing Governance through Peer Learning and Networking: Lessons from Grassroots Women* by Monika Jaeckel published by Best Practices Foundation for the Huairou Commission, 2002.

The Huairou Commission (HC) launched its Our Best Practices Campaign[ix] (OBPC) in 1999, a three year effort that harvested community building practices all over the world. The HC celebrated and made visible the remarkable contributions grassroots women make to their communities.

The Huairou Commission joined the Steering Committee of the UN Habitat Best Practices and Lessons Learnt (BPLL) Program in 1998. In reviewing the 1998 cycle and again in 2000 it came to the conclusion that the program was not generating a critical mass of engendered practices nor was the Technical Advisory Committee and Jury for the Dubai International Awards sufficiently gender sensitive, so as to ensure adequate representation of grassroots women's practices. Instead there was a bias towards large-scale infrastructural programs.

The Our Best Practices Campaign was launched as a tool to identify and document grassroots solutions, to inform policy. It is a means to strengthen the flow of innovations from grassroots to policy makers, to expand options by sharing grassroots knowledge and to make the work of grassroots women both visible and influential in public policy.

As a first step, the Huairou Commission organised an International Task Force to examine the methods for documenting the experiences of women's collectives. In this process grassroots women's groups drew up the criteria to benchmark their practices. This resulted in the Our Best Practices Indicators (Box 6.1a). Task force meetings were combined with peer exchanges between grassroots organizations.

For the first time through the campaign a global effort was made to take seriously the everyday knowledge and practical solutions created by grassroots women. The two key areas of concern, namely local governance and community participation, of the United Nations and the HC were focused on in this campaign.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;">

Box 6.1a: Our Best Practices Indicators

- Practices that empower women,
- Practices where grassroots women take on leadership roles in the development of communities,
- Practices which recognize everyday experiences of grassroots women as expertise,
- Practices that incorporate seeds of change and transformation of the status quo,
- Practices that contribute to a redistribution and re-channeling of resources to the grassroots level,
- Practices that allow grassroots women's collectives to own the ideas they have developed as well as the tools by which they are disseminated,
- Practices which contribute to centre staging grassroots women in the community,
- Practices which create solutions that strengthen the entire community,
- Practices which advance women's participation and leadership in decision making and governance,
- Practices which claim space and resources for women,
- Practices that have the potential for replicability,
- Practices which sustain transformation,
- Practices that build win-win partnerships with institutional actors,
- Practices that support grassroots culture and support systems,
- Practices that engage in building horizontal alliances and developing a critical mass of actors who can impact policies and local development agendas,
- Practices that break social and political barriers, creating new spaces and rules, and transforming vertical structures,
- Practices that create a supportive culture of learning among grassroots women,

</div>

Involving grassroots groups in describing the best practice became a capacity building tool, offering the organizations reflection and ownership over their expertise. Outreach to universities and academia to help document their practices, allowed best practices to become a tool for action research and for building partnerships between grassroots groups and academic institutions. The Campaign also arranged for sharing and peer learning thus allowing the best practices process to become a peer learning, transfer and networking tool. The visibility accorded to the best practice, naming of its expertise and linking it to mainstream debates, made the best practices campaign a tool for partnerships and negotiation with mainstream actors. This overall experience led to the formulation of the Our Best Practices Principles (Box 6.1b).

Box 6.1b Our Best Practices Principles

1. Diversity: The Huairou Commission recognises and respects diversity among women, which is seen as a source of richness and resources. For this reason, the effort of gathering women's practices is happening throughout the globe. In each region the members of the Huairou Commission are trying to reach diverse women, incorporate their particular approaches and solutions to everyday problems and challenges.

2. Building Knowledge: Documentation of Our Best Practices is meant to be in itself a process of empowerment for those women who are developing the experience. Women interested in sharing their experience should also learn from the process of documenting it. The documentation of the experience (with or without external support) is an opportunity to reflect on how we are doing things, what our visions are and what empowers us, what is working for women and what is not, what are ways in which women learn, what sustains women's networks, who are our partners and in what circumstances.

3. Participation: One of the important things that make Our Best Practices different is participation. Participation is a value that needs to be enhanced and promoted in all our efforts. Gathering information in an inclusive and participatory manner, looking at our experiences from the point of view of all the people involved, deciding together how to present the experience, is important.

4. Sharing: The idea of documenting Our Best Practices is meant to enhance sharing among women, and to foster mutual capacity building in face-to-face exchanges, peer learning and transfer systems. It is important that grassroots women be initiators of their own information sharing and horizontal and vertical transfers rather than receivers and beneficiaries of trainings, programs and capacity building of the "Development Industry".

5. Ownership: The experiences documented are the practices of those who carry them out. The inclusion of these experiences in publications, data bases, conferences and other channels of communication and transfer will respect this ownership and create favourable conditions for grassroots participation and ownership in dissemination and implementation processes.

6. Empowerment and Global Learning: The Huairou Commission looks at the process of documenting Our Best Practices as a means for providing CBOs with tools for their empowerment and as part of a process of global learning. Women are acting locally, but are also building strong connections and networks at a global level to put value on indigenous expertise, to validate and legitimize women's ways of knowing and doing, to monitor the framing and interpretation of women's experiences and initiatives and to ensure that benefits come back to the groups that helped in the process of identifying, gathering and making known what women are doing.

7. Respectful Partnerships: Respectful relationships and partnerships for the documentation and dissemination of Our Best Practices are a way of bringing together our strength and that of our alliances. This includes careful consideration of the conditions and principles needed for sustainable partnerships.

