

WOMEN, CITIZENS
STAGE DOCUMENT

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“Towards full citizenship for women”

URB-AL Network No. 12 Woman and City

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INTRODUCTION

The URB-AL Network No. 12 “Woman and City” has been operative for one year now. In this time, the main energies have been focused on launching the Network and developing links among members.

The Baseline Diagnosis carried out in early 2003 provided systematic analysis of the structural barriers working against equality, recognition of women’s rights, and their participation in political decision-making, employment, and the organisation of cities from a gender perspective. The Diagnosis also analysed the social changes of recent years in relation to advances in equal opportunities and also the new obstacles which now lie in the path of women’s advance.

The Network’s presentation seminar, held in San Salvador in late April, 2003, marked a milestone and provided the setting for a first meeting and exchange of views among members. A number of joint projects emerged from the seminar, of which nine were presented for European Commission funding in October 2003. Several others were held over for presentation in April 2004. The Commission has now approved funding for three of the projects presented in October.

The Network comprises 188 full members (66 European and 122 Latin American) and 61 associate members (15 European and 46 Latin American), together with two observers from Latin America. It is, then, a widely-based and diverse Network in terms of geographical location and population represented.

At present, the challenge facing this large Network is to generate ideas and innovative projects, share experience and pool good practices with regard to promotion of women in local decision-making.

This Report, appearing after one year of Network activity, sets out to achieve three objectives:

- To compile Network-related concerns of members which have not been covered in detail in the earlier documents.
- To add new data on Latin American women and the specific obstacles they face in exercising full citizenship, and to compile details of European perspectives on this subject.
- To generate ideas and actions which will form the basis of discussion at the Network’s Second Annual Seminar, in Barcelona in April 2004, and lead to joint advances in attaining full citizenship for women.

This Report begins with an affirmation of women’s rights as human rights. These include the right to full citizenship and political participation. We hold that the universal nature of these rights must mean that all forms of discrimination are illegitimate. The Report then goes on to set out proposals to strengthen women’s exercise of economic and social rights at local level. The third chapter explores the presence of women in

local politics. The text concludes with proposals for institutionalisation of local gender policies.

1. WOMEN’S RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS

Although it may seem incredible at the start of the 21st century, women must still fight for their human rights. The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993) declared that “The human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights” and that these rights “constitute universal law, independent of the laws of national states.” According to the UNDP’s *Human Development Report 2000*, by early 2002, 168 countries had ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including all the countries of Latin America and the European Union.

Why then, do we find this historical resistance against abolishing discrimination against women and recognising their human rights? Expressed differently, why must women continue to justify their status as human beings with full human rights? The answer is not hard to find, bearing in mind that different religions and cultures have traditionally attributed different roles and values to men and women, invariably to the latter’s disadvantage. For this reason, until very recently, certain human rights were the legal preserve of men, and especially educated men with high incomes.

The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women represents a major milestone in women’s rights and points out “that discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity”.

Women’s rights, as human rights, arise from the dignity of the individual, are universal and inalienable, and must not be violated or denied by any law since they take precedence over all laws and never expire.

Despite these declarations and the undeniable advances made in the 20th century, discrimination against women continues to be a very real part of day-to-day life in many countries. This is an attack of women’s dignity. Many factors underlie this discrimination; yet two are especially crucial: poverty and gender violence.

1.1. POVERTY AND GENDER VIOLENCE MILITATING AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS

Poverty is the main problem facing the human race, and the majority of the poor are women. Women's poverty, according to a 2000 UNDP report, involves "lack of goods, dignity, autonomy and time". Women are poorer, because they also suffer inequality which is a decisive factor in the reproduction of poverty:

- Women face greater difficulties than men in obtaining worthwhile employment, and they earn less for the same work, often between 30% and 50% less.
- In many countries, women are virtually barred from owning land, and inheriting wealth; they are denied access to housing and basic services such as health and education, the means of production, loans and paid employment, unless they receive the male's approval.
- Women take responsibility for domestic, family and community duties which, very frequently, are difficult to reconcile with worthwhile paid employment. These responsibilities increase during recessions, due to cutbacks in social spending (by state and other authorities). This leads to an extra burden for women who must care for dependents.
- In many countries, women's employment opportunities are far inferior to men, since they are often denied access to basic and secondary education.
- The majority of single-parent families consist of women and dependents. Almost two-thirds of these families live below the poverty threshold in many developing countries.
- Low-quality jobs in agriculture, in cross-border assembly plants, duty-free zones and the underground economy, account for a great proportion of female activity rates in Latin America in recent years.
- Women are under-represented in all organs of political and economic power despite the fact that it is women who take responsibility for community concerns such as health, drinking water, reproductive health and dependent, especially in developing countries.

On 8 September, 2000, the Heads of State and Government of the world's main states signed the United Nations General Assembly Millennium Declaration. Among other undertakings, they pledged to reduce by half the percentage of the world's poor by the year 2015; to ensure that girls would enjoy equal access to all levels of education; to reduce maternal mortality by 75% and to "To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable." They also pledged to "To combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on

the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women."

However, the tragic events of 11 September, 2001, in New York, led to a change of priorities. The pledges of the Millennium Declaration were relegated to a secondary position in the planet's political agenda. Now we could ask whether progress is being made in pursuit of the aspirations set out in the Declaration, and whether this progress will be sufficient to reach the targets set for the year 2015. The answer must be no. According to the Inter-American Development Bank, in order to achieve the objectives of the Millennium Declaration, Latin American economies, for example, would have to grow by an average of at least 4% per annum. The present figure is only 1.5%, and there are major differences across countries with many living in situations of ever-worsening poverty.

The objectives of the Millennium Declaration could still be achieved. But for this to happen, a change in the economic and social policies underpinning poverty is needed. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to suggest the likelihood of such a change.

Economic globalisation is not benefiting the poor, and even less so the female poor, who are forced to further reconcile family care (not counted as a market value even though it compensates for the lack of social services due to cutbacks), with work in sectors which cannot compete in the global market.

Poverty is thus the main obstacle to women's exercise of their rights.

Gender violence is the other great obstacle to women's human rights and is utterly incompatible with the concept of democracy. Statistics show that there are practically no differences for country, social class and culture with regard to this shameful phenomenon: when women resist the arbitrary nature of male power, when they wish to take decisions concerning their affective relationships, their children, their economic independence... they are often risking their physical safety or even their lives. Far from the traditional happy image, home for many women and their children, is a dangerous place. In countries at peace, the victims of gender violence outnumber by far the victims of terrorism each year, although gender violence does not seem to be a political priority for many governments.

Furthermore, wars worsen women's vulnerability, as reported, with many examples from recent conflicts, in the 2002 UNIFEM report "*Women, War and Peace*". Women become military objectives in war more frequently than do men. They are more often the victims of violence and exploitation, at the hands of their male partners, their enemies and, sometimes, even peacekeeping forces. This experience has enabled women victims of wartime violence to function as excellent mediators in peacemaking and reconstruction projects.

Violence against women is an infringement of the most elementary human rights; it undermines their self-esteem and prevents them from full participation.

There are many impediments to eradication of violence against women, as recognised by the Inter-American Convention for Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (2000): there are neither statistics nor monitoring mechanisms; in many countries the work is left to insufficiently funded non-governmental agencies; poverty increases women's economic dependence on those who abuse them; the attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes which excuse this violence continue to exist; the efforts made to combat it are fragmented and badly coordinated; modern technologies are now facilitating certain forms of violence such as sexual trafficking and exploitation, and once again the victims are women and children.

The map of gender violence, both within and outside the family, includes all countries, and has left some particularly ignominious blotches such as the women murdered in Ciudad Juárez.

Strategies to combat gender violence include government and legal commitment to zero tolerance policies; improvement of legal protection against aggression, implementation of educational programmes for men and women designed to achieve a commitment to eliminating gender violence; the establishment of services and shelters, etc. Specific actions are also increasingly necessary to protect immigrant women who are victims of violence. However, above all, it is vital to prevent gender violence by cutting off its roots, which lie in the excessive and arbitrary exercise of male power, favoured or tolerated by social customs, beliefs and norms.

1.2. THE RIGHT TO QUALITY OF LIFE

Recognition of equality in the eyes of the law is but the first step in affirmation of women's human rights. More and more countries are enshrining this recognition into legislation, although often only partially, since the vested interests of various groups (generally cultural, political or religious) often contrive to hinder what are basic legal amendments.

Effective equal rights mean that all political actions must ensure that people enjoy this equality. The right to life, to freedom, to personal safety and integrity, the right not to be subjected to degrading or inhuman treatment, the right to education, to the best possible mental and physical health, the right to just working conditions, to participation in economic and social life and politics, all require political support measures. If we fail to ensure that citizens achieve a quality of life, in which they enjoy the fundamental rights and liberties, then legal commitments are but empty declarations.

The concept of "quality of life" is now becoming a feature of the political agenda of many countries, especially developed countries. Quality of life is defined as an overall condition

leading to a feeling of wellbeing in individuals. It comprises acceptable living conditions, access to the minimum resources needed for safe existence and a feeling of belonging to a community or society. This is in line with the description provided by the recent (2003) *report of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*.

Quality of life is closely bound up with policies aiming to reconcile economic growth with sustainable development and gender equality.

Quality of life means enjoying living conditions and access to the necessary minimum resources which permit:

- Enjoyment of the best possible state of health and, to this end, access to health services.
- Acceptable employment and working conditions.
- Access to the necessary economic resources and goods enabling one to avoid poverty.
- An acceptable home.
- Access to knowledge, education and training throughout life.
- Access to transport, and sufficient mobility to reach places of employment, public services, markets and leisure centres, etc.
- Participation in leisure activities, and the time and services which make this possible.
- Safety in public places.
- Healthy environmental conditions.

In addition to resources, quality of life entails that the individual feels part of a community or society, which means:

- A feeling of belonging to a family and neighbourhood.
- Sharing community values, not feeling excluded for reasons of sex or sexual orientation, race, economic status or any other individual characteristic.
- Sharing in social challenges and opportunities.
- Participating in community life and decisions.

Quality of life is based on objective components, such as health, the necessary income to permit an acceptable standard of living, and public services providing the same opportunities and protection to all. It is also based on subjective components such as a feeling of inclusion and belonging to a community, and feeling satisfied, safe and independent in one's way of thinking and living.

Many women, and not only in developing countries, suffer discrimination with regard to living conditions, public services and social inclusion. This discrimination is becoming increasingly clear through statistical data. What is also clear is that it could be overcome through application of equality policies and reorientation of public spending priorities so as to

favour equal opportunities and rights. Yet, it is also important to overcome the traditional prejudices against seeing women as human beings with full rights, who are entitled to play a central role in collective decision-making.

1.3. WOMEN'S CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS

Among the fundamental rights and liberties of all human beings is the right to play a role in construction of one's country, city and community. This is a citizen's right, and must be made available to both men and women, without discrimination, exclusion or restrictions.

Women's citizenship is founded on recognition of their "status" as being legally and politically equal to men, and their entitlement to public regulation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Active citizenship for women means they must be active participants in collective processes, as organisers, interlocutors and developers of public policy and public participation schemes.

The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adds another reason: "the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields."

Women's right to full citizenship is closely linked to the very concept of democracy. The right to vote, to participate in the government of one's country, in political organisations and activities, are all basic human rights underpinning the workings of democracy. Democracy can only be considered to function when these rights are shared by both men and women in equal conditions.

Exercising one's political rights in a representative, democratic state means:

- Freedom to actively express political opinions.
- The right to vote and be a candidate in all public elections.
- The right to occupy public positions and participate in the formulation of governmental policies, free from all forms of discrimination regarding spheres, issues or importance on the government agenda.
- That public institutions play an active role in guaranteeing, without distinctions, exclusion or restrictions, stability and safety for all members of society who comply with their rights and duties as citizens.

Data collected in all democratic countries show that women are under-represented in government, public administration and legal decision-making bodies. This is true both of central and regional administration; however, the difference is sharpest at the level of local administration bodies. The objective set by

the Beijing Platform for Action of 50% representation for women has not been achieved, and in most countries the figure is still below 30%, which could be taken as a minimum, intermediate stage objective.

Why are women so under-represented in political decision-making bodies? The fundamental reasons are cultural, social and economic. The cultural obstacles derive from the traditional sex-based division of roles and spheres: the public sphere is the reserve of men, the private, of women. There are also social and economic inequalities which hinder women's access to decision-making candidatures. These obstacles continue to exist, largely, due to the failure of public institutions to adopt a sufficiently active role in ensuring equal political representation for women. Most importantly, political parties reflect the same prejudices when drawing candidate lists.

Democracy is also a question of values; values learned from childhood when boys and girls have the opportunity to play equal roles in the family and school. For many generations now, the education we all receive since birth has set out clear gender differences. One of the instruments used to demarcate these differences is language. The first function of language is communication and transmission of thoughts and feelings to others; however, language has also served to transmit stereotypes and feelings which legitimise infringement of the human rights of women. Consequently, the first declarations of human rights focused on the male, especially the rich and educated male. In their day, these declarations represented major conceptual advances, yet they were only applicable to a limited sector of humanity.

As a means of transmission and communication, language has helped to forge differences between men and women. Changing language and offering boys and girls equal opportunities to participate in family and school decisions from the earliest years and in accord with their maturity, will be the first step in carving out a new identity for women with full citizenship rights.

However, active promotion of parity democracy in politics (and economics), will also demand further actions in all countries. Once implemented, these actions must be evaluated and then disseminated so as to heighten societal awareness. The objectives of these actions must be:

- To promote greater awareness of the existing levels of discrimination, through civic education.
- To establish awareness-raising actions for the general public pointing out the need for balanced representation of men and women on elected public bodies, political party structures, and candidate selection committees, and for equal distribution of candidate and campaign funding. This awareness-raising must include motivating women to take an active part in politics.

- Creation of networks of women in elected positions at all levels: international, national, regional and local.
- To favour gender balance in electoral systems (specific laws, quotas, training programmes for women candidates, funding support, etc.). These measures must also be monitored and evaluated.
- To establish multi-lateral funding organisms providing technical and economic support to measures fostering equality in political decision-making.
- To promote vocational training for women, aiding their transition from education to working life and fostering entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. The overall aim of these measures is to increase women's participation in company management and in economic decision-making, generally.
- To optimise and disseminate statistics on women's participation in political and economic decision-making and management.
- Local governments can enrich and heighten the democratic validity of their programmes by listening to women's opinions on public spending in such areas as housing, regional planning and urban service planning.
- Local development, which generates wealth and social cohesion, is hardly conceivable today without the contribution of women.
- Basic social services such as education, health (especially sexual and reproductive health), and care services for dependents, have an enormous impact on women's lives. Local authorities are obliged to take account of this in their planning. Clearly, women must have an input into decision-making in this sphere.
- Public municipal infrastructure such as transport and communication services, street lighting and water supply, ensure mobility and safety, especially to the poorer members of the community, the majority of whom are women. Therefore, it is important to incorporate a gender perspective into public infrastructure spending and planning.
- Joint public-private sector local employment programmes must also be aimed at women, given that female unemployment rates are higher and that there are barriers militating against their entry to worthwhile employment.
- The struggle against gender violence can also have a local basis. Women must direct measures and participate in forums and committees working to ensure public safety and peace, and conflict resolution.

1.4. WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND LOCAL POLICIES

Local politics is the collective decision-making arena closest to the lives of individual citizens. It is also the best setting for solving problems in the sphere of women's rights. Local politics is also important in that the exercise of human rights is not solely an issue of legal reforms guaranteeing equality, but also requires changes in social practice. In countries with legislation designed to foster equality, inequality has continued to exist in day-to-day attitudes and social practices. For this reason, inequality can often best be tackled by means of proximity politics.

Many actions fostering human development are found at local level, as are many of the services required to ensure equal opportunities. The local level is therefore the optimum and most accessible arena for exercise of citizenship rights. Consequently, it is strategically suited for promotion of women's equality and exercise of their social and political rights.

Local government, which will be afforded increasingly greater powers and resources as part of ongoing decentralisation moves, has the potential to act on a number of fronts in empowering women's political participation:

- Traditionally, women have taken responsibility for community activities and services. They are also well-qualified for responsibilities in local government if their work is made visible and if they themselves are aware of the value of their contribution, gain in self-respect and achieve recognition of their rights to participate in collective decision-making.
- Local authorities have wide powers in the area of environmental protection. Environmental deterioration creates risks which are especially threatening to the poor and to women, who as women are doubly poor.

Local policies can have a decisive effect on human living conditions by ensuring services which provide for quality of life among the less well-off and help to develop a feeling of belonging to a community. Human rights can also be guaranteed at local level, since exercising rights requires more than being enshrined in national law. Local policies have an impact on social practice which, today, has a greater impact than national anti-discrimination legislation.

However, we must not forget that local policies are not enough in themselves; state legislation and active state policies are the first prerequisite in the battle to do away with all forms of discrimination. Governments have an obligation to define national objectives in the sphere of gender equality and to establish indicators for evaluation of progress made.

There is also a need for independent institutions dedicated to the defence of human rights. They must have powers and resources to monitor and evaluate the position of women regarding economic, social and political rights and liberties.

The gender perspective must be integrated into all aspects of rights and liberties: cultural, leisure, political, social and economic.

Women's poverty, like poverty in general, must be fought by overall policies, integrating the concepts of economic growth

and sustainability, promoting social equality, reducing poverty and improving the quality of life of the population in general.