6.2 Grassroots Women's International Academies[9]

The OBP campaign was taken a step further to a peer learning model by the Grassroots Women's International Academy (GWIA) conducted as a series of 4 one week workshops as part of the EXPO 2000 in Germany, where 42 grassroots women's projects from around the world presented their work in a training format, 20 of which were from the OBP campaign. GWIA was produced by the National Association of German Mother Centers in cooperation with the Huairou Commission.   A second Grassroots Women´s International Academy (GWIA) was held in New York end of May 2001 to deepen the learnings from these practices in preparation. for Istanbul plus five. GWIA at Istanbul plus 5 focussed on the policy implications of selected Our Best Practices and the lessons learned from exchanges and transfers that were a result of the campaign and the Expo 2000 workshops.

The GWIAs were a unique experience where grassroots women's groups from around the world presented their best practices and the underlying skills and strategies in the format of trainings. The success of grassroots women's initiatives is grounded in their ability to build alliances and share their knowledge at the local level, regionally and globally. The Grassroots Women's International Academy is designed as a platform for direct encounter and exchange as well as for interaction with mainstream stakeholders.

GWIA is unique in that it is the grassroots women's groups who are the ones owning and teaching their knowledge, unlike formal educational institutions where women are seen as recipients of capacity building, never as teachers. GWIA thus ensures that the innovators of solutions from the ground also be the ones articulating, naming, claiming and transferring their knowledge.

GWIA is not a workshop, conference or seminar, it is a hands on learning format to transfer successful practices and knowledge. By teaching their methods, analysis and lessons learned in a curriculum and training format, GWIA presentations enable groups from other regions and other continents to concretely understand the practices and thus adapt them to their own work in their own social and cultural settings. Mainstream planning and decision-making is informed by extracting the political and legislative reforms implied and the institutional challenges and innovations required.

An integral part of GWIA focuses on building partnerships with mainstream actors, especially government. This is done through interactive joint problem solving sessions between grassroots women's groups and partners from government, international agencies, churches, academia, foundations as well as the private sector. The academies thus contribute to understanding the issues and challenges that are better dealt with in partnerships with grassroots organisations. The roles which partners can play both in sustaining and up-scaling grassroots practices are jointly defined. The key elements of the Grassroots Women´s International Academies are detailed in Box 6.2.

---

[9]   This section draws on the document *Advancing Governance through Peer Learning and Networking: Lessons from Grassroots Women* by Monika Jaeckel published by Best Practices Foundation for the Huairou Commission, 2002.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ **Box 6.2: Key elements in the Grassroots Women´s International Academies (GWIA)** │
│                                                                       │
│   •  Inducing individual and collective self reflection and assessment of motivations, │
│      resources and capacities, strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and barriers, goals │
│      and visions, methods and strategies, successes and failures, individual and group │
│      conflicts and processes, individual and collective support structures, internal and │
│      external profiles, communication structures and co-operation and collaboration │
│      styles.                                                          │
│                                                                       │
│   •  Recognising that issues grassroots women face worldwide are related and that their │
│      strategies to confront these issues are also related. Mirroring each others strengths │
│      and challenges as well as inspiring innovative thinking and new strategies. │
│                                                                       │
│   •  Producing and securing a grassroots knowledge base to enrich each others practices │
│      as well as to inform legislation and policies. Creating visibility, recognition and │
│      acknowledgement for grassroots knowledge and practices. Extending the scope and │
│      influence of grassroots learnings and expertise. Controlling the teachings and │
│      dissemination of grassroots knowledge and practices. │
│                                                                       │
│   •  Creating transfer and up-scaling of grassroots practices from one group to another, │
│      one region to another, and one continent to another as in the case of the German │
│      Mother Centers, that have meanwhile spread into 15 countries and 4 continents or in │
│      the case of the Indian Saving and Credit groups, a strategy that has spread from the │
│      South to grassroots women's groups in the North. │
│                                                                       │
│   •  Creating dialogues with partners from other sectors of society in a direct and │
│      unfiltered form and allowing for a process between grassroots and mainstream │
│      partners to understand what makes sustainable partnerships, and when respective │
│      partnerships work and when they do not. │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

6.3. The Local to Local Dialogues (2001-4)[x]

Forged by Huairou Commission and GROOTS International, the local to local dialogues
represents an innovative global strategy grounded in local action. It is a method by which
organizations engage in an on-going dialogue with local authorities to forge sustainable
development. The Huairou Commission implemented the project through its global
networks, GROOTS International, HIC Women and Shelter, International Council of
Women (ICW), Women and Peace, Women Environment and Development Organization
(WEDO), International Women and Cities Network.

The local-to-local dialogue is a methodology where according to Achola P. Okeyo[10],
dialogues become the means to open up channels of policy discussion for grassroots
communities while at the same time amplifying an understanding of why gender matters,
why participation is key to local decision-making and how democracy can be achieved in
a very practical way on a common forum where anyone can have an idea about what

---

[10]   *Status Report On Engendering Governance. Local To Local Dialogues* By Achola P. Okeyo,
UNDP, February, 2002.

needs to be done to solve common problems in a conflict free way. This methodology and global strategy has been analysed one by one below.

The Asia Women and Shelter Network (AWAS) pioneered the Local to Local Dialogues tool between community groups and local authorities in three countries in Asia – India, Malaysia and Nepal (UN Habitat, 2004). See Boxes 8.2a, 8.2b, 8.2c and 8.2d.

Box 6.3a Women and Reconstruction in India, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, India

When a devastating earthquake struck Maharashtra in India in 1993, killing close to 10,000 people and destroying over 50 villages and damaging homes in 1200 villages, the Government was thrown into crisis. In the state-led reconstruction program that followed, women's collectives supported by Swayam Shikshan Prayog, worked with district authorities to disseminate information on entitlements, increase access to entitlements and on repair and strengthening of houses using earthquake-safe technology. The women also learned construction and were able to monitor the implementation of the World Bank funded Government's repair and strengthening program. The Government was forced to acknowledge that women were key partners who had improved the effectiveness of the reconstruction program through information dissemination, monitoring and providing feedback to officials, and preventing corruption.

The first partnership in India illustrates grassroots women's roles in monitoring and information dissemination towards improving people's participation while the next is an instance of actual implementation of government programmes by grassroots women.

Box 6.3b: Toilets in Indian Cities: SPARC, India

The National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan (MM), supported by an NGO called SPARC (Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers), have been working in Mumbai and other cities in India for over a decade to address the problem of sanitation for the urban poor. NSDF found that despite a dire need for toilets by women in slums, existing toilets become unusable. This is because sanitation solutions designed by the government without the input of communities is unviable. In the city of Pune, a partnership between the municipal government, NGOs and community-based organizations has built more than 400 community toilet blocks, demonstrating the potential of municipal-community partnerships to improve conditions for the poor. Some women community leaders took on contracts themselves and managed the whole construction process, supported by engineers and architects from SPARC. As one leader, Savita Sonawane noted, "In the beginning we did not know what a drawing or a plinth was. We did not understand what a foundation was or how to do the plastering. But as we went along, we learnt more and more and now we can build toilets with our eyes closed." Over time, these women's groups gained confidence monitoring quality and costs. This program reconfigured relationships between local government and civil society where the capacity of community organizations to develop their own solutions was recognized.

Box 6.3c: Women and the Changing City in Penang, Malaysia

In George Town, Penang the Control of Rent Act protected inner city communities in 10,000 pre-1940 buildings from market forces. The repeal of the Control of Rent Act has resulted in many households facing rental hikes and evictions. In addition, the plan to restore the community market also threatens traditional livelihoods of residents. The Penang Heritage Trust (PHT) undertook the Local to Local Dialogues to explore how women were affected by these changes and how local government can improve quality of life and opportunities for women. The first phase of the Dialogues consisted of dialogues with stakeholders from community and government resulting in broad recommendations and concrete proposals for follow up action which included not removing the community market. Politicians and bureaucrats were compelled to recognize that maintenance of community amenities were necessary to support the government's vision of a 'living heritage city'. The Dialogue highlighted the needs for special populations i.e. the disabled, elderly and very young for attitudinal and technical requirements of providing an enabling environment. Corruption in processing social housing applications was being monitored by the communities. Overall, the inter-relatedness of urban issues was clear. Accessible design, heritage conservation, public safety, social housing and improved security of tenure, better community amenities, could be improved with more community feedback, bottom-up planning and public participation in decision-making.

This dialogue emphasized the fact that whatever the starting point, in this case heritage, the interrelatedness of issues in local communities require holistic integrated solutions[11].

Box 6.3d: Securing the right to live in the city, Kathmandu, Nepal

The Local to Local Dialogues process initiated by LUMANTI in Kathmandu was divided into two phases: the preparation of Family Identity Cards and a workshop. The family identity cards of the squatter families were prepared by the Womens' Federation (Nepal Mahila Ekta Samaj) and Squatters' Federation (Nepal Basobas Basti Sanrakshan Samaj) and jointly issued to squatters by the Mayor of KMC -- a historical breakthrough as it meant that the city recognized the rights of squatters as citizens, thus providing them with a form of secure tenure. The workshop addressed women's priorities w.r.t. safe and secure housing, strategies to address this, roles and responsibilities of government, NGOs and communities towards solutions. Officials from Kathmandu Metropolitan Council (KMC) recognized that they needed community inputs in policy to ensure that that implementation will directly benefit the poor. The Dialogues brought to the attention of local authorities that one prerequisite of good governance is recognition of all inhabitants as true citizens and problem solvers of key urban problems. The provision of identity cards was a way to recognize poor communities as legitimate citizens who have a key role in problem solving.

These initiatives show that on going dialogues between local government and communities have resulted in workable solutions for both. Seeing the success of the AWAS led dialogues, the Huairou Commission decided to take the strategy of Local to

---

[11]   These initiatives were funded by The Good Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI).
        The Local to Local Dialogue in Malaysia was undertaken jointly by Penang Heritage Trust with support from the Asia West Pacific Network for Urban Conservation (AWPNUC).