International financial institutions and governments must set a priority on promoting human rights and gender policies, and must assign resources for evaluation of the results and impacts of these programmes.

2. POLICIES TO STRENGTHEN WOMEN'S RIGHTS AT LOCAL LEVEL

Public policies can serve as a strategic instrument to achieve gender equality, by diagnosing inequality, and providing for planning, resources, evaluation and continuity.

Many of the declarations and commitments given on women's rights and gender equality have emerged in the context of international conferences and organisms. Pressure has then been placed on governments to ratify them. The United Nations and its dependent organisms have played an especially active role in promoting declarations and resolutions on women's political rights, the elimination of all forms of discrimination and gender violence, protection for women and children in emergency situations and armed conflict, violence against women immigrants and equal rights to property, land and decent housing.

One of the most recent UN resolutions, known as the Millennium Declaration, mentioned in the previous chapter, sees equal rights and opportunities for women as a basic objective in the struggle against poverty and for peace.

International resolutions and declarations on women's rights and gender equality have played an important role in the gradual commitment of governments to taking a stand and in raising public awareness of discrimination.

Today, as recognised by the by the UNDP *Human Development Report 2003*, gender equality is not only a question of justice, but is also a driving force for development. Lack of autonomy for women leads to a breakdown in the links between productivity, health and education. Educated women represent an boundless source of potential for the labour market, the economy and public services (especially basic services). They are also a decisive factor for improved quality of life for families.

The majority of countries have ratified the main international agreements on women's equality and many, especially more developed countries, have reformed their legislation to include equality in the eyes of the law. Fortunately, the number of countries refusing to recognise the equal rights of women in their laws is shrinking.

However, the transforming impact of laws is negligible unless accompanied by political action to enable real exercise of rights. Genuine transformation can only take place in the

context of policies working to expand democracy. This also means that women must participate in decision-making either through democratic structures or through direct collective mobilisation and action.

Over the last 20 years, the move towards democracy has been accompanied in many countries by decentralisation. More than 60 countries, many of them in Latin America, have begun to devolve political powers, resources and administrative responsibility from central government or state and regional level to local level.

Political decentralisation is important to women's rights:

- Because it permits a swifter response to the real needs of women through direct participation in policy formulation and implementation.
- Because it is easier to ensure transparency, due to more direct information flow, thereby reducing corruption,.
- Because it improves delivery of basic services such as education, health, housing and drinking water, which are so vital to women's wellbeing.
- Because conflicts can best be solved through discussion and negotiation within the community itself. Women have proven highly effective in negotiating and mediating roles in conflict resolution at local level.
- Because the motivation to solve daily problems at local level is greater, and no one is more aware of these problems than women.
- Because the local environment offers greater opportunities for people to have a say in political decisions that have a direct effect on their lives.

To be effective, political decentralisation, must include transfer of resources to the local authorities which enable them to provide basic services. Decentralisation must ensure inter-regional solidarity within the state in question and standardised and fair provision of such services as health and education, together with development of joint infrastructure requiring large-scale investment.

However, decentralisation of powers and services cannot be a panacea if the state does not have the power to effectively guarantee provision of services, representation of the users or transparency. Weak states often feel the temptation to transfer services to local administration and to share responsibilities with local elites when the central government is unable to provide these services itself. Successful decentralisation then is often a measure of a state's success, not the opposite. For decentralisation to benefit the general population, especially those suffering discrimination, local authorities must have sufficient power and resources, must be committed to serving the country's citizens and competent. However, it must also be based on the support of a well-informed society and on citizens'

organisations capable of articulating community views and needs.

What follows on local policies as an instrument for equal rights and opportunities for women makes a number of assumptions. These assumptions are that local authorities have sufficient power and resources; are committed to the community; are made up of informed men and women citizens, and are based on solidarity and shared decisions.

2.1. A LIFE FREE OF GENDER VIOLENCE

As stated earlier, gender violence is an attack on human rights and fundamental freedoms. As pointed out by the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, it is also a manifestation of men's power and domination over women, and "one of the fundamental mechanisms forcing women into a situation of subordination to men."

Gender violence has met with excessive tolerance in socialisation processes in practically all cultures. The persistence of murder, degrading treatment and abuse has finally led to gender violence being perceived as one of the great shames of democracy. The problem is how to eliminate it. It will not be easy, especially if gender violence continues to be seen as the outcome of individual dysfunctions as opposed to a social problem with deeply rooted cultural origins often exacerbated by external factors, such as alcoholism, poverty or collective violence.

How can municipal policies contribute to the eradication of gender violence? The contribution can either be highly significant or minimal, depending on whether the action taken is comprehensive and concerted with other policies at national level, harnessing all the democratically-available resources. In addition to concerted implementation with other comprehensive policies, municipal policies must also set a priority on prevention.

The task of preventing gender violence must begin at school, with a mainstreaming approach penetrating all subject areas from the earliest years. The essential objective is to instil values of mutual respect, tolerance and equal opportunities in the young. These values can best be transmitted when the school itself guarantees equal treatment and when the teachers, men and women, are examples of these values.

Schools also play an important role in prevention of violence against children at risk. Specific and individualised programmes targeting such children are required for this purpose.

In many countries, local authorities have limited powers in the sphere of education. In these cases, local policies must seek to provide support to concerted actions jointly agreed with the educational authorities and, especially, with the local schools.

The media can be another channel for prevention. Tolerance of violence, including gender violence, continues to be scandalously high in the media, especially television, which is the medium with the highest audience. Local authorities rarely have the power to influence what appears on television or in other media. However, they can run media campaigns against gender violence and ensure that programmes promoting discrimination do not receive the benefit of institutional advertising or support.

Prevention can also be served through improving women's safety. Local law and order policies play an essential role here; although again they must be implemented in coordination with other policies at state level. The main task of prevention at this level is to create safe environments and safety mechanisms, hindering aggression. Many incidences of gender violence occur on the street, whether the aggressor is a member of the family or not. The location and/or supervision of parks, parking places, shopping centres, bus-stops and other places frequented by women can play an important preventive role. Incidents may occur in the victim's home, where external security measures are less effective. However, it is possible to provide greater protection to women in their own homes if authorities have the political will to do so.

Apart from being ideal for prevention, the local level is also important for improvement of community services to women victims of violence. Policies aiming to improve these services include:

- Support to local organisations and associations, ranging from sports and cultural groups to business associations, which do not discriminate against women as members.
- Support to associations working to prevent gender violence and victim-support. The fact that more and more men are joining the struggle against gender violence is highly positive, not only for its exemplary nature, but also because it serves to deactivate the dominating male stereotype. This stereotype and its aggressive dimension are prejudicial to society as a whole.
- Improved detection mechanisms for signs of gender violence in the social and health services, and specialised training for service staff.
- Specially trained women members in local police forces to attend the victims of gender violence, especially in the immediate aftermath of attacks.
- Provision of shelters, adequately resourced support services and specifically trained staff qualified to deal with cultural differences in immigrant women victims.
- Specific employment programmes, including work skills training and care for participants' children. These programmes place a priority on employment for financially dependent women, so that poverty or the need to care for their children will not force them to return to the aggressor.

- Economic aid and care for victims of gender violence when necessary.
- Special protection for women members of ethnic minorities, women in remote rural communities, in detention, to the old, the handicapped and the victims of armed conflict.
- Policies seeking to account for the needs of women victims of violence in general.

There can be no doubt that victim care costs more than preventive policies. However, it is absolutely necessary until gender violence is completely eradicated. Total eradication must be the overall objective. Without the necessary means and resources, political provisions and declarations are mere rhetoric and do not serve to guarantee the minimum solidarity with the victims.

Total eradication will only be achieved by means of a radical change in the attitudes, beliefs and traditions which underlie gender violence. This change will call for a great degree of social commitment, which will prove easier for future generations who will hopefully grow up free from stereotype of the dominating male.

In the meantime however, legal changes and improvements in the way the legal system deals with violence against women are essential. These changes of course are not a function of local policy, yet they do require commitment at the local level. The changes must include:

- Recognition and appropriate punishment of certain forms of violence against women.
- Establishment of effective legal protection against gender violence.
- Restriction of custody and visiting rights when there is a risk of violence.
- Measures against sexual harassment of adult women by persons in positions of authority or responsibility.
- Persecution, by the most effective means, of new forms of trafficking and sexual exploitation of human beings.

Finally, all local policies against gender violence must be designed and implemented with the participation of women.

This is vital not only because it is women who best know their own needs and problems, but also women's contribution has been shown to be highly effective.

As highlighted in reports by international bodies, women who have borne the brunt of violence in war situations are extraordinarily effective as agents of peace-building and reconstruction. They succeed in penetrating to the roots of the conflict and its solution. War leaves terrible wounds, not only economic and social but also psychological. Indeed, it is the psychological damage that takes longest to repair, including depression and hatred. Women have shown themselves to be

highly realistic when dealing with these issues as members of peace-building committees.

Gender violence is equally serious in non-war zones, although society seems determined to see it as the outcome of merely individual conflict. The first need of those suffering from violence is help in recovering their self-respect and the ability to live without fear. Once they have achieved this, they are excellent human resources for the work of building violence-free communities.

It is not the simple fact of being women that qualifies them for policy decisions in the battle against gender violence, but rather their experience of what violence brings with it, as victims or as professionals who have worked to help victims, or simply, as human beings capable of understanding the suffering of others and helping them to recover.

Therefore, local policies against gender violence must be led by women who have a clear understanding and knowledge of the roots and solutions of the problem. Cooperation from men is also vital, since the roots of the violence lie in prejudices which are common to society as a whole, both men and women. However, women must be the main decision-makers in the fight to eradicate a form of violence which affects them so directly.

A life free of gender violence is a life free. It is also the reflection of a genuinely democratic citizenry.

2.2. PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS AT LOCAL POLICY LEVEL

Women's economic and social rights must be guaranteed if we are to help them to escape poverty (gender inequality means more women in poverty than men) and enjoy quality of life.

The rights to education, to work, to equal pay, to health cover, to social security, to property, to leisure and rest, to participation in cultural life, to dignity have all been recognised in law for both men and women in most countries. As pointed out, however, gender discrimination continues to exist in all countries. In the majority of countries, women leave school earlier than men; in all, they earn less for the same work; in all, they have less time for leisure and rest; in many, they are not guaranteed access to maternity or paediatric health services; a large proportion of poor women are denied access to social housing; a significant number of countries still restrict women's right to own property or only permit it subject to male consent.

States are obliged to recognise the equality of men and women in law and provide resources to make this equality effective. No one questions that this is one of the main responsibilities of national and regional government, in accordance with their sphere of power. In this context, it is the local authorities that make decisions with the most immediate effect for people's quality of life.

Municipal bodies work in close contact with the local population and make quantitative and qualitative decisions concerning such everyday services as public transport, leisure, safety, subsidised housing, regional planning including education and health services and local development programmes. Municipal government also plays a central role in coordinating and harmonising measures implemented at regional level by other bodies, including government organs.

This is why, in addition to calling on national and regional government to ensure the quality of life of all citizens, both men and women, the URB-AL Network also lays special emphasis on municipal action to promote the quality of life and economic and social rights of women.

2.3. LOCAL POLICIES ENSURING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The struggle for women's equality must be accompanied by recognition of the difference of women as human beings, of their specific sexual and reproductive social function, which is also a source of personal development.

The great efforts made by women throughout the 20th century to achieve economic autonomy, have had the unfortunate effect of relegating the issue of maternity to a secondary plane. The view which sees production as the supreme value of economic life, has neglected reproduction or even tended to see it as an obstacle to the needs of production. By devaluing maternity in social and economic terms in favour of work, the system has also devalued women and what makes them different to men.

Moreover, certain value-systems and beliefs have attributed a merely instrumental role to the mother, as producer of the necessary labour force. Maternity as a personal experience has been denied and devalued.

At the same time, these very value-systems have sought to prevent women's sexual development, sometimes emphasising their material instrumental role, at others, their instrumental role as sex objects for men.

Local equality policies, like all policies seeking to promote women, must contribute to breaking down the production-reproduction dichotomy and affirming difference as a defining principle of our common humanity, which entitles both sexes to identical rights.

At first glance, it may seem that municipal action can contribute relatively little to this change of mentality, and a heightened appreciation for female sexuality and maternity. However, the possible actions include the following:

- Ensuring that all women have access to primary attention, sexual and reproductive health services.

- Increasing municipal aid for childcare schemes, in support of working mothers.
- Recognising the value of the unpaid social work of women, and using the money saved through this work to improve free municipal services for mothers and care-giving women (social, cultural, sports, leisure and other services).
- Promoting sexual education and co-education by means of school support programmes.
- Working to make towns and cities into settings for human communication and cohesion, enabling complete integration for all into community life, irrespective of origin, economic status, culture, sex or sexual orientation.

2.4. WOMEN AS AGENTS OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Regional and local development is of great interest for women in that they use the services provided and are also agents of development. Fundamentally, local development entails improving the quality of life of all persons and their level of participation in community affairs. This demands consideration of a range of dimensions in local development: economic growth, increased employment, social priorities of public spending, improving public services, community inclusion, use and promotion of local human capital, recognition of ethnic and cultural differences, protection of historic and environmental assets, etc. A conception of local development which only draws on one dimension, for example, the economic, is doomed to ineffectiveness and may even create more problems than it solves.

A balanced conception of development must see women as agents for development rather than as mere beneficiaries.

As agents of local development, women are at home with a combination of economic development, social integration and cultural identity, and furthermore, they have solid experience of daily life. Increasingly, women also have an added qualification deriving from their work experience. Thus, local development is losing out on great potential in terms of human resources, if it fails to integrate a significant number of women into its design and decision-making organs.

A greater presence of women on local development committees means, firstly, recognition of their role as active participants. This involves improved visibility of women's contribution: their presence on consultative committees, their role as entrepreneurs, their contribution to community services, the work of women's' associations. For this to happen, women must have access to all local platforms: press dossiers, discussion forums, consulting committees, lobbies, and associations, etc. The objective is to achieve recognition for the specific know-how and skills of women in groups and as

individuals, in decision-making processes which have a bearing on community life as a whole.

It is also important that local development take into account the interests and position of women. Women's position in any urban setting comprises multiple dimensions. In addition to gender, other factors such as social status, group membership or isolation, family context, ethnic and cultural origin, etc. also play an important role. The essential overriding factor is whether or not women are economically independent. The fact that certain women may play a role in local policy decision-making does not guarantee that the position of all women will be taken into account. This is especially true of women who have the added handicap of poverty. Women with local power failing to understand the needs of women of social classes and groups other than their own, can contribute little to local development.

2.5. PRIORITIES FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH GUARANTEES ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EQUALITY

It is therefore vital that local development policies and decisions seek to overcome situations which prejudice women. These policies must strive to re-establish the economic and social rights infringed due to discrimination. The main tasks include the following:

- Guaranteeing the right to education throughout life. This must be one of the main priorities of local development, for, while in many cases young girls attain educational levels equivalent to or higher than those of males, many also leave school early due to economic or cultural pressure, and many adult women lack opportunities or time to update their professional skills, especially when seeking to re-enter the labour market after a period of caring for their family. Adult education and training programmes are an excellent example of an area in which municipal government can play a central role.
- The right to work is an inalienable right for every human being, and must include equality at all levels; the right also entails the freedom to choose a profession, the right to equal pay, to social security, to health coverage and safe working conditions, to job security during maternity leave and special job protection during pregnancy. The responsibility of all public powers in ensuring the right to work is beyond question, yet this is one of the most frequently infringed of women's rights. Perhaps the most effective contribution of local policies in this area is through local employment programmes for women, including occupational training. It is also vital that local administration set an example in its treatment of its female employees.
- Women's right to sexual and reproductive health must be another priority for local development. In addition to access to general health services in common with other citizens, women must have access to family planning, special health care during pregnancy, childbirth, post-birth, and mother and child care, together with prevention and treatment of gynaecological conditions. High mother and child mortality rates are due to the lack of access to these specialised services among poor women. Local planning must seek to guarantee this access. The right to health also includes access to other local services such as drinking water and sanitation. Women have traditionally played an important role in providing water and ensuring family hygiene. This continues to be the case in developing countries. Therefore, a primary objective in the area of health and sanitation is to improve these services and facilitate access, thereby leading to an improved quality of life. However, it is also vital that municipal governments implement the provisions of the Local Agenda 21 plan, and that women participate as recommended in chapter 24 of the Agenda.
- Municipal taxes must also integrate a gender dimension. Many rates and charges are directed to families, including charges for water, waste collection, housing taxes, without sufficient consideration of the fact that many poor families are headed by women. It is not necessarily fair to make everyone pay the same and not to include considerations of gender, in addition to social circumstances and type of family, in charges for certain supply services.
- Inclusion of poor women in community life. This also requires integration of a gender perspective into social, cultural and leisure services at municipal level. Poor women make the greatest contribution to community social services, since they care for their dependents at no cost to the public purse. It would be inconceivably unjust for a democratic society not to make such women a priority recipient of those services. Participation by poor women in cultural and leisure services must be a priority for local development, since it helps develop a sense of belonging to the community, and enables them to benefit from community resources for social life, welfare and emotional exchange.