Local Dialogues to grassroots women's groups in other parts of the world to encourage these groups to test out their abilities to collaborate with and influence local authorities. The six organizations and their initiatives in the Local to Local Dialogues are listed in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Organizations and Initiatives in the Local to Local Dialogues		
Location	NGO	Focus
Kenya	GROOTS Kenya	GROOTS Kenya facilitated a process through which slum communities identified questions of infrastructure, security, they wanted to address in collaboration with authorities.
Russia	Information Center of Independent Women's Forum (ICIWF)	ICIWF is concerned with how to find ways to strengthen the resource base, information base and build capacities of women to create safe neighborhoods and find ways to improve and maintain community infrastructure.
Argentina	Center of Services and Exchange for the Southern Cone (CISCSA)	CISCSA is working with four community-based organizations (Family Community Market, Council of Neighborhood Centers, the Women's Council, and the Cosquín River Commission) to collectively create a plan for sustainable use of the resources from the Cosquín River.
Tanzania	Women Advancement Trust (WAT)	Two groups supported by WAT worked to negotiate with local authorities to reclaim collectively purchased land and gain legal status for their group.
Czech Republic	Mother Centers	The Mother Centers organized a campaign with local authorities, the media and schools to get the city to fund a playground for children.
Uganda	Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE)	FOWODE organized a workshop for elected women and communities to help women set priorities and identify strategies to address settlement problems.

The local dimension here is that it *enables local communities to use their own diversity creatively to solve local administrative and development management problems.*[12] Some groups have effectively negotiated resources and begun work while others have begun the process and have managed to get commitments from the local governments towards change. For details on each of the current dialogues see Appendix 1.

The dialogues highlight the four key areas that grassroots women must address in their negotiations with state actors:

- Collective Action: The power of collective action and negotiation for the grassroots here cannot be over emphasized vis-à-vis state actors. Having a critical mass of grassroots women participating also helps demonstrate the viability of

---

[12] *Status Report On Engendering Governance. Local To Local Dialogues* By Achola P. Okeyo, UNDP, February, 2002.

particular solutions to the state. Mobilization is also needed to build confidence, capacities and build consensus and ownership on issues and solutions.

- Capacity Building: the dialogue itself is a site for learning for the grassroots of negotiation skills, planning skills, manage and monitor resources, disseminate and manage information. Peer learning and sharing is a means to consolidation and ownership of knowledge.
- Building Alliances: this builds in accountability from officials with their constituencies and simultaneously strengthens institutions legitimacy and capacities to run programmes due to the more participation. Planning by institutions and communities jointly helps ground programmes and formally acknowledges women's needs. It allows the support of insiders and also allows women to monitor and feedback information on how programmes work on the ground to the state.
- Demonstrating Capacities: Here through pilots capacities where women's capacities are used and made visible, support for upscaling and mainstreaming with the state can be built.

VII. Roles Played by Grassroots Women in Governance

Community based organizations play a variety of roles in development and consequently in governance. These include monitoring local services, gender sensitization and mainstreaming gender concerns among others. Local governments are increasingly recognizing the roles played by community-based organizations.

Existing roles of Grassroots Organizations and networks in promoting governance towards the goal of poverty alleviation include[13]:

- ➤ **Planning:** Joint planning initiatives with community based organizations and government help both sides understand each other right from the onset. Grassroots groups understand government constraints and resources in terms of availability of resources, times lines, assumptions, eligibility criteria for programmes and funds, types of programmes available and so on. Government can also better understand the real needs of the community.
- ➤ **Monitoring:** A certain percentage of funds in local governments in some countries are either allocated to women or to marginalized groups or to low income populations. For example 30% of local government funds in India are supposed to be earmarked for women and in Philippines, 5% are earmarked for women and development. Bantay Banay, Philippines, tries to monitor this 5% wherever it works. It trains women on local government services. An Inter-Agency Coordination Council (IACC) coordinates and collaborates among its members and represents the community. Partners involved include the police, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), LGUs, NGOs and

---

[13]   Sangeetha Purushothaman and Monika Jaeckel, *Engendering Development and Governance: Grassroots Women's Our Best Practices* on behalf of The Huairou Commission from the Our Best Practices Campaign supported by the UNDP, Books for Change: Bangalore, May 2001.

other private sector actors demonstrating the inclusive nature of women's organizing.

- ➢ **Convergence: Collaboration Across Sectors and Departments:** The inter relatedness of issues in women's lives have resulted in the need for cross sectoral multi-issues based solutions. Solutions created by them have therefore drawn upon *diverse sectors*. In Bantay Banay, government agencies from different sectors and stake holders (health, social welfare, religious, police, law and private sectors to name a few) collaborated with communities to provide a range of services for victims' families. This builds the buy-in and support to grassroots women from actors in other sectors as well as gets them to appreciate and understand the contributions made by grassroots women.

- ➢ **Gender Sensitization, Mainstreaming and Institutionalizing Gender Concerns:** Institutionalizing and mainstreaming women's concerns has resulted in changing educational curriculums, increasing budgetary allocations to address women's needs, increasing the number of women on electoral and decision-making bodies and increased opportunities for women in educational institutions, training and in employment.

- ➢ **Channel Into Politics: Building Leadership:** Organizations in the south and the north act as feeders for women to participate in the public sphere. Grassroots organization facilitate the entry of the poor and women into local politics through organizing them into collectives. In the CBOs, while women individually become more active, the CBOs also help strengthen their collective voice in the community. This channel into politics not only engenders local governance but provides a grassroots culture.

- ➢ **Creating an Alternative Development Voice:** By creating a dialogue forum and by bringing in other actors into this dialogue grassroots women are able to generate an alternative voice to top down development by providing solutions and alternatives that include a range of perspectives.

- ➢ **Building Capacities to Govern:** Through local initiatives such as building leadership skills within grassroots community based organizations to national roles played by national initiatives where grassroots networks influence policies and structures towards mainstreaming their problems and solutions, at all levels the capacities to govern are being built by grassroots organizations and their networks.

- ➢ **Engendering and Democratising Institutions of Governance and Civil Society:** Post-socialist societies and societies with histories of military rule, typically have weak civil societies. Part of reweaving a new civil society fabric is to imbibe values and practices of tolerance, trust, acceptance of difference, celebration of diversity and cooperation among its members. Grassroots networks and organizations imbibe this culture by practice, modelling it for governments. They represent a new type of civil society, which is community-based and women-led. Inclusion of children at a very young age teaches them to participate and learn the value of a rich civil society. It simultaneously enables women, youth and the larger community to unlearn totalitarian or top down practices of previous regimes helping them overcome internalized fears and assert themselves. These are training grounds for dialogue across different opinions and dealing with

local authorities. Even in historically democratic countries like Germany, the Mother Centers play this role of teaching historically excluded populations to participate in public spheres. These values are constantly being learned and constitute basic elements of democratic participation of a citizenry.

➢ **Engendering Leadership:** Grassroots women have changed the very definition of leadership and therefore of governance. New elements of leadership from grassroots women perspective include:

- Center staging women: Women's inclusive style of work brings different stakeholders and their perspectives into the process fostering more flexibility and creativity.
- Multi-faceted leadership characterizes women-led organizations. Organizations have different leaders representing them or the leadership is rotated over a period of time.
- Leadership as a Learned not Innate Trait: Leadership can be fostered in everyone and that all people need the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and capacities. Female leadership is intrinsically non-hierarchical and diametrically opposed to the idea that there can be only one leader and everyone else must act as followers. Leadership is seen as a process whose elements are *support, training and nurturing* of women's myriad capacities. Bringing women into local government especially requires a variety of inputs, which can be learned.
- Leadership for Empowerment: Leadership is also linked to women's *empowerment*. To build women's capacities as leaders in business and government, women's organizations train and support women to take on these challenges. Leadership empowers grassroots women by validating existing strengths from their *daily experiences*.
- Multi-faceted leadership: Grassroots women leaders act as *administrator, teacher, community organizer rolled into one*. Recognizing the myriad roles women leaders are capable of playing nurturing their practical organizational skills, placing them in their roles as leaders in the community as well as knowledge-givers are all seen as part of nurturing leadership.
- Women Leaders Facilitating Other Women's Leadership: Contrary to the myth that women are women's worst enemies and unlike men who compete there are many examples of women leaders promoting other women's leadership. The Uganda Women's Caucus, is an outstanding example of this type of transmission of opportunities for women.
- Non-Partisan leadership: Women's organizations take clear non partisan stands which helps retain their autonomy and independence in decision making fora.
- Leaders taking care of everyone: Leadership qualities among grassroots women include not just taking care of their constituency, kin or party but *taking care of everyone*. A leadership talent also rooted in competencies developed by motherhood relates to making sure that everyone in the community has the chance to contribute. Mothers encourage the best in all their children and bring out their individual strengths. Leadership of this kind

is not polarizing nor is it about building enemies. It is about *building alliances across differences* and celebrating a community's diversity and strengths associated with that diversity. *Collaborative not confrontational* leadership characterizes these movements.

- Collective Leadership is a tool of empowerment where grassroots women emerge as leaders through collective sharing and action.
- Self-defined and recognized: Women learn to identify their own strengths and voices and choose for themselves areas where they wish to take leadership.
- Issue based leadership: different issues are spear headed by different women leaders which broadens the base of leaders and brings out women's different talents and celebrates diversity.

Engendered leadership thus is not about public spokesmanship and charisma but about honesty, patience and accountability, qualities to be nurtured in leaders. It is about spending funds for their designated purpose, helping everyone get an equal chance to access funds and information and taking care of everyone's needs. It is acknowledging that every individual has strengths and in that capacity can be a leader. In essence, leadership redefined is about the larger collective good, about fairness and about opportunity.   Leadership is thus seen as a process whose elements include support, training and nurturing of women's myriad capacities.

VIII. Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women: Need for Grassroots Inputs

National machineries for the advancement of women have been established in several countries which include National Ministries or Departments or Commissions for Women. These mechanisms tend to be marginalized within government structures and often are created without the powers or the finances needed to deal with the scope and range of issues that get tabled in front of them. The lack of effectiveness of these national mechanisms is also a direct function of the distance between these mechanisms and the needs and reach to the grassroots. International and regional mechanisms and institutions suffer from the same weaknesses. However these national regional and international mechanisms pay an important role in policy and advocacy of women's issues at macro levels. Simultaneously, the distance from the grassroots is also reflected in the lack of a grassroots perspective in the policies advocated. There is an important implication here for government grassroots partnerships where the grassroots women's organizations can play an important role in monitoring the implementation and impact of policies and programmes on the ground.

Legislation, public policies and programmes need to have a gender analysis conducted on the issue prior to passage or implementation. Here again grassroots women's inputs are crucial to the gender analysis and in the monitoring and impact assessment of the implementation of policies and programmes on the poor and especially on poor women.

Generation of gender disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation. Here all major government departments need to collect their data ensuring that it can be

disaggregated by gender, age and income. However it is equally important that grassroots women be asked what kinds of data would be useful for them to have and for their work and to improve their lives. This type of data should be collected by census and other statistical bodies, to ensure the usefulness of information collected to different user groups. Also existing data could be useful to the grassroots but developing mechanisms by which the grassroots can access such data and building their capacities to do so would be important. This would require also a demystification of the data presentation and analysis methods, the simplification of language used, among other issues.