2.6. DIAGNOSIS OF THE POSITION OF WOMEN AT LOCAL LEVEL

Policies seeking to promote equality must be planned from the basis of a diagnosis of the specific circumstances of different groups of women within the local setting. Important indicators are the type of family (single-parent, two-parent), independent income, dependents, type of

employment if any, type of housing, basic services available (health, education, drinking water, energy, transport, etc.), education and professional skills, participation in cultural and leisure activities etc. Many cities lack such detailed statistics; as a result it is difficult to plan to cover real needs.

The purpose of the diagnosis is to overcome the statistical invisibility of the major social problems which affect women more than men. These include gender violence, poverty, the issue of resources and power within the home, and the failure to value domestic work:

- The gravity of the statistical invisibility of gender violence has already been highlighted.
- The invisibility of income differences between individuals and different members of the same household prevents us from seeing the underlying inequalities: women have lower negotiating power, less time and mobility.
- It is also important to do away with the invisibility of unpaid domestic work. The CEPAL *report on Latin America 2002-2003* sets this out clearly:
“The failure to assign economic value to unpaid housework or to regard it as income in households where an individual is exclusively engaged in housekeeping and caregiving severely limits attempts to measure gender inequalities. In particular, this is because such work can make a difference in household income, as households headed by men are more likely to benefit from the housework performed free of charge by the spouse, and thus do not incur expenses for housekeeping services. Women heads of household shoulder the burden of housework without receiving compensation. They do so by increasing the time they spend doing unpaid work, incurring additional expenses to buy services available on the market and developing innovative ways of saving and spending.
This gives them fewer opportunities to improve their position in the labour market, participate in public life or enjoy leisure and recreation, not to mention the effects of this situation on their physical and mental health. In this connection, specifically identifying differences between men and women in terms of their use of time and their spending patterns is a relevant exercise for analysing poverty and the different ways in which individuals experience poverty.”
- Another form of invisibility is found in statistics (or the lack of statistics) on ownership of assets and land for rural women.

The above considerations highlight that local policies are an extremely important tool in the struggle for women's rights. There are also factors other than those listed here. Part of the Network's task could be to explore this area more deeply and point to guidelines for reflection and action.

3. WOMEN IN LOCAL POLITICS

3.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF MEN AND WOMEN IN POLICY DECISION-MAKING

3.1.1. Women and power. Some previously existing ideas

Power has always resisted and continues to resist the entry of women. Political power and decision-making are areas which are especially difficult for women to penetrate.

There can be no doubt that women have made major advances in politics over recent decades, yet it is equally certain that this progress has been anything but uniform and inequalities continue to exist between women and men. There continue to be major obstacles to progress and these often lead to serious consequences for wellbeing and development. This situation has been exacerbated by globalisation and the feminisation of poverty.

Ever since women achieved the right to vote, there has been a debate on their role in politics. Compared to the situation prevailing 100 years ago, the general attitude towards women's participation in politics is much more positive nowadays and few people are of the opinion that women have no role in the political arena. As a result, the present debate tends to center on the issue of how rather than whether we should work to increase women's participation in politics.

1. Public space – public life; private space – private life

Participation by women in decision-making and as political and economic representatives is a key demand of the contemporary women's movement. Ensuring that women are at the centre of political decision-making is a truly contemporary concern.

The absence of women from public life dates back to an deep-rooted and well-known system of dividing the world up in a process of social construction of gender; it is not the casual outcome of coincidence or accident.

As set out in General Recommendation 23, adopted in 1997 by the Committee for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the public and private spheres of human activity have always been considered different and as such have been regulated differently. Invariably, women were assigned functions in the private or domestic sphere in connection with procreation and childcare - functions treated as inferior in all societies. In contrast, public life, the object of respect and prestige, spans a wide range of

activities outside the domestic or private sphere. Historically, men have dominated public life and have exercised their power to relegate and subordinate women to the private sphere.

In most countries, what have impeded women from active participation in public life are cultural values and religious beliefs, which have contrived to confine women to the private sphere. Despite the central function performed by women in sustaining the family, contributing to society and development, they have been excluded from political life and from decision-making concerning daily life and the future of society. In times of recession especially, this exclusion has had the effect of silencing women's voice and rendering their contribution and experience invisible.

This historical division of spheres and roles has taken many forms over the course of time. Especially ironic is the case of the New Regime emerging from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, which not only excluded women from the principle of equality, denying them rights of citizenship (along with "children, the mad and the condemned"),¹ but also provided an exhaustive description of the qualities and skills of each of the sexes and of the spheres they were to occupy. In his exclusion of women from his discourse on equality, Rousseau said that "politics pertains to men, as does rationality, hierarchy, culture, courage, valour, character and accord. Women must be excluded from politics and limited to the good management of their homes, obedience, sweetness, and, in general, facilitating the liberty and success of the men to whom they are subordinated."

As Amelia Valcárcel points out in *"Feminismo y Poder Político"*: "Against this division of the world ... there appeared

the first conscious feminist protest. Mary Wollstonscraft demanded the same rights, opportunities and conditions given to men for all women. Ever since then, the same arguments have appeared with every political paradigm change."

3.1.2. Women's right to participate in politics in general, and local politics, in particular

*"First it was the right to parity in public affairs as made concrete in suffragism - the right to vote - which was the key to many other transformations; the right to basic and higher education, the right to exercise all professions, and finally, the right to ownership of assets and resources, a right acquired by some European women only some few decades ago..."*²

• Women's citizenship rights: the right to vote

Ever since New Zealand became the first country to grant women's right to vote back in 1893 (the right to vote only, the right to run for election came in 1919), there has been an ongoing battle to consolidate this basic citizenship right around the world.

Year after year, women from different countries have had to struggle for their right to participate in public decisions, often in a context of controversy and misunderstanding. The main opposition to women's vote was based on the belief that the woman's role was essentially in the family.

The table below, which does not claim to be exhaustive, sets out this century-long struggle to obtain women's right to vote.

Table 1: Milestones in recognition of female suffrage.

New Zealand	1893	Spain	1931
Australia	1902	Uruguay	1932
Finland	1906	Brazil	1932
Norway	1913	France	1944
Denmark	1915	Italy	1945
Iceland	1915	Argentina	1947
Germany	1918	Chile	1949
Ireland	1918	Mexico	1953
Austria	1919	Peru	1955
USSR	1918	Egypt	1956
Sweden	1919	Paraguay	1961
USA	1920	Switzerland	1971
UK	1928	Liechtenstein	1984
Ecuador	1929	South Africa (black women)	1994

1 The French Constitution of 1793 proclaimed that "children, the mad, women and the condemned cannot be considered as citizens."

2 Amelia Valcárcel. *Feminismo y poder político*.

The same data for Network member countries (Europe and Latin America) is set out on pages 9 and 10 of the *Baseline Diagnosis*.

Even today, more than 100 years after the first women achieved their right to vote, there are countries which do not recognise either the right to vote or run for election. (*UNDP Report on Human Development 2003*).

The achievement of passive suffrage for women meant that they could participate as voters on equal terms to men. However, this was not accompanied by a parallel rise of women as candidates and elected members of legislative assemblies and political decision-making bodies.

For many years, women's nominal right to run for election and occupy political posts was not worth the paper it was written on. The number of women occupying such positions was entirely insignificant. Perhaps the hope that access to education, work and birth control in the 60s and 70s would also lead to real equality in the political sphere was a little ingenuous.

The passing of time did not lead to any visible changes in the levels of active political participation by women. In all countries, the numbers of women in decision-making roles remained stagnant, in many cases at merely symbolical levels.

- **Again – a glass ceiling. Quotas**

When women decided to break the glass ceiling and seek equal access to political power in the 1980s, the first strategy to be applied was that of quotas. The objective was that political parties would accept rules establishing quotas for women candidates thus ensuring their presence in legislative assemblies, governments and public administration.

For a long time the low number of women in decision-making bodies, legislative assemblies and governments was seen as a women's problem stemming from a lack of political aspirations. Therefore, it was decided to introduce mechanisms to achieve equal representation of men and women. The first political party quotas for women candidates were introduced in the 1970s by the Danish People's Socialist Party, which stated that each sex had to account for at least 40% of election candidates.

The quotas have proven to be a very useful strategy in increasing the numbers of women members of parliament and other political organs. However, they have also been the subject of criticism and opposition. Introduced either through legislation or internal party rules, the adoption of quotas by political parties had a snowball effect, leading to an increased presence of women candidates even in those parties which had declared their opposition to the system, as happened in Spain.

In addition, the debate on quotas meant a public highlighting of the inequality between men and women in the political sphere and the need to take measures to overcome inequality.

- **Women's right to participate in politics in the context of URB-AL Network No. 12**

After so many years of struggle for recognition of their right to participate in public decision-making, the challenge faced by women now is to design and implement strategies for full exercise of the acquired rights on an equal footing with men.

The Network's Baseline Diagnostic compiles and analyses instruments and legislation safeguarding this right, but it also highlights the inequalities that continue to exist.

At present, one of the main priorities on the equal opportunities agenda is the issue of access for women to decision-making roles. This is also the concern of URB AL Network No. 12, on "Promoting women in local decision-making bodies."

Participation in decision-making is strategically important as part of the campaign for full citizenship rights for women. This is true, both in the area covered by this Network, i.e., Europe and Latin America, and also in other more culturally and geographically distant areas. Even within the Network itself however, the position of women, the processes in which they are engaged and the priorities they set themselves, differ greatly from one setting to another.

Since Network No. 12 comprises women from European and Latin American countries, there could be a temptation to focus more on the differences between them than the objectives and strategies which bind them together. The Network aims to strengthen and build on the latter. The women involved are engaged in different processes and we must strive to achieve an optimum intermeshing of contextually-based strategies for joint action. There can be no doubt that we share the objective of increased participation for women in decision-making, as we must also share strategies and actions.

On this basis it can be affirmed that in order to achieve political objectives of whatever nature (from better health to higher employment rates; peace-building, promotion of women or simple survival), we need active participation by women in strategic decision-making.

The lack of participation by women in decision-making, and in consequence, the failure of authorities to take the needs and interests of women into account in this decision-making, continues to give rise to and consolidate women's invisibility in the public sphere. This leads to a form of "democratic deficit" which hinders the full development of society. To avoid this, we must work for incorporation of the priorities, interests and perspectives of women into the sphere of public affairs and decision-making, both in Europe and Latin America. In other words, we need the "gender perspective".

It is also important to promote women's contribution to a new way of doing and apprehending politics in that men and women share much in common, but have different life experiences.

- **A new perspective on politics and decision-making: new Leadership**

In line with the European Commission's report "How to create a gender balance in political decision-making. A guide to implementing policies for increasing the participation of women in political decision-making", this section will deal with the changes required in the political system itself, the content of political decisions and decision-making culture. If sufficient numbers of women were involved in policy decision-making (i.e., if we achieved sufficient critical mass), then the overall perspective of policy making could change. We propose the hypothesis that women, due to their experience and interests, would be likely to be critical of traditional policy approaches and would work to widen the spectrum for action.

Section 2 of the *Charter of Rome* "Women for the renewal of politics and society" (18 May, 1996), states that a sufficient number of women representatives would contribute to changes in policy and decision-making, both in terms of priorities and content, and decision-making procedures.

Women can change the structure and culture of politics. Several studies have shown that women develop leadership styles which are different from those of men. For example, a study on members of Parliament in the Netherlands discovered that the women members perceived their way of doing politics as different from that of their male colleagues. They saw themselves as more practical, more pragmatic and more sensitive to their electors. They also saw their work differently: women attached more importance to reaching agreement and negotiating with members of other parties.

This hypothesis, which underlies our demand for a greater number of women in decision-making, holds that women politicians tend to be more democratic and more likely to avoid confrontation; they are more open to change and more skilled in team-work. It also holds that women see present decision-making mechanisms as overly centralised, hierarchical and technocratic. It is also important to consider the hypothesis that a greater number of women in senior positions would lead to a change in political deliberation processes.

A number of studies in Europe and Latin America have shown that women spend less time in positions of power. This has a negative impact on their political leadership.

A Spanish study revealed the following:

- For 61.2% of women members of parliament, the 1996-2000 term was their first, whereas for men, this figure was only 38%.
- In the 1995 local elections, only 30% of the women candidates went on to run for another term.

These data, which were similar in all electoral districts, reveal that there are obstacles preventing women from accumulating the political experience and practice needed to consolidate leadership.

There is also a lack of models and existing guidelines on evaluating the impact of women in politics.

Studies show that if women's participation rate in decision-making rises to between 30 and 35% (what is generally known as "critical mass"), then they may have a real impact on decision-making and the renewal of political life

There are also some basic conditions which must be fulfilled if women's leadership is to be consolidated: women must have full equality in the exercise of political and economic power; they must participate fully in the decision-making process at all levels, both national and international, thereby making a contribution towards the great overall goals of equality, development and peace.

- **Political and public life**

Among the basic international instruments for women's rights, first and foremost without doubt we must list the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, mentioned earlier. The Convention attributes special importance to women's participation in public life and decision-making. Under article 7, the signatory states undertake to adopt appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life and to ensure equality with men. The provisions of this article cover all spheres of public and political life.

Article 7 also highlights that public and political life is a very broad concept. It covers the exercise of political power, in particular the exercise of legislative, judicial, executive and administrative power. The Convention covers all aspects of public administration and the formulation and execution of policy at international, national, regional and local level. It also embraces many aspects of civil society, including, public boards, local councils and political parties, trade unions, professional and industrial associations, women's, community and other organisations which are active in public and political life.

The Convention foresees that, to be effective, women's equality will be achieved within a political regime in which all citizens have the right to vote and run for election; where elections are run on a principle of universal suffrage and secret ballot. This is the only guarantee that the electorate can freely express its wishes, as set out in international instruments on human rights, such as article 21 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and article 25 of the *International Pact on Civil and Political Rights*.

- **Advancing and *empowering* women**

A special mention must be made of the Beijing Conference in 1995. Its analysis, recommendations and strategies continue to be valid. Furthermore, the conference marked a milestone and set benchmarks for analysis of the position of women worldwide and for international and national measures and strategies to overcome obstacles, which were included in the Platform for Action.

The *Beijing Declaration* and the Platform for Action, the two outcomes of the Conference, synthesise the efforts made by thousands of social, private and public groups to establish an agreed situational analysis and design strategies at national and international level.

The Beijing Platform for Action proposes action through promotion of the “advancement and *empowerment*³ of women throughout the world” (*Beijing Declaration*), thereby guaranteeing their right to completely fulfil their potential in society and to structure their lives in line with their aspirations.

The Declaration states that it is vital to promote participation of women in public life, so as to harness the benefits of their contribution, safeguard their interests and comply with the principle of the universal human rights, irrespective of gender.

The Declaration also states that full participation by women is fundamental, not only for women empowerment but also for the advancement of all society.

It is appropriate at this stage to recall some of the provisions of the Declaration of Beijing, with which signatory governments claim to agree. These include:

- We must work for women's *empowerment* and their full and equal participation in all spheres of society, including decision-making and power, if we are to achieve equality, development and peace.
- Women's rights are human rights.
- Equal rights, opportunities and access to resources, equal sharing of family responsibilities by men and women, and a relationship of partnership between the sexes are critical to people's and family well-being and to consolidation of democracy.

Achievement of the Platform for Action objectives will require commitment from governments and from the international community. By undertaking to carry out actions at national and international level, governments and the international community are recognise the need to set a priority on measures for the advancement and *empowerment* of women.

- **Data on political participation**

One of the main advances made over recent decades is the improved collection and processing of data on women at national and international level. This enables us to carry out diagnostic analysis and monitor changes.

This is why Network no. 12 carried out its *Baseline Diagnosis*, with a wide range of data and analysis on the position of women in Latin America and Europe. The Baseline Diagnosis is recommended reading.

The most difficult aspect to determine is the participation of women in government, since the data are less homogenous. In addition to the content of the Diagnosis, the table presented below drawn from the *UN Human Development Report* is also illustrative. It presents statistics on women in government and at ministerial level. One problem is that countries are not homogenous in terms of positions of responsibility. The countries chosen were in three groups according to developmental level. The first group were highly developed countries, under UN classification, the others were countries with a moderate level of development and finally, the third group were characterised as low development. The number to the left of the country name indicates its ranking on the UNDP development index.

³ This concept is twofold: firstly, it means consciousness of the individual and collective power of women. In this light, *empowerment* entails the recovery of women's dignity as people. Secondly, *empowerment* also has a political dimension in that it demands that women participate in decision-making, i.e., that they exercise power.