Gender budgeting (Box 8.1) is another institutional mechanism developed in countries like South Africa, Philippines and Australia to hold governments accountable to women.

Box 8.1: Training and Gender Budgeting:
The South African Local Government Association

South Africa's national local government Association (SALGA) aims to mainstream gender equality action through training and with an initiative to introduce gender budgeting methods. South Africa's efforts to build a healthy, efficient and effective local democracy presented a challenge to SALGA. Local government structures had broken down in many communities and many that survived were in financial difficulties. In 1995 less than 15% of local decision-makers were women and gender equality action met with cultural and social impediments.

SALGA promoted good practice, including the promotion of gender equality, and encouraged its nine provincial member Associations in their efforts to do the same. In late 1996 SALGA formed a Gender Working Group (GWG). The Group drew one member from each of the Provincial Associations, usually the Chairperson of the counterpart working group. The GWG is informed by a system of discussion.

Municipality representatives discuss issues in their provincial working groups and those groups' representatives seek to build a national consensus within the GWG. The GWG develops gender policies and devises training and capacity-building programmes. It shares information on gender equality action with all SALGA members and promotes networking on gender issues with other relevant organisations.

The GWG has devised a gender and development handbook for both elected members and officials. The training focuses particularly on developing lobbying, caucusing and communication skills among women councilors. □SALGA has cooperated with NGOs, universities and the UN Development Programme in gender budgeting action. The "South African Women's Budget Initiative" analysed the gender impacts of the South African budget. It sought to re-prioritise public expenditure, not by creating special budget heads, but by ensuring that expenditure under the usual heads reflects gender sensitive and appropriate policies. The budget initiative adopts a realistic approach to finite budgets, by not only specifying gender-sensitive expenditure and service provision targets, but by also identifying offsetting savings to pay for such measures.

In countries like India the women's component has become the instrument through which women can access a third of the resources of all programmes. However systematic

analysis showed that a lot of these funds were being returned unspent because there were built in biases, which prevented women from gaining access. For access to agricultural programmes, women have to own land, which automatically limited access. For industrial programmes government claimed no takers despite many calls and outreach efforts made to women. Training programmes would find that women's mobility did not allow them to travel for training or to stay away from domestic responsibilities for any major length of time. This was specifically true for poor women whereas women who were slightly better off have some support systems even in the form of domestic help which the poor do not have. If further analysis were done from the perspective of grassroots women it would not be surprising to find that any access that women have obtained, if at all, have been for the more privileged sectors. Thus, mechanisms that broaden the access to resources need to be specifically tailored to include grassroots women's participation.

Often times the mechanisms created by government constitute what has been referred to as hardware or what amounts to infrastructure only. Certain paradigm shifts are required in the creation of institutional mechanisms:
- Building capacities of women and providing grassroots women the support they need to overcome obstacles they face and effectively utilize these mechanisms is what will in the end breathe life into the national mechanisms and the infrastructure created.
- Building alliances and effective partnerships with the personnel manning these institutional mechanisms would be the step which would precede the provision of the capacity building and support needs of grassroots women. This is because without the partnerships in place there would not be the necessary input from the grassroots on what is required.
- The need to plan and create these mechanisms *in collaboration with* women's organizations, particularly grassroots women's organizations.

IX. Capacity Building

Table 9.1: Creating an Enabling Environment: Capacity Building vs Support Needs of Grassroots Actors		
	Capacity Building Needs	Support Needs
9.1 Overall	9.1.1. Support existing capacity building initiatives	9.1.1. Resources for existing capacity building initiatives 9.1.2. Provide the space for grassroots networks and organizations to identify future capacity building needs 9.1.3. The central goal for all capacity building initiatives should be empowerment of the grassroots
9.2. Education	9.2.1. Functional literacy and numeracy 9.2.2. Education more broadly defined including skills development 9.2.3. Education for empowerment 9.2.4. Reviving traditional knowledge systems	9.2.1. Resources for flexibly designed education programmes 9.2.2. Adequate human resources or training of trainers 9.2.3. Transportation and child care needs to attend training
9.3. Information	9.3.1. Imparting the skills to access information 9.3.2. Imparting the skills to own local knowledge 9.3.3. Information dissemination on basic human rights, 9.3.4. Legal literacy to promote democratization and equality 9.3.5. Training on policy and legal reform	9.3.1. Resources for peer exchanges and horizontal learning 9.3.2. Media oriented towards serving the needs of the grassroots 9.3.3. Space and time for face to face interaction with banks, government and grassroots actors 9.3.4. Legal frameworks that promote equality and democracy 9.3.5. Dialogue forums on policy and reforms
9.4. Gender	9.4.1. Gender sensitization programmes for community men and women, and officials of banks, government, donor agencies and policy makers	9.2.1. Programmes and policies whose explicit goal is the empowerment of women 9.2.2. Programmes and policies that mandate equal participation of men and women 9.2.3. Separate planning fora for men and women 9.2.4. Exposure visits for the poorest, especially women and the landless 9.2.5. Programmes, resources that can cater separately to needs of men and women
9.5. Governance	9.5.1. Pre-election training 9.5.2. Post election training 9.5.3. Right to information movement 9.5.4. Needs based training 9.5.5. Training for government on the need for participatory mechanisms in planning, and other participatory methodologies	9.5.1. Policies that increase the representation of the grassroots and women in all levels of government 9.5.2. Resources for campaigning for the poor and women 9.5.3. Resources to building people's capacities to govern effectively 9.5.4. Policies and programmes that are not prescribed but need based 9.5.5. Policies and programmes that mandate participatory methodologies for planning implementation and monitoring of all government services.

Table 3.1: Creating an Enabling Environment: Capacity Building vs Support Needs of Grassroots Actors (Continued…)		
	Capacity Building Needs	Support Needs
9.6. Community and economic development	9.6.1. Community mobilization and self help group concepts, group dynamics, conflict resolution and organizational/management skills. 9.6.2. Savings and credit training 9.6.3. Exposure visits to government and banks and training on programmes and linkages 9.6.4. Market assessment by the grassroots 9.6.5. Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) training for community, NGOs and government 9.6.6. Participatory planning training for all stakeholders 9.6.7. Technical training that close the gap between lab to land and that is relevant to local conditions 9.6.8. Creation of business proposals for income generation 9.6.9. Creation of proposals to fill community needs 9.6.10. Negotiation skills that help access public funds 9.6.11. Training on marketing	9.6.1. Resources and funding streams for community mobilization 9.6.2. Revolving funds for flexible credit for community and economic development 9.6.3. Government, banks and donors programmes made more transparent 9.6.4. Human resource development and trainers for participatory market analysis 9.6.5. Policies that mainstream PRA into government and donor programmes 9.6.6. Government and banks sensitized on participatory planning and policies that facilitate planning by communities instead of top down planning systems 9.6.7. Sharing of technical knowhow and collaboration between technicians and grassroots communities 9.6.8. Financial institutions collaborate and share criteria on proposal assessment with grassroots actors at the stage of proposal formulation. 9.6.9. Policies and planning mechanisms that accommodate community development proposals 9.6.10. Policies that promote fair trade direct trading among communities on products. 9.6.11. Policies that promote sustainable community and economic development where people have ownership over the development processes and can reap the benefits of their labour.
9.7. Health and Environment	9.7.1. Training on traditional health care systems that are affordable and easily available 9.7.2. Training on preventative health care measures 9.7.3. Gender training on the importance of taking care of women's health care needs	9.7.1. Policies and resources that increase the outreach of existing health care systems to poor women given their lack of mobility 9.7.2. Policies and resources that prioritise reproductive health 9.7.3. Policies and programmes that raise awareness of poor communities on the gender bias in health care needs within families and communities
9.8. Rights	9.8.1. Legal literacy training on women's rights for women and elected representatives 9.8.2. Training for electorate and elected representatives on the right to Information on candidates, budgets and expenditures. 9.8.3. Training on policy, reforms and democratic processes	9.8.1. Create spaces in the form of policies and programmes on the importance of legal literacy training within government 9.8.2. Policies that prioritise transparency and mandate public consultations and reporting of actions and expenditures. 9.8.3. Policies that provide the space to civil society to train government on reforms and democratic norms and processes.

Here the range of areas where capacity building and support to the grassroots is needed has been highlighted to build an enabling environment for the effective participation of grassroots women.

X. Partnerships Principles[xi]

*Day after day, around the clock, grassroots women work as paid and unpaid community developers. They are on the frontlines where community development and household life intersect. The stories of their projects tell us much about the meanings of community and the varieties of development.[14] They are Community Builders and they are pioneering a **partnering process**. Perspectives of grassroots women offer **a partnership learning model** that starts with issues and approaches on the ground. Their **partnering practices** suggest a **code of conduct** that enables positive and sustainable partnering in local communities.[15]*

Jacqueline Leavitt (2000)

For the Huairou Commission, partnering is crucial and always begins from the grassroots women's perspective. Integrating grassroots women into global events is a basic principle that began from the inception of the Huairou Commission's work, from the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995 to the Commissions on the Status of Women to HABITAT, and to date this continues.[16]

In 2000, at the Expo 2000 in Germany, and later on in New York at the Beijing plus five events, the Huairou Commission sponsored the Grassroots Women's International Academies (GWIA) where grassroots women's groups showcased best practices. They taught their local technical knowledge to other grassroots women and their partners. GWIA made clear that the practices of grassroots women rested on capacity building group-by-group, had reached a stage where it needed to be now acknowledged as the expertise of the grassroots. GWIA was and is about grassroots women making policy. One component of GWIA has been to create a dialogue forum where partners including local government, donors, professionals can dialogue with the grassroots organizations who are training in the international academy.

GWIA is just one of the Huairou Commission strategies that help promote partnerships. There are several others which include basic on the ground local partnering (Box 10.1)[xii]

---

[14]   Sangeetha Purushothaman and Monica Jaeckel, eds., *Engendering Governance and Development: Grassroots Women's Best Practices* Bangalore, India: Books for Change, 2001; Monica Jaeckel and Andrea Laux, "Local Governance from the Bottom Up: Bringing the Habitat Agenda Home." Bangalore, India: Books for Change, 2000; Deborah Mindry, "Intergovernmental Organizations, "Grassroots,' and the Politics of Virtue," *SIGNS* 26:4(2001):1187-1211.

[15]   Jacqueline Leavitt, "Inviting Partners to Partner," this excerpt is from a longer report based on the Grassroots Women's International Academy, 2000.

[16]   See Huairou Newsletter, Geertje Lycklama a Nijeholt, Joke Swiebel and Virginia Vargas, "The Global Institutional Framework: The Long March to Beijing," in Geertje Lycklama a Nijeholt, Virginia Vargas, and Saskia Wieringa, eds. *Women's Movements and Public Policy in Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1998), pp. 25-48.