Table 2: Political participation by women across countries

		Year women achieved the right to vote (the first date in the column on the left refers to a restricted right to vote)		Year the first women was elected (E) or assigned (A) to the Parliament	Percentage of women in high-ranking gov. And admin. positions.	Seats held by women (on 1 March, 2003)	
		Vote	To be elected			Lower House or Congress	Upper House or Senate
Highly developed							
1	Norway	1907, 1913	1907, 1913	1911 A	42.1	36.4	–
2	Iceland	1915	1915	1922 E	33.3	34.9	–
3	Sweden	1861, 1921	1907, 1921	1921 E	55.0	45.3	–
4	Australia	1902, 1962	1902, 1962	1943 E	19.5	25.3	28.9
5	The Netherlands	1919	1917	1918 E	31.0	36.7	26.7
6	Belgium	1919, 1948	1921, 1948	1921 A	18.5	23.3	28.2
7	United States	1920, 1960	1788	1917 E	31.8	14.3	13.0
8	Canada	1917, 1950	1920, 1960	1921 E	24.3	20.6	32.4
9	Japan	1945, 1947	1945, 1947	1946 E	5.7	7.3	15.4
10	Switzerland	1971	1971	1971 E	28.6	23.0	19.6
11	Denmark	1915	1915	1918 E	45.0	38.0	–
12	Ireland	1918, 1928	1918, 1928	1918 E	18.8	13.3	16.7
13	Great Britain	1918, 1928	1918, 1928	1918 E	33.3	17.9	16.4
14	Finland	1906	1906	1907 E	44.4	36.5	–
15	Luxembourg	1919	1919	1919 E	28.6	16.7	–
16	Austria	1918	1918	1919 E	31.3	33.9	21.0
17	France	1944	1944	1945 E	37.9	12.2	10.9
18	Germany	1918	1918	1919 E	35.7	32.2	24.6
19	Spain	1931	1931	1931 E	17.6	28.3	24.3
20	New Zeland	1893	1919	1933 E	44.0	29.2	–
Medium development							
69	Venezuela	1946	1946	1948 E	0.0	9.7	–
74	Thailand	1932	1932	1948 A	5.7	9.2	10.5
96	Turkey	1930	1934	1935 A	0.0	4.4	–
107	Algeria	1962	1962	1962 A	0.0	6.2	5.6
112	Indonesia	1945	1945	1950 A	5.9	8.0	–
119	Guatemala	1946	1946	1956 E	7.1	8.8	–
120	Egypt	1956	1956	1957 E	6.1	2.4	–
126	Morocco	1963	1963	1993 E	4.9	10.8	0.4
127	India	1950	1950	1952 E	10.1	8.8	10.3
139	Bangladesh	1972	1972	1973 E	9.5	2.0	–
Low development							
164	Angola	1975	1975	1980 E	14.7	15.5	–
166	Guinea-Bissau	1977	1977	1972 A	8.3	7.8	–

Source: UNDP, Human Development Report 2003.

The majority of women who exercise government responsibilities do so in the areas of education, social welfare, family affairs, etc.

The number of women occupying posts in economics,

national security or infrastructure development is very low, and women heads of government or Prime Ministers in the world since 1945 total only 32:

Table 3: women prime ministers

Name	Term of office	Country
Sirimavo Bandaranaike	1960-1965 1970-1977 1994-2000	Sri Lanka
Indira Gandhi	1966-1977 1980-1984	India
Golda Meir	1969-1974	Israel
Elisabeth Domitien	1975-1976	Central African Republic
Margaret Thatcher	1979-1990	Great Britain
María de Lourdes Pintasilgo	1979-1980	Portugal
Mary Eugenia Charles	1980-1995 1981	Dominican Republic
Gro Harlem Brundtland	1986-1989 1990-1996	Norway
Milka Planinc	1982-1986	Yugoslavia
Benazir Bhutto	1988-1990 1993-1996	Pakistan
Kazimiera Danutė Prunskienė	1990-1991	Lithuania
Khaleda Zia	1991-1996	Bangladesh
Edith Cresson	1991-1992	France
Hanna Suchocka	1992-1993	Poland
Kim Campbell	1993	Canada
Tansu Çiller	1993-1996	Turkey
Sylvie Kinigi	1993-1994	Burundi
Agathe Uwilingiyimana	1993-1994	Rwanda
Chandrika Kumaratunga	1994	Sri Lanka
Reneta Indzhova	1994-1995	Bulgaria
Claudette Werleigh	1995-1996	Haiti
Sheikh Hasina Wajed	1996-2001	Bangladesh
Janet Jagan	1997	Guyana
Jenny Shipley	1997-1999	New Zealand
Irena Degutienė	1999 (2 veces)	Lithuania
Nyam-Osoriyn Tuyaa	1999	Mongolia
Helen Elizabeth Clark	1999-	New Zealand
Mame Madior Boye	2001-2002	Senegal
Chang Sang	2002	South Korea
Maria das Neves Ceita Baptista de Sousa	2002	São Tomé-Principe
Anneli Tuulikki Jäätteenmäki	2003	Finland
Beatriz Merino Lucero	2003	Peru

Source: Roberto Ortiz de Zárate.

<http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/00women.htm>

To date only 28 women have occupied positions as Presidents or Heads of State. Although of lesser importance in parliamentary regimes, in presidential systems this position concentrates all executive power. Examples of the latter are Corazón Aquino (the Philippines, 1986-1992), Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (Nicaragua, 1990-1997), Mireya Moscoso (Panama, 1999-), Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (the Philippines, 2001-) and Megawati Sukarnoputri (Indonesia, 2001).

• Local Politics

The concerns of Network no. 12 also extend to other areas: women in cities and their access to local decision-making.

Local and regional level politics are increasingly serving as channels for expression of identity and political action focused on the main problems facing citizens in everyday life: growth and the environment, excess waste and poverty, possible liberties and real exclusions.

Why this specific focus on promoting women's participation in local politics? Towns and cities are the most immediate sphere of political activity. They are the setting for daily life, the manifestation of our day-to-day needs, the best and the worst of life in its unrefined state, needs which are often forgotten by politics and which need to be transformed through politics into action and solutions.

The general objectives of Network no. 12 focus on women's participation in local decision-making. The Network aims to promote new citizen-centred city and town models, placing emphasis on women's contribution to decision-making at local level, and bearing in mind that women are the main users of city services and, as such, have an additional right to participate in their design.

Promoting the active participation of women in local level decision-making means promoting the direct and active participation of women in design and development of new models of city which will be good for both men and women, unlike the current model.

The previous section and Chapter 4 of the *Baseline Diagnosis* ("Cities from a gender perspective") highlighted how the social construction of gender discriminated against women, over the course of history, in the assignation of functions and access to public and private spheres, constructing parallel and simultaneous worlds which intermeshed in private relations.

In their planning and organisation, cities, as tangible physical settings for human life, reproduce the gender division regarding functions and access to public and private spheres, thereby maintaining a division which now, more than ever, does not correspond to the functions and needs of either of the two sexes inhabiting them. *The Network's Baseline Diagnosis* sees cities as spaces which limit and yet provide great possibilities

for women's access to decision-making and their full development as active citizens.

In this light, the report highlights the factors which characterise city organisation and serve to perpetuate sexual discrimination:

- The spatial organisation of cities reinforces and reproduces the sexual division of labour,
- The absence of women from urban planning and management decision-making forums, and
- The fact that women's needs deriving from the sexual division of labour and the spatial segregation of cities are not taken into account in urban planning and management.

According to the Diagnosis "these three factors contribute to the basic framework of problems affecting women in cities".

Therefore, if we want cities to become settings for harmonious living, favouring the full development of those living in them, it is vital to ensure active participation by women in their design and management, i.e., in decision-making. The final chapter of this Report will detail with this last point in more detail.

• Women in Local Power

Limitations on women's political participation and/or exclusion from decision-making and exercise of power at local level

As we have seen, women's struggle for recognition of their rights has been long and tenacious. The process is complex and coincided with other processes of structural, political and cultural change.

However, active participation by women in municipalities and cities cannot be limited to active participation in politics. Women have a long tradition as active participants in municipal and local councils through various associations of a local nature. In most NGOs, parents' and residents' associations, and local councils we find a high proportion of women participants. They are invariably to the forefront in movements demanding basic social rights such as health, education and social services. However, as we will see later on, this commitment is not reflected in the proportion of women occupying elected positions at municipal level, which continues to be very low.

There is no doubt that the number of women in local government has increased, as part of an advance in recent years in other spheres of power. Despite this, the presence of women in power at local level is still relatively low, especially when compared to other electoral spheres. In general, women

have participated at a consultative level rather than an executive one. That is, they are not part of decision-making teams (see *Baseline Diagnosis*, pp. 26-27).

Until a short time ago, general analysis of the low number of women in elected positions pointed to the corresponding shortage of women on party candidate lists. The few women on the list tended to suffer discrimination regarding the position they occupied – the women were invariably way down the list. The outcome in terms of elected positions was obvious.

Later, an effort was made to correct this imbalance through affirmative action, including quotas which established not only a set percentage of seats to be reserved for women candidates, but also a number of premium positions on candidate lists. However, the impact of these measures on municipal election results has been very different from elections at other levels.

It is recommended that the Network's second seminar explore these issues in more depth. We must strive to find the underlying causes of this situation, if we are to identify and apply possible corrective measures.

• Notes on possible causes of deficit in local participation

Over recent years, several of the causes of this "glass ceiling" which impedes equal participation by men and women in decision-making have been identified: the excessive burden on women who take responsibility for family affairs in addition to their professional or political work; candidate selection networks made up primarily of men; the absence of political socialisation for women and the weight of centuries-old cultural stereotypes (see section 3.2).

All these factors are reproduced when it comes to the political participation by women at local level. Some (or perhaps all) of them seem to even grow in strength at the local level. The Dolores Ibárruri Foundation carried out a qualitative study entitled "More Women in Local Power" which is one of the few studies existing in this subject matter. It is the source of some of the data presented in this section. According to this study, the main factors underlying the situation are:

- In many Municipal Councils, especially smaller ones, elected positions are unpaid. Women accepting such positions have a threefold working life: the elected position, work and the family.
- At local level everything is more personal; there can be no anonymity; again this is especially true of smaller municipalities, and more again in the case of women, who tend to stand out by virtue of being so few. One result of this is that pressure on the occupant of the position is doubled (local residents, local media, etc.) and the time

and spaces attributed to the private and public spheres tend to intermingle and blur. This often has a negative effect on the personal or professional life of these women.

- Cultural stereotypes weigh more heavily and have more impact at local level.

• The opinions of women mayors and councillors on feminism

Interviews with women who either had been or were presently mayors and councillors in the above-mentioned study found that the vast majority identified totally with the Feminist movement, at least with its aims regarding political participation of women. However, only some of them were fully happy to describe themselves as feminists. They felt that the Feminist movement has been unjustly stigmatised and said they did not share the downgraded and distorted image of the Feminist movement which existed at grassroots level. Further, they felt that political parties were now satisfied to defend the arguments which had been the exclusive reserve of feminists just a few years previously. Nevertheless, they are aware of the political and electoral costs of defining themselves as feminists, not only in terms of the general public but also members of their own parties. They concluded that feminism continues to bear connotations of extremism and radicalism that do not help them in their work. They claim that their reluctance to classify themselves as feminists does not mean that their ideas in the realm of women's affairs are not progressive and feminist in nature, and that they do not bring this ideology to bear on all areas in which they work.

• Effects of low participation by women in local government

The low number of women in municipal government is an issue of great concern, not only because municipal government is the institution closest to the general public, but also because municipal elections are the most widely-based element of representative democracy. Therefore, any gender policy strategy or plan aiming to bring about greater participation of women in representative politics must first set out to increase the number of women occupying posts as mayors and councillors in local government.

A range of reasons are offered to explain this low level of participation. Sometimes, it has even been said that there are not enough candidates, i.e., women willing to go forward for election.

The problem is a frequent and widespread one and therefore merits in-depth examination. It is important to monitor the functioning of candidate selection and recruitment processes. It has been pointed out that centralised recruitment mechanisms

– under the control of the party elite, with higher levels of education and therefore more openness to the entry of women – have tended to favour greater and more effective application of quotas.

A Spanish study provides the following data: 68% of Spaniards blame the political parties for the low numbers of women in politics, saying that the parties prefer male candidates. This opinion is shared by 83.6% of female members of parliament and by 44.2% of male members of parliament (1996 data). Therefore, instead of seeing the origin of the problem in supply (candidates and motivation), Spanish members of parliament point to the demand side, i.e., the attitudes of the parties' candidate selection committees.

There is a general tendency for women's participation to be lower in local government than in national government or parliamentary level. In addition, local politics is the setting for much less action aiming to promote equal opportunities.

In conclusion, women at local level tend to "specialise" in certain areas. They continue to mainly occupy areas of "social" concern. This, of course, also occurs in national government: the ministries first occupied by women were all connected to social affairs and these continue to be assigned predominantly to women today.

3.1.3. Women must participate in politics if we are to strengthen democracy

- Parity democracy

This section will follow the analysis and sequential lay-out adopted by Carmen Martínez Ten and Purificación Gutiérrez in their study "Hacia la representación paritaria" in "El voto de las mujeres" (2003).

The term "parity democracy" and, indeed, the underlying idea, is of recent coinage and marks a fundamental turning-point in the campaign for women's access to political decision-making and therefore to the places where this decision-making takes place: parliaments and governments.

Until the late 1980s, the low level of female participation in political decision-making was seen as a lack of equality and as discrimination against women. Emphasis began to be placed on the defective nature of a democracy which proceeded without the active participation of 50% of the population. Women may have had a problem, they did – they were excluded from making the decisions which affected them: however, democracy itself also had a problem, since persistent exclusion of women from the realm of politics constituted a conceptual and practical failure of representative democracy. This shift in emphasis was of fundamental importance.

The first use of the term dates back to a 1989 Council of Europe seminar entitled "Parity democracy. Forty years of Council of Europe Activity". However, it was not until 1992, with the *Final Declaration of the First European Summit on "Women in Power"*, held in Athens in November, under the auspices of the European Commission and with the participation of women prime ministers, ministers and other distinguished figures, that the term began to be used with a clear and precise definition.

The Declaration begins by stating that "the current position of women in the Member States of the European Communities as in other European countries is still characterised by profound inequality in all public and political decision-making authorities and bodies at every level - local, regional, national and European...[and]... women's participation in political decision-making has not improved in a number of European countries since the mid-seventies."

The document goes on to make demands of great political significance: "Women represent half the potential talent and skills of humanity and their under-representation in decision-making is a loss for society as a whole."

"A balanced participation by women and men in decision-making would produce different ideas, values and styles of behaviour suited to a fairer and more balanced world for all, both women and men."

"The absence of women in political representation and decision making implies a democratic deficit which is incompatible with true democracy. This deficit can only be overcome by a fairer distribution of public and private responsibilities and a more balanced presence of women and men in the political decision-making bodies."

The Declaration highlights "the need to make profound changes in the structure of decision-making processes so as to ensure equality between men and women."

The means of overcoming this situation were also defined and conceptualised at Athens: parity democracy, which would mean a balanced representation of men and women in the ratio of 60/40, in other words, that there should not be more than 60% or less than 40% of either gender on any electoral list or in any decision-making or representative posts.

Through the Beijing World Conference on Women in September 1995, the United Nations Organisation also clearly aligned itself with those demanding parity for women in all decision-making spheres as a necessary condition for development and peace: "Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace."

The Platform for Action approved by the Conference set the following compulsory strategic objectives for all signatory governments: "to adopt measures to ensure (if necessary,

through changes to electoral systems) equal access to and full participation in power and decision-making".

The Platform also set out that governments and other public and private institutions in signatory states would adopt "positive measures to ensure that a decisive number of women would occupy executive and management positions in strategic decision-making positions."

The Declaration of Athens (1992) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) are, without any doubt, key documents in the campaign for women's participation in decision-making and political power. *The Athens Declaration* defined the pre-existing situation as "characterised by profound inequality in all public and political decision-making authorities and bodies at every level -local, regional, national and European" and as a situation of "democratic deficit", in which formal political rights did not guarantee equality in practice.

These documents have had a significant impact and their content has been developed and incorporated into regional strategies for equality, for example, in Latin America and Europe. They have also penetrated a number of countries in the form of legislative or constitutional changes. A significant number of political parties have modified their internal regulations to ensure more balanced representation of women.

• European regional level instruments and policies

As mentioned earlier, the European Council and the European Union were responsible for development of the concept of parity and their work has permitted significant advances in this field.

The Council of Europe, whose main mission is defence and promotion of human rights, has established, through its Steering Committee for Equality (CEEG, 1979) important directives on "affirmative action" and parity democracy.

On 12 March, 2003, the Council of Ministers of the European Council approved a recommendation on balanced participation of men and women in decision-making, in response to the Parliamentary Assembly's request in June 1999. The Council Assembly also seconded previous advances, such as the outcome of the Ministerial Conference held in Istanbul in 1997. The Council of Ministers' recommendation to the 143 member-governments was that they "promote legislative and administrative changes to ensure parity democracy and establish parity observatories to monitor the situation."

The debate on women's participation in politics and decision-making is not limited to Europe however. In Latin America, for instance, both the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Economic Commission for Latin American Countries (CEPAL) have focused special attention over the last ten years on the issue of women's access to power and decision-making.

• The position in other countries

The debate on parity in international multilateral and regional institutions has also been reflected at national and local level.

A range of actions have been taken to promote women's participation in representative politics, including modifications to constitutional and electoral law, and internal party regulations and directives concerning candidate selection procedures. Some of these measures involved compulsory actions, with certain conditions to be met, (e.g., compulsory percentages of women candidates, and positions on candidate lists). Some measures include sanctions for failure to comply. Application of the measures depends on the election system employed. In general, quotas work better in proportional representation systems than in "first past the post" systems, with only a single candidate per constituency.

• Election systems

The Nordic countries were the pioneers in establishing quotas and even today, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway occupy first place in the world ranking for women members of parliament with figures ranging from 45.3% in Sweden to 36.4% in Norway.

Belgium was for many years the only EU country to impose a quota system for political party election candidates (the 1994 law was amended in 1999). Italy applied a quota law from 1993 to 1995, when it was repealed as unconstitutional. After a constitutional amendment in 1999, France introduced a parity-inspired law in 2000 obliging parties to ensure balanced representation between men and women, with fines for failure to comply.

Table 4: Electoral quotas in Latin America

Country	Year of amendment	Minimum quota	Specification of position on list	Type of list
Argentina	1991	30%	Sí	Closed
Costa Rica	1997/2000	40%	Sí	Closed
Peru	1997	25%	No	Open
Dominican Rep.	1997	25%	No	Closed
Mexico	1996	30%	No	Closed
Ecuador	1997	20%		
	2000	30%	Sí	Open
Bolivia	1997	30%	Sí	Closed
Panama	1997	30%	No	Open
Brazil	1997	30%	No	Open
Paraguay	1996	20%	Sí	Closed

Source: Jacqueline Peschard. *El sistema de cuotas en América Latina*. www.democraciaparitaria.com.

Other countries with applying systems reserving positions for women in political representation are Namibia, North Korea, Taiwan, Tanzania and Bangladesh.

Finally, there are political parties who opt to adjust their own regulations to ensure women occupy a certain percentage of positions, both internally and for election lists. For example, 57 member parties of the International Socialist have reserved places for women, ranging from 50% to not less than 40% (i.e., parity democracy). These include the French Socialist Party, the Swedish social democrats and the Spanish PSOE. Greece's PASOK applies a 20% quota.

There is an important conceptual difference between quotas and parity. Parity, i.e., balanced representation of men and women in such a way that neither sex accounts for more than 60% of the total positions, involves a qualitative as well as a quantitative difference in respect of quotas of 25 or 30% which, although representing an advance still maintain female under-representation (and are presented as an argument against inequality). Parity entails enhanced democratic quality.

3.2. KEY FACTORS IN WOMEN'S UNDER-REPRESENTATION

There are many barriers to be overcome for those striving to reach a position of legislative power. Some of these are the same for both men and women; however there are others which only apply to women. For example, countries differ with respect to the opportunities provided to women to achieve education and enter the labour market. For many women, the problems begin with a lack of political socialisation, which may give rise to lower interest in and knowledge of politics than men. For many women,

combining their role as mothers, especially as mothers of young children, with political responsibilities is also difficult. Political work itself is not well adapted to the working hours of women with family responsibilities.

As pointed out in the *Network's Diagnosis*, statistics show that women's presence in roles of responsibility in political parties and in decision-making bodies has not advanced at the same rate as other areas such as education and general professions. This highlights the barriers to women's participation inherent in the political party candidate selection procedures and criteria. Awareness of the factors which can either favour or impede women's access to roles of political responsibility will enable us to develop strategies to overcome these barriers. Section 3.3 describes several of the political instruments which can be used to this end.

The *Network's Diagnosis* analysed different factors which contribute to the persistent under-representation of women in different areas of government. In the section "Democratic Deficit, absences and factors" (p. 29-31) the following factors are mentioned inter alia:

- Firstly, at "grassroots" level, there is a gender-based division of work characterised by unlimited timetables, work at weekends, etc. which means that party militants are essentially male. It is difficult for women to combine family responsibilities with political activism.
- A second factor is directly related with the structure of political party decision-making apparatus: if those who decide are men, then in all likelihood they will choose men candidates, unless their values or party practices change dramatically. European Parliament Resolution "Gender-Balanced Decision-Making" (2001), stresses "the need to involve men in working

towards greater equality, since equality in decision-making can only be achieved by both sexes cooperating.”

- Thirdly, as mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, the different socialisation received by men and women constitutes another obstacle. This was summed up by a woman participant in the study by the Dolores Ibárruri Foundation: “...you tell a man that he’s going to be made a minister, and the first thing he thinks is ‘about time!’. You tell a woman and her reaction is ‘do you think I’ll be able to do it?’ ‘Are you sure?’” If men must learn to cooperate for equality, then women must reaffirm our will to advance and value our actions and abilities.
- Finally, a major obstacle, which is not exclusively the reserve of women, but which has a direct effect on women: the loss of confidence in the value of politics and in political parties as organisations, common to all Western countries. There are two aspects which demand analysis. Membership trends in political parties, and the loss of confidence in political institutions (which may lead to a loss of democratic legitimacy). These have been the subject of debate in consolidated democracies since the 1970s. It is precisely this crisis in the party political system common to all states which demands that strategies be employed jointly by governments, political parties and women’s organisations to promote balanced representation of women in political decision-making. Achieving this central presence of women in decision-making could help to redress the loss of confidence in politics and democracy.

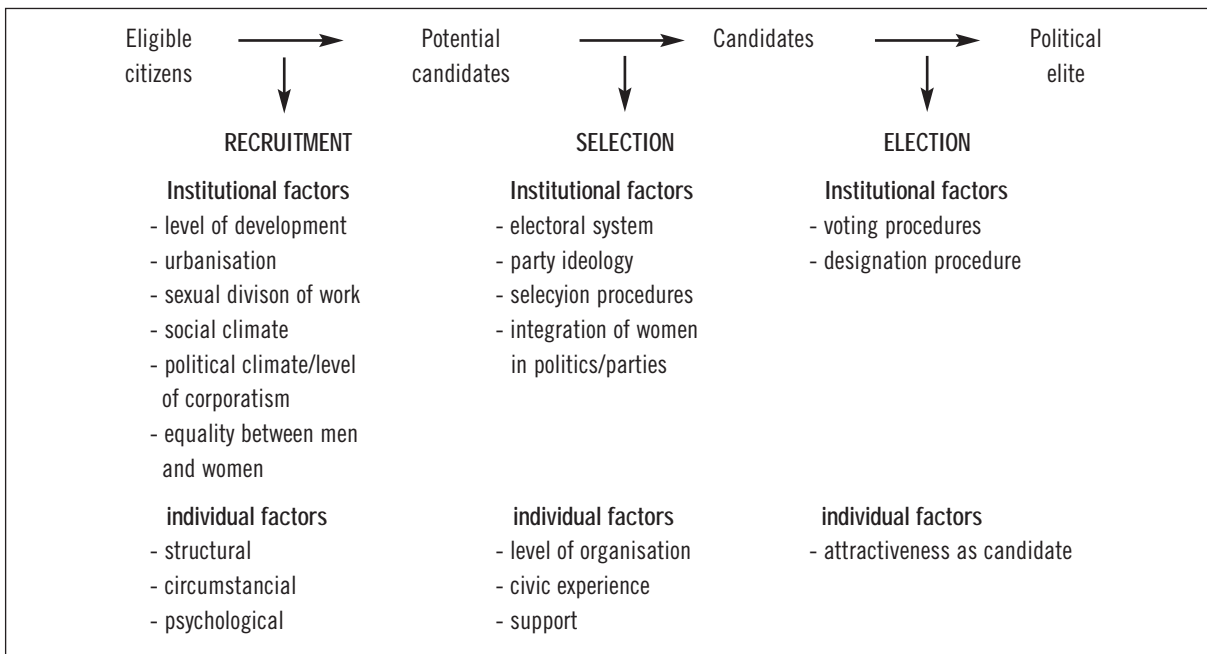
• **Institutional factors/individual factors**

The recommendations of the European Commission’s “How to create a gender balance in political decision-making. A guide to implementing policies for increasing the participation of women in political decision-making” continue to be valid. In chapter 2, it explores the causes of women’s under-representation in politics and draws a distinction between individual and institutional factors in classification of the barriers faced by women. Individual factors includes aspects which favour entry into political life such as training, education and professional experience, and also aspects which impede it, such as having young children. The institutional factors are related to the organisation of society and the political system.

The document includes the following table which aims to provide a general overview of the factors favouring or hindering women’s access to positions of political responsibility, as determined by studies and research carried out over recent years.

• **Access to political decision-making**

For each of the three stages of this process (i.e., recruitment, selection and election), the individual and institutional factors affecting women’s electoral possibilities are laid out.



- Recruitment

Institutional factors

- Level of economic development and urbanisation of the country: women face more obstacles in countries with lower standards of living and urbanisation.
- Sexual division of work: whether society allows women a role in public affairs (whether the state reinforces traditional roles; lack of nurseries..). This has a major impact on the woman's individual development.
- Social climate: for example, the predominant religion of a country may have a significant effect on the level of women's participation in politics; religion may also have played an important role in the development of the traditional attitudes regarding gender roles in society.
- Political climate: authoritarian and military regimes in general tend to restrict or impede the exercise of democracy and do not favour high levels of political participation by women.
- Equality between men and women: different countries avail of different instruments to promote economic, political and social equality.

Individual factors

- Structural: Access to political resources. These factors include educational level (a relatively high level of education seems to be necessary for women to become involved in politics), professional experience and income.
- Circumstantial: The circumstances in which the majority of women find themselves (as housewives). Barrier: being a mother of young children. Women's right to participate in politics was not accompanied by establishment of the necessary facilities and support services to enable exercise of this right. The unpredictable hours required by political activity are incompatible with motherhood, especially for mothers of young children. There is also the psychological barrier of guilt feelings about neglecting one's family. Another important factor for the majority of women is partner support (women politicians recognise the importance of the psychological support of their partners); this support cannot be taken for granted, especially when the women's political activity competes with the husband or partner's work. A woman's political career may prove incompatible with the traditional division of work within a marriage.
- Psychological: The psychological effects of socialisation, especially in the case of politics. One consequence is that women lack confidence in their own political capacity.

- Selection

Institutional factors

- Electoral system: The electoral and political system plays a role. There is a close link between the electoral system employed and the number of women elected to parliament. A proportional representation system (each party presents a list of candidates), provides women with greater possibilities of being elected than a majority ("first past the post") system with single-representative constituencies.
- Party ideology: This can affect women's participation in a number of ways: liberal ideologies tend to favour equal opportunities in a competitive political market, while progressive ideologies make a specific commitment to women's emancipation. Conservative ideology on the other hand, tends to emphasise the women's role in the family more than in politics. Historically, it has been the left of centre parties that have initiated measures to increase the number of women representatives.
- Selection procedures: The probabilities of a woman being selected is the outcome of three factors: who makes the choice, the selection criteria employed and whether there are specific policies reinforcing women candidates. Depending on the election system, it is either the voters or the party that make the initial selection; in the list system it is the party that selects the candidates. This determines the probabilities of women being given a "safe position" on the list. In general, decentralised selection processes have tended to be unfavourable for selection of women candidates. This would appear to be due to the fact that national party leaders are keener to achieve balanced representation of men and women than local party heads. Decentralised procedures also tend to be more competitive with the consequence that women are less likely to obtain a "safe position". In addition, regional party leaders are likely to push their own party allies, who invariably happen to be male. Political parties employ different selection criteria. They tend to prefer candidates with higher educational and professional status. The usual means of obtaining a senior political position is by having held office previously. All parties consider political experience as the most important requisite for a potential candidate. These criteria obviously have a negative effect on women's opportunities, since, very often, they are older when they join the party and thus have had less experience than their male counterparts. This issue ties in with the previously mentioned need to consolidate women's leadership skills. The question is whether there are specific policies which guarantee the selection of, at least, some women (reserved positions and quota systems).

- Integration of women in politics: Women’s participation in the politics of a country is determined by their degree of overall integration into politics. One important factor in the demand for equality has been the women’s movement in general and the feminist movement in particular, whose principle objective has been to defend and extend women’s rights. Political parties represent a specific form of political organisation and many of them have a special department or organisation for women party members. These women’s organisations may be of great help in integrating women into politics, in that they may serve to reduce the barriers to entry, provide training and post-election support to the new arrivals.

Individual factors

- We have just mentioned the need for political experience in order to obtain a high-level political post. There are also other individual factors which have a bearing on the selection process, for example, the woman’s involvement in non-political organisations (civic experience). Very often, participation in such organisations serves as a springboard for election to a public position, and parties see the support provided by such organisations as positive.

• Election

Institutional factors

- Voting procedure/designation procedure: voting procedures can also represent a barrier for women. It is more likely for a woman to be selected by designation than by direct election. Again, the explanation would seem to be that the authorities responsible for designating are more anxious to achieve a balance in many areas, including that of gender.

Individual factors

- Attractiveness as candidate: this factor is not so important in the closed list system. In this system, the majority of voters just vote for the party.

3.3. STRATEGIES AND INSTRUMENTS FOR EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN LOCAL POLITICS

This section will describe political instruments enabling us to design plans and actions for increased participation by women in political decision-making. These instruments are basically conceived for use by governments, initially national governments, since in many cases these are the main driving

force behind efforts to devolve power to women. However, bearing in mind the influence of political parties in selection of candidates for parliament or government, several of the strategies presented are addressed to them.

As in previous sections, the approach taken is to focus on women’s participation in power and decision-making at general level. Some of the proposals are applicable to local level, others would need to be redesigned specifically for the local level, which is the specific area of interest of Network no. 12.

It must also be pointed out that the intention of this chapter is to formulate specific policies and strategies to increase the number of women in politics, while chapter 4 aims to develop and structure integrated action plans and policies.

In the previous section (3.2), we saw some of the possible explanations for the continuing under-representation of women in positions of political leadership and we drew a distinction between individual and institutional barriers following the European Commission’s guide. In line with this, we shall now distinguish between two types of strategy aiming to offset the low level of participation by women in decision-making. The first is in response to individual barriers (i.e., the lack of personal resources which make it difficult for women to enter politics, including lack of education, professional status/income, political socialisation for self-confidence). The hypothesis is that when women can achieve the same educational level as men and enter the labour market in larger numbers, this will eventually give rise to more equal participation patterns in political power. The consequences of this strategy is increased access for women to education and employment. In addition, specific training for self-affirmation and exercise of political activity is required.

The second type addressed institutional barriers. These strategies set out from the assumption that power must be redistributed. In this analysis, the main obstacle posed for women wishing to gain access to decision-making positions is the selection process. Various studies have highlighted that these processes continue to be prejudiced towards continued occupation of decision-making positions by previously established groups and individuals, predominantly male. Therefore, the aim of strategies and policies in this area must be to change these criteria and selection processes so as to permit equal conditions for men and women. One such strategy is establishment of quotas. A specific instrument to achieve this is legislation. Electoral law can establish parity criteria for preparation of candidate lists.

The following table sets out examples of strategies aiming to increase women’s political participation. They are grouped according to type of strategy:

Table 5: Examples of strategies for governments and political parties

Government	Political party
<p>Type 1: strategies focused on individual barriers</p> <p>Recruitment: Awareness-raising campaigns through funding of NGOs for women (posters, television advertising, printed media, etc.).</p> <p>Recruitment and selection: Training of women through funding of special training centres, women's organisations or political parties.</p> <p>Selection: Provision of facilities to ease family obligations for women elected representatives (aids for child care; maternity leave for parliamentarians, etc.).</p>	<p>Type 1: strategies focused on individual barriers</p> <p>Recruitment: Campaigns motivating women to join political parties.</p> <p>Selection: Training, including specific training for women candidates.</p> <p>Selection: Women still undecided about accepting nomination, work with elected members so as to obtain experience and self-confidence. Funding for childcare expenses for potential candidates.</p>
<p>Type 2: strategies focused on institutional barriers</p> <p>Selection: Database of potential women candidates.</p> <p>Recruitment and selection: Funding of political parties (women's sections).</p> <p>Selection: Revise and modify selection procedures and criteria for all political positions.</p> <p>Selection: Quotas for designated political positions.</p> <p>Selection and election: Legislation (modify electoral legislation to ensure parties nominate a given number of women).</p>	<p>Typo 2: strategies focused on institutional barriers</p> <p>Selection: Adaptation of selection criteria; elimination of gender prejudices.</p> <p>Selection: Database including names, history and career objectives of party members.</p> <p>Selection: Establishment of quotas for internal party structures and electoral organisms.</p> <p>Selection and election: Alternation of men and women on candidate list or women-only list.</p>

There are many policies and strategies that governments and parties may employ and adapt with a view to increasing women's participation in politics. The following sections present five political instruments for discussion. Those which are more directly applicable to the local sphere are described in more depth; those which require the involvement of higher level power are merely presented.

- Research, compilation of statistics and monitoring: one of the most important instruments of affirmative action is compilation and publication of relevant statistics. This is empirical confirmation of women's under-representation. The next step is to disseminate the data. Compilation of data is an essential step for increasing women's participation. So as to enable government policies to focus on the fundamental issues, it is also advisable to carry out research into the specific barriers to women's participation in each country. It is also necessary to carry out monitoring so as to determine the efficacy of policies and measures applied.

- Awareness-raising: governments can play an important role in changing people's attitudes with regard to women's participation in politics. Awareness-raising campaigns are required to focus people's attention on the importance of equal participation by women, and to eradicate the stereotype that politicians are male. This includes the possibility of media programmes to support female candidates, or the creation of specific channels or platforms to ensure their political policies receive public attention (Ireland).
- Increasing numbers of potential candidates: Many studies have been carried out on the effects of the socialisation process on the learning of political roles. Men and women are socialised differently, and this has important consequences on the positions they later go on to occupy in society. Training courses aimed at eliminating barriers can also contribute.
 - a. Political socialisation: public and private spheres/ absence of models
 - b. Civic education: understanding the principles of democracy

- c. Vocational training and university education: there are specifically designed programmes to increase the number of potential female candidates. These programmes help women to acquire the knowledge and skills needed as local election candidates or to compete for positions of leadership in cultural or social organisations or trade unions. One example of such programmes is in the Netherlands, where the Ministry of Social Affairs has sponsored several training programmes for women in general and for immigrant women in particular. These programmes include knowledge of the political system, especially legal and financial aspects; personal development, including communication and negotiation skills, presentation techniques, dealing with the media; time management for work, political life and the home; in addition to psychological support and evaluation.
- d. Training of potential candidates: most political parties offer training for their members and potential candidates, covering campaign, presentation, negotiation and media skills. Specific courses for potential women candidates provide support to women, especially those who find they lack the necessary confidence.