The Local to Local Dialogues described elsewhere was a global campaign of the Huairou Commission that promoted local partnerships.

Box 10.1. Examples of Local Partnering

- In the Philippines, a law requires that a percentage of the national budget is allocated to women's programs. Active NGOs sit on the National Commission for Women and make sure that proposals are submitted to claim the percentage.
- In Uganda, secure positions for women in local government enable them to promote budgets and be able to monitor where the resources are going.
- In Germany, in the State of Hessen, legislation to provide funding for Mothers Centers used the language and concepts "exactly as the Mothers Center saw them . . . not bending the concept."
- In Turkey, in the wake of the 1999 earthquake in the Marmara region, The Foundation for the Support of Women's Work negotiated to ensure that local administrators, chambers of commerce, and private sector representatives met with women in order to help them explore business potentials. The Foundation signed a protocol with the Tourism Department to support women's centers through marketing products in papermaking, carpeting, and toys.
- In Montreal, Canada, Comité d'action Femmes et Sécurité Urbaine (CAFSU), women's groups, and local public authorities formed a Women's Urban Safety Action Committee in Montreal, Canada. They have raised issues about women's representation in local government among groups such as the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA).

Partnering is more than being present. In less than a decade, grassroots women, drawing from solid and successful experiences in their communities, building on peer learning, and exchanges, have given life to a partnership learning model that rests on the following points: For partnerships to work, grassroots women have to:
- Be present at the table when policies are discussed;
- Participate in debates, especially when options are dismissed;
- Be the voices for their concerns and not have others voice concerns for them;
- Offer their expertise; and
- Expect that partners will respect grassroots knowledge as valued expertise.

Partnering takes different forms. One partnership formula does not fit all.
Grassroots women identify eight types of partnering, some occur at the same time, others change over time.
- **Economic partnering:** Involve grassroots women equally in decisions about resource allocation.
- **Political partnering**: Build access to civil society and government where grassroots women may hold governmental positions and grassroots women's new institutions gain support.
- **Strategic partnering:** Strengthen capacity building among grassroots women and allow grassroots women's groups to advance policy.

- **Financial partnering:** Provide funds, land, space, and tools for planning, projects, and policymaking.
- **Emotional partnering:** Create spiritual space where listening is a tool in sustaining and supporting grassroots women's projects.
- **Documenting partnering:** Provide and maintain visibility for grassroots women's plans and projects.
- **Moral partnering:** Lend name and presence at public events.
- **Assisted partnering:** Organize events that showcase grassroots women's projects.

Through its wide experience between its grassroots member organizations and their partners partners the Huairou Commission has evolved principles which guide partnerships (Box 10.2) (Levitt, 2000).

Box 10.2. The Huairou Commission's Partnership Code of Conduct

Both Women Organizations and Local Government should
1. Explicitly recognize inequalities of power, resources, and money.
2. Identify and be transparent about shared concerns, risks, and uncertainty.
3. Use language that everybody understands.
4. Regularly review changes and compare changes to the original partnership objectives.
5. Provide resources to grassroots women in order for them to document their projects, their sustainability and their transferability.
6. Create ways to link grassroots partners to opportunities for funding, sitting on boards, being appointed to advisory committees, and jointly issuing strategy papers.

Partners in government, business, foundations, media, and universities should:
7. Build capacity of their staffs, retain grassroots women's groups to train staffs, use the Huairou Commission's "Our Best Practices" as a learning tool.
8. Assist grassroots women's groups to package curriculum tools as an economic development tool and create a Grassroots Women's Development Trust Fund.

For its part, The Huairou Commission will:
9. Continue to work with grassroots women as partners in capacity building.
10. Prepare Partner Report Cards similar to the model Huairou Commission Report Card for the 2001 Istanbul + 5 Thematic Sessions.
11. Explore protection of grassroots women's intellectual property rights over local technical knowledge and methods.
12. Explore protocols about access to public space and that local grassroots women's groups can adapt for their use.
13. Encourage dialogues through local Grassroots Women's International Academies and with all partners.

Footnotes

i   IULA declaration citing the World Wide declaration on Women in Local Government, 1998, www.iula.org
ii   Based on case studies and materials in www.iula.org

iii   www.bestpractices.org UN Habitat's database on best practices
iv   As defined in *The Perpetrators of Domestic Violence* http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues
v   Recommended in *Two Case Studies and a Few Random Thoughts about Domestic Violence in Rural Ohio* http://www.huc.edu/ethics/conted/11292000Kessinger.pdf
vi   "Women's Rights are Human Rights" and Access to Decision-Making in www.iula.org
vii   The United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women - Beijing, China - September 1995 - Action for Equality, Development and Peace
viii   "Women's Rights are Human Rights" and Access to Decision-Making in www.iula.org
ix   The support for the Our Best Practices Campaign of the Huairou Commission and this paper came from the LIFE program of the IDG/BDP/UNDP UNDP. LIFE is a UNDP global flagship programme to promote local-local dialogue and partnership between NGOs, CBOs, Local Governments and Private Sector for improving the living of the urban poor and influencing policies for participatory local governance.
x   Based on the report *Local to Local Dialogue: A Grassroots Women's Perspective on Good Governance* authored by Suranjana Gupta, January 2002, UN Habitat
xi   This section draws heavily on the work done on partnerships by Jacqueline Levitt on behalf of the Huairou Commission.
xii   This section draws heavily on the work done on partnerships by Jacqueline Levitt on behalf of the Huairou Commission.