- **Adaptation of party selection criteria:**

Recruitment and candidate selection criteria must be analysed to detect sexist prejudices, and new selection criteria and affirmative actions be recommended. These include quotas, alternation of men and women on lists, time limits for occupation of positions, etc. All these measures will serve to redress the under-representation of women in political decision-making.

- a. Eligibility requirements: the eligibility requirements for potential politicians are much more diffuse than in other spheres of activity in the professional and business world. As they stand at present, the recruitment and selection criteria employed by parties favour maintenance of certain groups, predominantly men, in positions of power. It is very difficult to defeat the person who already holds the position and very few senior political vacancies come up for newcomers. The features which are most highly valued in political leaders are principally associated with men. Similarly, the criteria for evaluation of qualifications to run for positions of responsibility are also defined by men. Widening and diversifying the selection criteria for potential political candidates would make a significant contribution to increasing the number of women entering decision-making positions.

- b. Quotas: one of the more controversial measures employed to promote equal presence of men and women in decision-making, which has already been discussed elsewhere in relation to the concept of parity. It is important that quotas be applied in combination with other programmes, such as, training programmes for potential women candidates, and databases of names and aspirations of party members.
- c. Consolidating leadership: studies show that the political career of men lasts longer than that of women, that reshuffling operations invariably have a more negative effect on women than men, and that changeover within the quota positions assigned to women is much higher than in the case of the equivalent position occupied by a man. This is not only due to the personal characteristics of the women in question or the problems of conciliating various roles. Essentially, the reason is that men wield the real power in organisations, power held by women is merely delegated. Thus we find men hold decision-making positions and power for much longer than women.

- **Legislation:** legal measures to guarantee equal participation of the genders in decision-making, thereby avoiding dependence on the goodwill of a given government or party leadership. This legislation must demand representative parity, as described in another section of this chapter. Legislation aiming to bring about equal political representation of men and women is the most direct strategy, but also the most controversial. To date, many governments have rejected this means as unconstitutional and as infringing pre-existing anti-discrimination legislation. Examples include the French constitutional amendment and electoral law in favour of parity, and the defeat of the Portuguese feminists and socialists on the issue of the constitutionality of their parity-based electoral law.

- **Strategies**

On the basis of the European Commission guidelines and the experience of recent years, the following approaches are potentially useful. They can be developed and built on at the Barcelona Seminar in April 2004:

1. Firstly, application of all measures to overcome the glass ceiling effect: sharing of family responsibilities, socialisation of women for decision-making, introduction of objective criteria for candidate selection, etc.
2. Secondly, diagnosis, data-collection and monitoring of the position of women in different spheres of activity. It is highly important to develop strong arguments for increased participation of women in decision-making.

The need to develop these arguments may seem self-evident. However, it must be remembered that parity democracy has many enemies. There are also female enemies: women who say they do not want to be quota women. All kinds of strategies are employed to ridicule and crush the campaign for women's rights. Therefore, it is extremely important to develop strong arguments and to be aware of the statistics which demonstrate the paltry presence of women in power. It is necessary to argue that this absence, in addition to unjust, is also negative for democracy and society. European documents in favour of parity democracy begin by saying: "Europe has a population of more than 370 million inhabitants, 51% of which are women. Despite the fact that equality between men and women is one of the fundamental principles in European Community legislation, there are very few women in decision-making positions either at European level or Member States level."

The figures speak for themselves: in Greece 4% of mayors are women, in Portugal 11%. In Sweden, where there are active support measures, the figure is 41%. These and other such statistics must be circulated to Network members.

The *Athens Declaration* set out that:

- Women account for half the talent and ability of society. Efficient use of that talent and ability does not mean excluding it from exercise of political power.
- The absence of women poses a question as to the legitimacy of our present-day political structures. A representative democracy in which the only representatives of society are men, is clearly an incomplete democracy.
- Women must make a contribution to changing political culture and agenda.

3. Concrete affirmative actions:

- Modification of funding of political parties: funding provided subject to parity requirements.
- Quotas applied by parties in preparing candidate lists.
- Modification of electoral law: recent years have seen initiatives in several European countries to ensure the presence of women on representative bodies through modifications of electoral law, introduction of quotas or parity criteria (Belgium, Italy and Portugal) or constitution amendment (France).

4. Women's networks, including the coordinated work of women who are active in different spheres (NGOs, institutional positions, feminist platforms), are very important.

This work must seek to incorporate women of all ideologies;

there must also be recognition of the work done by women in different areas: recognition of the importance of the advances made by women in what we could term "feminist theory"; recognition and support for women working in political parties and institutions; support for women's associations, both those working on specific issues and those active in more general fields.

The work must also contribute to consolidation of women's leadership and must demand visibility for women.

5. Working horizontally, *mainstreaming*. Integrating the gender variable into the political agenda of all areas - bearing in mind that this must also include the various levels of government: municipal, autonomous, national and international.
6. The strengthening of bodies working for equality and combating and denouncing efforts to render them ineffective.

ANNEX I

INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR ACTION TO BE EXPLORED IN-DEPTH BY NETWORK NO. 12

Below, we set out a number of initial proposals for action and analysis, which can be developed and explored in more depth by the Network. They are all along the lines of the strategies set out in this section. The Barcelona seminar in April will be the ideal setting for discussion, analysis and extension of the proposals.

- Proposed programmes to ensure advances towards equality.
 - Making women's political activity visible:
Women's political contributions are often rendered invisible. It is vital to foster and develop studies and diagnoses and design statistical indicators, which permit us to disseminate, monitor and evaluate the political work of women, their successes and failures, so as to design strategies for future advances.
 - Strategies to develop leadership and create local political actors with special attention to women's leadership.
The following measures are proposed to foster active participation of women in local politics. Many other possible measures will undoubtedly emerge from the Network's seminars and pooling sessions. All this will center on the Network's general objective of promoting participation of women in all aspects of local decision-making, through information, awareness-raising and training campaigns.
 - Implementation of measures to foster parity between men and women in local politics and candidate selection committees. Developing the role of political parties at municipal level in promoting the political involvement of women. Fostering their commitment to advances and compliance of parity requirements in political power and decision-making both at party and institutional level.
 - Actions to increase visibility of women candidates and their programmes. Development of strategies for media promotion of women as politicians, working to change stereotypes and design new roles which will open up avenues for other women. It must be remembered that the media are a powerful tool for promotion of equality through plural, balanced depiction of men and women free of traditional stereotypes, in a way which respects the dignity and value of the human being.
 - Development and implementation of other strategies and measures promoting recognition and strengthening

of women's leadership. Ensuring public awareness of these actions.

- Adoption of measures favouring participation of women in public life without prejudice to their professional careers (job protection for candidates) or to their personal-family lives (shared responsibilities, care services for dependents, etc.).
- Development of local and regional training projects and awareness-raising programmes for women wishing to become involved in politics. Training for candidates is vital both for improved self-confidence and useful management tools.
We agree with M^a Dolors Renau when she says that political training for women requires a specific gender component, focusing on the obstacles that militate against women in politics. Subjects such as self-assertion and leadership skills, history of women in politics, a new social contract, and networking are all priority areas. It is also necessary to provide training in more general aspects which, from a gender perspective, enable us to understand and improve the position of women via political action (democracy, globalisation, economics, etc.). A third training block would focus on political management, including negotiation, communication and teamwork skills, etc.

ANNEX II

ACTIONS PROPOSED IN THIS AREA AT THE NETWORK'S EL SALVADOR SEMINAR

Before concluding this chapter, we must recall the proposals from the Group Workshops at the Network's Presentation Seminar. These continue to be of interest and need to be further developed and explored.

Workshop 2: Instruments for women's participation in local politics

- Fostering the active citizenship of women.
- Participating in definition of the local political agenda.
- The presence of women on election lists and promotion of women candidates. Parity representation.
- Representation of women in strategic areas of municipal councils, such as public treasury, urban and regional planning.
- Presence of women on public consultative committees.
- Support for women's associations and organisations.

Workshop 4: Support measures for the presence of women in local decision-making

- Training for women as community and local leaders: objectives, experiences, means.
- Quotas for women's participation in local politics.
- Awareness-raising and communication campaigns incorporating the gender dimension.
- A social pact for sharing of household tasks, employment and decisions affecting towns and cities.
- Care services for family dependents.
- Job and timetable sharing.
- Decision-making methods facilitating the participation of women.

4. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING OF LOCAL GENDER POLICIES

4.1. THE CITY AND GENDER DISCOURSE

The city, according to Hannah Arendt, is memory organised; in effect, our cities, and also our homes and public spaces, have developed in response to roles played by men and women over the course of history.

- Municipal areas have developed in accordance with the dichotomy between public and private spaces which formed the basis for the gender role division of the “old social contract”. Under this system the man went out to work and the woman stayed at home.
- As pointed out by the *Network Diagnosis* (p. 49), “The 20th century has been marked by the growth of cities. An intensive urbanisation process has been underway, especially since the 1960s and 1970s, with migration from rural areas to cities and movements within cities themselves from the centre to the suburbs. In the vast majority of cases, the cities are plagued by problems deriving from this rapid growth and the need to cater for the incoming population.” These and other changes have given rise to the present-day problems of cities, including spatial segregation, exclusion and marginalisation, city centres which are either run-down and uninhabited or given over exclusively to services and shops. Our cities present a combination of the historical problems of urban development (urban planning, urban growth, spatial segregation, etc.) and the problems arising from application of a given economic model (air and noise pollution, waste of basic resources such as water and energy, waste disposal problems, property speculation, crime and violence). To this now, we must add the social, economic and cultural transformations being brought about by globalisation.
- Women have not been included in decision-making and management of these urban processes; whenever they were involved it was in a symbolical role, with scarce exceptions.
- Despite the existence of contradictory data, the latest statistics for Latin America and the European Union, as set out in the Diagnostic, show that in relative terms there are fewer women in local power than in national governments or parliaments, and that development of equality policies at local level, both in specific policies and mainstreaming, is more difficult. The need for women to participate in decision-making concerning the development and management of the city, the life space and regional setting is increasingly evident, not only to satisfy the demands of women themselves but also to make it possible for the cities we live in to respond to our needs.

Fostering women’s participation in city-building is part of the bigger need to revitalise democracy, through increased public involvement in decisions which affect people’s daily life. The proposed URB-AL Network actions and the El Salvador Seminar report point to the need to revitalise democracy in line with the *European Charter of Human Rights in the City* and *European Charter of Women in Cities*.

New participative forums and platforms are required, of a political, public and academic nature. The issue is an emerging one, and it is at local level, precisely, where the clearest advances are taking place (Joan Font). In recent years, pilot schemes have emerged based around urban planning, the environment, health and budgetary priorities. These are all recent experiences, innovative and poised to spread, despite budget cutbacks, recession and a weakening of the power of the state at local, regional and national level. Local Agendas 21 (A21L), citizens’ juries in Britain, the participative budgets of Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte, and the consultative councils established in various Latin American and European cities are all interesting experiments. We must monitor the difficulties encountered, the results achieved and the methodologies and processes employed.

The *mainstreaming* approach for integration of the gender perspective into all policy areas marks an ambitious departure from the conceptual point of view; however, like other multi-faceted strategies, such as sustainable development, it requires major social, economic and political transformations, and must, therefore, be seen as a continuous, mid- and long-term process, involving learning, negotiation and experience sharing. This chapter aims to present the instruments, planning and proposed content of equality policies, at both conceptual and operative level. We hope this will provide a starting point for discussion and for continuing development of the Network activities.

4.2. MAINSTREAMING. SPECIFIC POLICIES AND MAINSTREAMING. IMPLEMENTATION, CRITERIA AND METHODS.

Development of policies for gender equality has been one of the United Nations Organisation’s objectives since the 1970s. Programmes and strategies aiming to improve women’s health, education and employment have been promoted through the International Conferences on gender equality. However, after the mid-90s, it became increasingly evident that policies directed solely at women were not in themselves sufficient to change the structural conditions underlying gender inequality. Furthermore, it was also becoming ever more evident that gender inequality is not just a women’s problem, but rather a problem for society as a whole. This led to a new approach to gender policies

known as mainstreaming. Mainstreaming began to figure strongly after the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. The Beijing Platform for Action invited governments "to integrate the gender perspective into all policies and to analyse their consequences for women and for men before taking decisions."

Mainstreaming is sometimes translated as an integrated gender approach.

Mainstreaming sets out to bring about far-reaching structural changes which can lead to real and effective gender equality in the mid-term. The main difficulty involved is the lengthy period of time required for project maturing, development and implementation.

At present, work is taking place on the implementation stage and on analysis of methodologies for its application.

It is important to clarify the meaning and range of terms such as mainstreaming, specific policies, affirmative action and positive discrimination.

• Definitions

Mainstreaming: systematic integration of the priorities and needs of men and women in all policies from the planning phase, with analysis of the impact of the policy during application and evaluation.

Specific policies, affirmative actions: specific policies addressed to women employ affirmative action and positive discrimination as tools for equality. Affirmative action comprises temporary compensatory measures designed to favour women and offset inherent structural disadvantages (for example, women's training courses). Positive discrimination is a form of affirmative action but it is not addressed to achieving a level playing-field but rather directly to results (for example, selecting a woman instead of a man with the same qualifications for a given job).

Strategies for equal opportunities for men and women

Specific policies addressed to women		Mainstreaming
– A specific problem arising from a situation of inequality.	STARTING POINT	– General policies.
– Development of a specific policy to address the problem by means of the existing instruments for equality. (Equality bodies, equal opportunity plans).	ACTIONS	– Reorganisation of the political process ensuring that the gender perspective is integrated (with the objective of achieving equality).
– Short/mid-term. – Limited to specific policy areas and does not affect policy as a whole.	TYPE OF POLICY	– Long-term (seeks transformation). – Affects policy as a whole.

Specific policies and mainstreaming also differ in these respects:

SPECIFIC POLICIES

- Aim for specific advances
- Are, on occasion, not sufficiently visible, leading to "ghetto-isation" of equality policies.
- Can provide an immediate response to specific problems in a way that would be impossible within the framework of more general policies.

MAINSTREAMING

- Enables better integration of equal opportunities into general policies.
- Is the structural foundation pillar of a new way of designing policy.
- A long-term strategy, with progressive implementation.
- Application must be flexible and adapted to the relevant context.

One error that must be avoided is to see specific policies as being opposed to mainstreaming. Experience shows that on occasion mainstreaming discourse has been used to eliminate resources assigned to specific policies, with the result that the resources and specific policies disappeared yet the gender dimension continued to be absent from the general policy panorama. In addition, unless they have become overly bureaucratic, women's sections at municipal, regional or national government level can serve as motors for action in other areas and implementation of mainstreaming approaches. In addition to improving specific situations, policies aimed specifically at women also serve to achieve improved visibility and awareness of discrimination and gender inequality. Generally, these policies are part of the first stage of equality strategies, both for governments and associations. They are therefore, absolutely necessary. It must also be borne in mind that experience in the field of mainstreaming is, as yet, limited and still recent.

In conclusion, mainstreaming and specific policies must not be seen as in opposition to each other; rather they must be mutually coherent and complement each other.

The advances arising from mainstreaming are not always clear. However, it must be emphasised that the United Nations included the Social and Economic Council's 1997 conclusions on mainstreaming and the recommendations of Resolution 4712 of the Commission on the Status of Women in the Millennium Declaration and in the Millennium Development Objectives. UN bodies have applied mainstreaming in programmes run by the World Bank, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), among others. The UN Secretariat General also included mainstreaming in its instructions on budgetary preparations used by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Children's Fund (UNICEF), the High Commissioner for Refugees and other UN bodies.

In the European Union, gender mainstreaming has had a greater impact in certain policy areas than in others. There have been significant advances in the European Employment Strategy and in the Structural Funding Programme. In December 2002, the European Commission adopted a communication (COM (2002) 748 final) on "Gender in the Structural Funds 2002-2006." Also, at the Council meeting in March 2003, the EU's heads of government asked the Commission to prepare an annual report on advances regarding the integration of gender equality into general policy areas.

• Implementation

For effective integration of a gender perspective into general policy, work must begin even before the planning stage with a view to:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | ← | Obtaining information on the current situation (information). |
| 2 | ← | Deciding where one wants to go (objectives). |
| 3 | ← | Planning what needs to be done (planning). |
| 4 | ← | Evaluating what has been achieved (evaluation). |

First phase

Mainstreaming entails determining whether a given policy has an impact on gender relations. This means finding answers to the following questions:

- | |
|---|
| A: Is the policy addressed to one or more target groups? Will it affect the daily life of one or more groups of citizens? |
| B: Are there differences between men and women in the field in question? (regarding, for example, rights, resources, participation, gender-related norms and values). |

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then the gender dimension must be addressed. A diagnosis of the initial situation must be carried out (are there gender differences with regard to pay for work, decision-making, the family, resources, cultural norms, etc.).

Second phase

At this stage, it is necessary to evaluate the potential impacts of the policy to be applied on women and men. Will the policy have a positive or negative impact on gender relations, especially in relation to autonomy and equality? What will its mid- and long-term impacts be?

Third phase

Finally, at planning stage, any possible negative effects of the policy in question must be eliminated and alternatives proposed to foster gender equality in terms of participation, resource distribution, entitlements, duties and responsibilities in the public and private spheres, etc.

- **Methodologies**

Mainstreaming practice has given rise to a range of different methodologies (SMART, the BETSY European Project for equality in management systems, GEM for integration of gender analysis in information and communication technologies, etc.).

- **Requirements**

Mainstreaming cannot be applied in the absence of the following:

- Political will
- Policy planning skills
- Policy makers who are sensitive to gender issues
- Data on men and women and gender relations in a variety of areas.
- Monitoring and follow-up mechanisms
- Sufficient material and human resources

- **Example of mainstreaming analysis in a general policy area. Transport**

Analysis of an apparently neutral general policy area such as transport reveals substantial gender-related differences in terms of use and access to public and private transport. Women are less likely to have access to a private car than men, and tend to make more use of public transport. Consequently, the availability and cost of public transport is an issue of great concern for women. It is also important for them that the public transport network be designed in such a way as to ensure ease of access to services such as health centres, schools, shops and also workplaces. These differences have implications in terms of the degree of participation of women and men, respectively, that would be desirable in sector decision-making. In the transport sector, there are also gender differences in terms of resources (for example, a private car) and time (in that access to a private car may mean a saving on time). Family decisions regarding use of a limited resource such as the family car, may be influenced by social norms and values regarding the relative importance attached to the needs of the man and women, respectively. Public transport network design must take the routes taken by women into account, and efforts must be made to ensure the service caters for the real needs of both men and women.

Examples of objectives and strategies to reduce gender inequality in the transport sector:

EMPLOYMENT

Improved employment opportunities for women in the transport sector, especially at policy-making and management level.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Improvements in terms of equality of participation of girls and women in training and education orientated to employment in the transport sector.

COMPANY

Higher proportion of companies established by women in the transport sector.

CONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

Improved access to centres of employment, services, schools and medical centres via public transport.

4.3. STRATEGIC PLANNING FROM THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Planning is a process which enables us to decide what needs to be done to change or overcome a problematic or unsatisfactory situation, or what needs to be done to prevent a given situation from worsening or engendering other problems. Planning must set out from an analysis of the situation which is to be changed or transformed. Planning means designing an action strategy, which may be a plan, a programme, a policy or a project. This strategy will include certain features and exclude others.

Planning is a process. It covers a time scale which may be what we term short-, mid- or long-term.

From a gender perspective, planning must take the people whom the policy is aimed at into account from the outset, but especially women. Failure to do this could lead to a situation where it is only possible to achieve some of the policy objectives.

Policy target groups must also participate in the planning phase; this will ensure their cooperation and support for the policy's continued implementation.

Directives emerging from the various Conferences and Forums on Equal Opportunities see women's participation in all phases of equality policies and programmes as a strategic objective.

- **Common errors of planning without a gender perspective**

Planning failing to incorporate a gender perspective may have negative consequences, especially for women. Such planning may lead to:

- Failure to detect the real position of women. It is often taken for granted that women are included in policy provisions; however, women may simply not exist in terms of benefits from employment and entrepreneurial policies.
- Ignoring women's needs. Women and men may not necessarily share the same problems; indeed the same problems may be experienced differently by each gender. An example of this is the conciliation of work and family life.
- Failure to include specific motivation and information measures. The traditionally low level of participation by women in certain sectors may lead to their being unaware of new opportunities, with the result that the only policy beneficiaries will be men. To avoid this, specific information and recruitment campaigns must be planned.
- The assumption that women have zero opportunity cost. In other words, failure to account for family obligations which force women in many cases to forego employment. Activities organised at the times when women are busiest with family obligations will either mean lost opportunities or excessive work load.
- Lack of awareness that women play important roles in the "submerged" or "informal" economy - roles which could be regularised and valued.
- Failure to account for government and non-governmental measures fostering equal opportunities.

It must not be forgotten that women may work in the traditional or informal sector or in producing goods for their own families' consumption. They also play a reproductive role both biologically and in social and community terms. Women work longer hours than men all over the world, in many different sectors. Planning which fails to take these considerations into account will not only not contribute to solving women's problems, but may place extra demands on their time, increase their workload and, in the long-term, lead to policy failure, for which women themselves may be blamed.

- **Planning with a gender perspective**

Planning which includes the gender perspective throughout as an integral pillar sets out from a study of the current position of women and men. This means taking account of the differences between men and women, particularly those arising from unequal access to power and resources. Such planning not only recognises the unequal power relations between men

and women but also that men and women occupy different positions in society, and that this can lead to other problem of a social, cultural, economic and political nature. Not only does women's subordination have implications for their position in society however, it also has a bearing on the material conditions of their existence. Women, in general, endure worse conditions than men and are less autonomous. In relative terms, women are poorer than men in all societies. This is the result of the gender-based division of work, family obligations and unpaid labour, among other factors. However, as heads of households, care-givers and community workers, women as individuals or via informal organisations solve many daily problems, and are in a position to provide an insight not only into their own needs but the needs of the community as a whole.

Planning with a gender perspective has the following objectives:

- To promote equal opportunities for men and women.
- To ensure visibility of the many roles played by women in society and, especially, economic roles.
- To include women's insights and proposals regarding community policies.
- To include affirmative measures which will increase women's participation in all areas and levels of work, employment and decision-making.
- To ensure visibility of the practices which discriminate against women, thereby facilitating their eradication.
- To adopt measures to eliminate the barriers and obstacles which militate against women.
- To define and include women's interests in social and economic life.
- To enhance democracy by helping to establish more equal power relations between men and women.
- To make rational use of the resources that both men and women can contribute to society.

Planning which integrates a gender perspective also realises that:

- Women do not constitute a homogenous group. It is necessary to analyse the specific needs of each separate group.
- The aim of policy must be to respond to the real situation and needs of the men and women addressed by the policy.

- **Fases de la planificación**

- a) **Diagnosis**

The starting point for planning must be recognition that the current situation is unsatisfactory and that improvement is needed. Thus, the first phase involves diagnosis of the current situation and all dimensions of the problems to be solved:

social, economic, political and cultural; persons and institutions that have a role to play or are affected and the available resources, among others. The information emerging from diagnosis is fundamental for the formulation of the remaining planning phases. Therefore, data must be collected as rigorously as possible. These data also provide justification for the process, and for the design of plans, programmes, projects and activities to address the shortcomings. Given that

we set out from a recognition of the existence of social inequalities between men and women, the diagnosis must also reflect the multiple dimensions in which these inequalities are manifested.

Below we present a generic format for the diagnostic phase at municipal or city level, based on the information gathering protocol employed by Barcelona Provincial Council for OTPI, a gender study at local level.

Table 6: Proposal for gender diagnosis at local level. General considerations

I: Location

- Geographical setting. Scale of area involved (km²), historical setting
- Features of zones, districts or communities, types of housing, resources and facilities.
- Maps of area involved.
- Census details: number of inhabitants, sex, age, distribution per districts, etc.
- Mobility and transport networks

II: Municipal organisation

- Organisation of different services. Structure. Municipal experts and employees (men and women).
- Relations with other institutions (Autonomous Region, State, Province, Region, etc.).
- Hierarchy of municipal government. Areas of responsibility and participation of men and women.
- Mainstreaming and inter-departmental programmes.
- Consulting bodies and citizens' representation.
- Residents and community associations and organisations. Informal organisations. Political parties and trade unions.
- Formal and informal women's associations and organisations.

III: Sociodemographic features

- Age pyramid
- Immigrants. Ethnic background and income.
- Birth rate, ageing population.
- Types of family: single-parent, extended family, unmarried couples and same-sex couples, abandoned families.
- Gender violence.
- Crime and violence.
- Social services.
- Social exclusion: homeless men and women, poverty index.

IV: Education and training

- Literacy and educational levels. School-going population. Data breakdown per gender at all educational levels and among teaching staff.
- Adult education centres.
- Absenteeism and school failure rates.
- Gender and co-education data.

V: Economic activity and time use

- Type of economy. GDP. CPI (Consumer Price Index). Use of resources (agricultural, industrial, commercial, artistic and cultural, cuisine, crafts, etc.).
- Active, employed and unemployed populations per gender.
- Submerged economy.

- Wage discrimination.
- Type of companies and industrial sectors. Types of working contract. Employment instability and bad working conditions.
- Characteristics of unemployed population.
- Characteristics of care-giving population by gender, age, district and educational level, income, mobility and autonomy.
- Leisure activities, participants.
- Leisure time and free time from work.
- Leisure and recreation facilities, public zones, sports and cultural facilities. Use patterns per gender.
- Time use per gender.
- Local media.

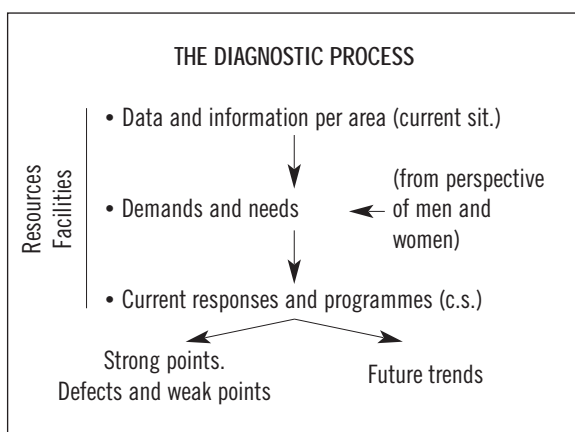
VI: Health

- Health Centres: use patterns, specialist care available, emergency service.
- Ratio of doctors to inhabitants. Pharmacies. Traditional medicine.
- General medicine, family planning, mental health, occupational health services, reasons for seeking health care, prevention, consumption of medication.
- Drug addiction.

This analysis must be completed with data on demands and needs, current responses and available resources and facilities. Finally, the area's weak and strong points must be considered, together with trends and conclusions regarding the gender situation.

In many cases, this information will either not exist in any accessible form or will not be readily available. In such cases, the objective must be twofold:

1. To initiate programmes for data gathering and break-down per gender.
2. To promote sociological studies (quantitative surveys, qualitative analysis) which will facilitate diagnosis of the current situation and needs in specific spheres.



b) Objectives and actions

The actions are implemented in order to achieve the objectives.

Accurate formulation of these concepts and the accuracy of the match between the data and the real situation are vital factors in project success, since this will point to the most

appropriate solutions. There must also be a logical and coherent relation between the objectives and actions implemented.

(The diagnostic phase will be the subject of a workshop at the next Network seminar).

c) Implementation

Implementation of the planned activities with assignation of time-scales, funding resources and persons with responsibility.

d) Monitoring

To facilitate monitoring, indicators are designed which permit measurement of advances towards project objectives. It is also recommendable to make provision for intermediate evaluation measures. In addition to measuring progress, these may also serve for recommendations for improved implementation. Evaluation reports at pre-established dates may also prove highly useful. Permitting public access to evaluation reports is also a useful means of fostering public participation in the overall process, especially in evaluation of progress and overcoming difficulties.

e) Final evaluation

The final evaluation assesses the project results and advances by means of the pre-defined indicators. Advances are considered in terms of the initial objectives. Project actions, procedures and methodologies are also analysed. Another purpose of the final evaluation is to formulate recommendations for improved implementation of future projects.

4.4. INSTRUMENTS FOR EQUALITY POLICIES AT LOCAL LEVEL

Democracy, decentralisation and financial solvency are important factors for policy success at local level, which is the level where citizens' rights can be exercised on a daily basis. Over recent years, however, large segments of the population have suffered the consequences of spending cutbacks and abandonment by public authorities of some of their traditional functions. Cutbacks in social services affects the entire population; however, in many cases the effects on women are worse since it is they who compensate the family for the lost services, at great personal cost. In poor, underfinanced contexts, it is more difficult to provide the instruments needed for development of equality policies, yet it is in such settings that they are most vitally needed. For this, the presence and participation activity of women is essential, both within political parties and institutions and as members of community and women's organisations.

4.4.1. Instruments for equality at local level

I: General policy instruments

- National laws on women's rights and gender equality.
- National laws establishing percentages or parity of representation by men and women at national/municipal level.
- Affirmative action programmes in political parties at municipal level.
- Women's associations and organisations.

Without the presence of women at the level of municipal government, it will prove practically impossible to implement effective policies for equality or find the necessary funding. Nor will it be possible to implement mainstreaming in general policies.

II: Administrative institutions: structures, mechanisms and resources.

- Gender Equality Office (with sufficient financial and human resources). This office must have equal hierarchical status with other municipal policy areas. It is responsible both for development of specific equality policies and for monitoring of overall implementation of mainstreaming.
- Implementation plan for equality policies including specific objectives, indicators and funding.

- The political will to integrate a gender perspective into all municipal policies, with appointment of supervisors in all policy areas and departments, each of which must define objectives regarding equality, and ensure programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Staff must also receive training in gender mainstreaming.
- Mainstreaming coordination body, which will work in conjunction with the Gender Equality Office.
- Access to and/or compilation of statistical data with gender break-down for all municipal activities.
- Evaluation of gender impact of municipal policies, programmes and services.
- Training in application of the gender focus to municipal management for staff at all levels. Awareness-raising actions addressed to policy makers.
- Equality programme in municipal employment policies with specific objectives at different staff levels.
- Information services at district, neighbourhood, or community level.
- Follow-up procedures for gender-related public demands and needs.

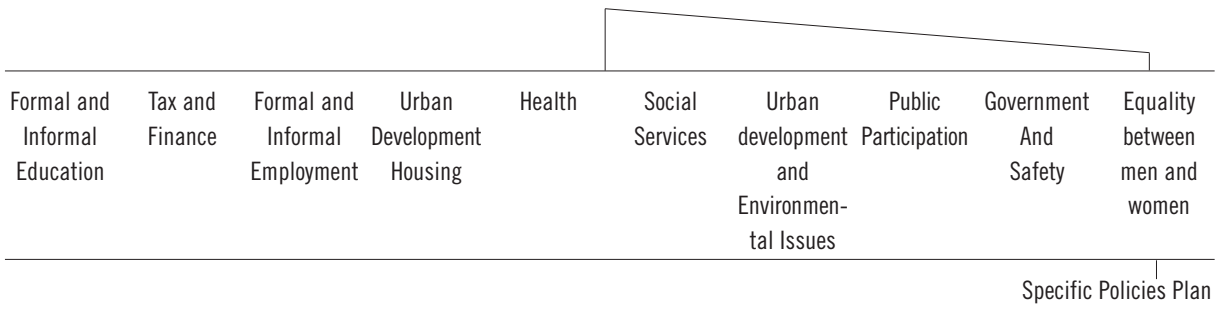
III: Participative bodies

- Women's Councils or Committees associated with the Municipal Council, with responsibility for monitoring equality policy and ensuring correct application.
- Standing committees for specific areas (violence, transport, housing, conflict resolution, environmental issues, etc.), comprising groups of women, community bodies and other engaged parties.
- Consulting bodies and mechanisms to encourage public participation.

• Proposed Organisational Model:

(*maximum level of responsibility)

MAINSTREAMING COORDINATION COMMITTEE
Gender Analysis Unit



It must be remembered that this is a proposal, a possible model. Each city, municipality and urban council has its own particular features and priorities. The instruments, therefore, must be adopted to the specific situation. Very often, the context is one of extreme lack of resources and the power of women is highly limited. In these cases, action must begin at whatever level is possible. As if it were a jigsaw puzzle to be assembled piece by piece, at first it may seem that the scope of our action for equality is limited, with inadequate staff and resources. This does not matter, if there is a clear vision of where this work is heading. The history of women's struggle for equality has lasted decades, no, centuries. Achieving instruments and resources for change is no easy matter. However, it is easier if we have a clear idea of what we need, the strategy to achieve this and the necessary tools. Therefore, there can be no tolerance for the attitude that sees work for equality as "just women's stuff". A women's office or a municipal department given over to women's affairs is, in many cities, a major breakthrough. Equally important is to have an adequately-resourced, coordinated and integrated action plan. However, if this stage has not yet been reached, work will have to start at a more basic level, with priority being attached to the most urgent shortcomings. The overall objective is that eventually all policies will include a gender perspective, that the city will respond to the needs of both men and women, that both genders will participate equally in design and development of the city, that men and women will become full citizens in the real sense of the word and not just in law.

• Potential theme for a Seminar workshop

Discussion and analysis of the current situation encountered by a number of municipal councils, exploring the organisation-chart of existing equality instruments, laying out priority areas and tools.

4.5. GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PLANS AND SPECIFIC POLICIES ADDRESSED TO WOMEN. MAINSTREAMING STRATEGIES.

As pointed out earlier, equality policies addressed specifically to women as part of the Equal Opportunities Plans developed by specific Women's Offices or Departments, represent a major advance and must never be seen as in opposition to mainstreaming, rather, they must be seen as complementary measures. This section aims firstly, to describe the basic structure of Equality Plans as specific policies, their fundamental components and actions, and secondly, to describe some of the main elements of mainstreaming at local level.

4.5.1. Equality Plans. Specific policies addressed to women

Equal Opportunity Plans are a particular type of gender policy, which aim to attack different dimensions of gender discrimination: structural elements, i.e., aspects deriving from the sexual division of labour and women's position in the family, market and politics; and cultural elements, deriving from the hegemony of certain patterns of interpretation and communication of social reality.

The starting point for these plans is recognition of the systemic nature of gender inequality, and consequently, the need for simultaneous and coordinated action at various levels of local policy. This conception of discrimination explains the need for simultaneous action at different levels, if we are to improve the position of women in any of them. For example, transforming women's position in the labour market means action at the family, education and media level, among others.

- **Thoughts on implementation**

Equality plans constitute a major symbolical and discursive advance in that they have forced recognition of the existence of gender inequality, its systemic nature and the need for institutional action to overcome it.

At the same time, they have enabled those working for gender equality to develop a common discourse and raise their argumentative power in terms of objectives and actions; they have invested what were once isolated actions with a sense of cohesion and unity via their incorporation into a shared frame of reference; they have served as a compass orienting implementation and evaluation, extremely important aspects in institutions without excessive experience in targeting gender inequality.

Implementation of equality plans also facilitates greater knowledge and awareness of the workings of government and women's organisations. Members of institutional coordination mechanisms for gender policies must be active in a variety of institutional settings; they must enter into contact with various bodies and actors, both within and outside government, with a view to convincing them of the importance of gender policies in their sector or institution. This means they must consider all dimensions of local government, not only the administrative and bureaucratic, but also the political, communication, symbolical and subjective aspects.

- **Risks**

The main risk faced by Equal Opportunities Plans is that they will become fragmented into a series of unrelated and unstructured measures. Actions may be implemented without consideration of their relative importance to each other, or their effects on accomplishment of the overall aims.

Another risk is that actions may lose part of their meaning if they are seen in isolation from their objectives. Employment training could, for example, become a mechanism deepening labour market segregation, if it only provides skills training for women in the areas they traditionally occupy. Policies aiming to combat violence against women could end up reinforcing women's dependence on the family, if they fail to provide them with the resources needed to heighten their autonomy.

One way to offset these risks is to inculcate local authorities and functionaries with the overall vision of the aims, meaning and objective of actions in each sector, rather simply signing agreements with respect to isolated specific actions.

Another attendant risk is that there may be excessive reliance on the logic and institutional objectives of other municipal sectors in an effort to ensure that local authorities

take the objectives and actions on board. This could lead to dilution of the specific thrust of gender policies, in other words, it may "de-genderise" the agenda, as has been pointed out by a number of writers.

A final risk to be avoided is use of the Plans as political marketing, for publicity purposes, without any real provision in terms of staff or funding.

- **Areas for action**

By way of example, this section presents the suggestions emerging from specific studies carried out by the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), and the Greenwich Agenda for Women's Equality, together with proposals from Network no. 12 URB-AL and the New Social Contract which comprises part of the Network's objectives.

- **The FEMP study**

This study compiled the demands of women in Spain and ordered them in terms of the size of the municipal area (cities of more than 500,000 inhabitants, provincial capitals of more than 200,000 inhabitants, cities with 50,000 or more inhabitants and those with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants).

The priority areas of local equality policies for these women were as follows:

- Firstly, the following general areas:

- Education
- Economy and employment
- Violence
- Associations

- Secondly, though taken as integrated:

- Women in exclusion
- Health
- Power and decision-making
- Image and communication

- Thirdly, in certain municipalities:

- The environment
- Rural women

- Orientation, information and advice were seen as the major need in the area of personal attention in 100% of the municipalities.

• **The Greenwich Agenda for Women’s Equality**

This study of Greenwich (London) pinpointed the following priority areas:

- Critical issues:
 - inequalities between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels
 - inequalities and inadequacies in, and unequal access to, education and training
 - inequalities and inadequacies in, and unequal access to, health care and related services
 - the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women
 - violence against women
 - gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment
 - inequalities in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources
 - insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women
 - persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl-child
 - the effects of armed and other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation
 - lack of respect for, and inadequate promotion and protection of, the human rights of women
 - stereotyping of women and inequality in women’s access to, and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media

• **Network no. 12 URB-AL**

Network no. 12 URB-AL lays special emphasis on the participation of women in urban planning processes (housing, transport, safety, social services, sanitation, etc.), and on what it terms a New Social Contract between men and women. The aims of the New Social Contract are sharing of power, employment and family responsibilities. The El Salvador Seminar also set out the following issues as important: the participation of women from the underground economy, women’s role as agents of social cohesion and their present role in daily life (basic sanitation, the environment and social harmony, quality of life, etc.) (M^a del Carmen Viñas, President of the Mar del Plata Studies Centre, Argentina and Sandra Barraza, National Coordinator, National Development Committee, El Salvador). Finally, other important issues are women, armed conflict and peace processes.

Many cities and municipalities have developed integrated Equality Plans, or specific actions which in themselves constitute the first steps in construction of an equality strategy. Below we

present the theoretical framework underpinning the New Contract for Equal Opportunities developed at the El Salvador Seminar, which leads on to description of a number of specific aspects of the New Social Contract between Women and Men.

(Paper “Family/Working Life and Political Activity”. M^a del Carmen Viñas, President, Mar de Plata Studies Centre, Argentina):

- The New Social Contract has three essential objectives:
- Sharing family responsibilities. This will require:
 - Increased awareness of family responsibilities (domestic work, care-giving)
 - Reorganisation of timetables so that men and women can share employment outside the home and domestic responsibilities (working day, shop opening hours, school timetables, times of political meetings, etc.)
 - Creation of support services for family work, nurseries and pre-schools, care centres for the elderly)
 - Sharing work. Which will require:
 - Extending the concept of work to include unpaid work
 - Focusing the thrust of collective negotiation on compensating gains in productivity by reductions in working hours and creation of new jobs.
 - Reduction of overtime
 - Early retirement
 - Tax rebates on leave periods or reduced working hours due to family responsibilities (care-giving) and training, etc.
 - Regulation of part-time work as part of labour legislation and social protection policy (now it forms a sub-category for women and the young)
 - Promotion of what is known as “proximity employment”
 - Defending equal treatment and opportunities and eradicating gender discrimination (i.e., achieving balanced presence of men and women in negotiations, equal pay for equal work, skills training allowing for diversification of employment options, integration of women into new technology-related sectors)
 - Sharing power. Which will mean:
 - Parity democracy at all levels of social and political representation and decision-making
 - Increased visibility of women’s participation in political, cultural and social activities
 - Organising, linking and coordinating women’s networks.

Examples of actions based on the New Social Contract for Equality between Men and Women

These measures are in line with the major thrust of the New Contract. However, the lists provided are by no means exhaustive. Actions must be adapted to each specific case and its local context, as described in the diagnostic study carried out by the Women's Office. Exchange of ideas and experiences in this area will prove highly important for the Network.

• Sharing family responsibilities

- Developing support programmes for young women's identity and self-esteem
- Promoting mutual respect and equality between boys and girls in domestic life, the school and the public sphere. Developing initiatives to foster leadership qualities in girls.

Childcare.

- Developing high-quality accessibly priced nursery services so as to enhance women's access to education, work and public life; ensuring that younger children have a secure family life.

Assistance for those caring for children and the elderly.

- Improved support for mothers caring for their children or elderly dependents. Improved access to accessibly priced and high-quality childcare.
- Increasing the number of places available at day centres, home-help services, helplines and homes for the elderly.
- Increasing budgetary provision for subsidised meals.
- Support for organisation of educational and recreational extracurricular and school holiday activities for children.
- Developing information campaigns and promoting the existing municipal services for women.
- Adapting timetables and access to municipal and social services to women's needs.
- Organising publicity and awareness-raising campaigns for a more balanced distribution of family tasks and responsibilities.
- Developing programmes addressed to schools, both teachers and students, for elimination of stereotyped and sexist gender roles and promoting sharing of responsibilities.
- Reinforcing actions addressed to business people for employment policies account for training needs, and more flexible working hours
- Support for creation of after-school leisure centres for the young as part of the drive for conciliation.

The appropriateness of these and other measures will all be subject to the outcome of the diagnostic study

• Sharing work and education

Promoting flexible working conditions for all employees, both men and women. Improving access to professional advice services. Establishing mentoring plans for women to overcome low self-esteem and increase their personal expectations. Developing strategies for entrepreneurial initiatives, such as technology support programmes.

Employment training in non-traditional areas.

- Facilitating skills training for women in non-traditional occupational fields, such as carpentry, painting and decoration, electricity, plastering and new technologies.
- Working to encourage local employers to adopt parity employment policies.
- Improving information flow to and from women in the community. Developing adequate databases and ensuring access to information. Making information available in clear, attractively presented language.

Flexibility in community-based continuing education and learning programmes

- Improving the flexibility of education and training programmes through wider use of new technologies. Developing courses for family groups in literacy, language and mathematics. Improving the quality and availability of employment information.
- Creating support measures for women heads of households wishing to receive employment training.
- Introducing quotas for women participants in all local employment initiatives.
- Motivating participation in new sources of employment.
- Equal opportunities training for municipal employees, so as to contribute to spreading gender-perspective to all areas.
- Information and communication technology skills training for women.
- Providing guidance for women in job searching, integrating a gender perspective into job searches.
- Guiding and mediating with local employers for integration of unemployed women.
- Providing guidance, information and advice for autonomous women.
- Technical and economic support for women's cooperative and self-employment projects.
- Promoting women's networks in various economic sectors.
- Increasing awareness, information and training for employers in the area of equal opportunities.

- **Sharing power and decision-making**

The actions proposed in line with this strand of the New Social Contract are set out in section 3.

The proposals presented throughout this Report include measures to combat gender violence and social exclusion, and also measures addressed to specific groups of women. Throughout the various stages of its Operating Programme, the Network will strive to promote web-based exchange of experiences in all areas. The Network webpage will provide updated information on equality programmes and policies implemented by Network members. For this, it is important that we receive specific information on measures, time-scales and resources. It is also fundamental that indicators and evaluation systems be employed enabling us to measure programme effectiveness.

4.5.2. MAINSTREAMING STRATEGIES

Section 4.2 presented methodological aspects of the implementation of mainstreaming. Although such mainstreaming policies are included in some Equality Plans, alongside specific policies addressed to women, we have chosen to deal with them separately in this Report, because their implementation requires coordination instruments (section 4.3) and resources that go beyond the scope of women's departments in municipal government, although, as has been pointed out, these departments are an indispensable element in the success of mainstreaming. As mentioned earlier, application of mainstreaming in fields other than Equal Opportunities (especially in the area of the environmental and sustainable development) is a new departure which, although beginning to move towards wider public participation, still requires diagnostic actions together with training and awareness campaigns.

Mainstreaming involves profound structural changes and this means that major obstacles must be overcome. Therefore, work must be planned with a view to mid-term results and bearing in mind that advances depend on the presence of equality-conscious women in decision-making positions and political power, together with a climate of political and public will. Public participation is also fundamental, along with mechanisms enabling women to contribute their community, family and life experience to municipal planning.

The debate of recent years on the role of local and regional administration bodies is not limited to transfer of powers and resources from state to municipal level, nor to greater levels of public participation; rather it demands new development models and political strategies incorporating such factors as ecology, economic reform, investment in human resources, and

active involvement of men and women in definition and consensus of processes.

The debate on the role of cities and towns has moved to the centre of the policy agenda over the course of the last decade. The 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio marked the beginning of joint work by more than 20 different city federations. This was a key factor in the UN General Assembly organising a World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities in 1996 in Istanbul on the occasion of the Habitat II Conference.

This was the context in which such initiatives as the Charter of Women in Cities arose. The guiding principles of this Charter are that:

The gender factor is taken as a source of a new shared culture in municipal planning. To do this, it is a priority to raise awareness and provide training for men and women in order to integrate the gender perspective into municipal policy.

The "gender" factor, understood as the study of social relations between men and women, is an effective means of dismantling stereotypes and considering citizenship from the perspective of equality.

Gender impact studies will form a prerequisite for approval of Strategic Plans and other municipal plans and programmes."

The URB-AL Network on "Promoting Women in Local Decision-Making Bodies" is also part of this movement to bring together the concept of gender mainstreaming and the debate on the role of the city, urban centres and participative democracy.

The El Salvador Seminar in April 2003 pointed out that it was vitally important:

- That women participate in city planning, since their points of view contribute to improving community life, environmental protection, housing, transport, safety and many other factors helping to make cities more human and inhabitable.
- That the active citizenship of women be fostered so that they can aspire to elected positions as mayors and municipal councillors in equal numbers to men.
- That cities promote a social pact by which men and women share family responsibilities, employment and municipal government.
- That cities become settings for social cohesion, in which all groups feel a sense of belonging, free of discrimination, and in which conflict is resolved via dialogue rather than by force. That cities become settings for a culture of peace and peaceful conflict-resolution.

The Network Operational Programme's working area "Women in City Planning", sets out to develop Specific Policies in the following areas:

- Urbanism
- Transport
- Safety
- Housing

From the 1980s, a number of feminist writers began to highlight how the spatial dimensions of cities tended to reproduce the pattern of social relations in general and gender relations in particular. The speed and scope of change in general is also posing problems for our cities, for which the response has not been optimum. This is clear to many women who perform multiple roles as workers, mothers or heads of households, in a society and urban context which neither recognises nor supports their efforts.

Women carrying out a combination of routines from the domestic, professional, public, private, home and city domains, under the burden of asymmetric distribution of family responsibilities, come up against the inhospitable dimension of the city every day – the lack of green zones and services, inadequate infrastructure, traffic problems, air and noise pollution, lack of areas for community life and a lack of autonomy for the weaker members of society in terms of accessibility and safety.

This crisis facing the post-industrial city has been exacerbated by uncontrolled suburban sprawl, degeneration of inner city areas and a rigid and overly complex organisation of time – different timetables and operating hours – in a context in which new forms of flexible and part-time work are now emerging. This will demand a reorganisation of time and space within our cities.

Problems can be approached from a range of perspectives and in recent years a number of interesting contributions have been made. These point to the need to facilitate the activities of daily life by means of an appropriate spatial environment, which includes the necessary infrastructure and transport service.

From the point of view of urban planning, the aim is to enable people to carry out the activities of their daily life in a concrete space-time setting. Combining working and family life can prove virtually impossible both for men and women in an urban context in which residential/dormitory areas are far from the areas where people work, where transport is inadequate, and where there is little integration of health or education facilities into the activities of daily life.

In response to these problems, a number of theoretical analyses and practical initiatives have emerged in recent years. These range from the Frauenwerkstadt Project in Vienna, which developed a housing complex designed from the point of view of women and the needs of daily life, the “Safe Stop” programme in Canada allowing women to get off night buses close to their homes, to the creation of local government Gender and Equality

Advice Units (for example, Andalusia in Spain). In short, a wide range of programmes are currently being implemented to help integrate the gender perspective into urban planning; see www.generourbano.org.

• Some proposals

Below are some of the most frequent proposals resulting from such projects. Part of this content is based on the work of Frederika Gepken, director of the EQUA project in the Netherlands.

Spatial grouping of different functions

Zoning tends to fragment society and single-function urban zones make life more difficult. This is why different uses and functions must be integrated into urban design.

Locating varied facilities such as schools, nurseries, sports and health centres within close distance of each other, facilitates daily life.

Recommendations

- Bring facilities closer to homes.
 - Mobile shops, home-catering, helplines.
 - Collective services located in ground floors of residential blocks and condominiums.
- Bring work closer to homes.
 - Neighbourhood “Teleworking” office.
 - Provide small-scale office premises within the neighbourhood or city.
- Group functions and facilities.
 - A mixture of work-related and home-related functions in urban zones.
 - Nurseries.
 - Grouping of functions which bear a logical relationship with each other.
 - Grouping complementary functions together, for example, recreational facilities for children near schools; combining shops, services and housing.
 - Easy access to facilities.
- Functions and facilities grouped in areas with employment potential
 - Nursery, shops, banks, leisure facilities (sports, restaurants, etc.).
 - Elimination of divisions between suburbs and urban centre, permitting each one to have the advantages of the other.

Quality of public and private transport

The quality of public and private transport is another important factor. Everyone benefits when the distances between different tasks and activities can be covered swiftly, safely, cheaply and in comfort.

Recommendations

- High quality transport system.
 - Effective (as direct as possible).
 - A solid, well-communicated network.
 - Well thought-out design.
 - Safe.
 - Investment, legal, tax and administration measures aiming to reduce use of private transport and improve public transport.
- A good public transport system.
 - Easy access to stops and stations.
 - Frequent and rapid links with other public transport networks.
 - Adapted for the elderly, children and the handicapped.
 - Reasonably priced fares, availability of information, ticket offices, etc.
 - Change-over locations (park-and-ride) for public and private transport.
 - Appropriate station furniture and fittings, and upkeep: telephones, toilets, information, etc.
 - Services at change-over points.
 - Made-to-measure transport: buses stopping on request, collective taxi-bus, train-taxi services.
- New residential and working areas with traffic and transport integration.
 - Easily accessible by car, train, bus, etc.
 - Creation of “deterrent” carparks at entry points to congested cities to encourage use of public transport.
- Integration of gender perspective.
 - Public transport routes and frequency in keeping with the mobility patterns of women combining work and other tasks.
 - Combat violence and crime, both real and perceived, on public transport, and at stops and stations.

The quality of public space

Urban space can serve to foster interaction among people by providing shared community areas. Safety must also be considered, so that the most vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly and the infirm, can move around without problems. Special attention needs to be paid to ease of access for wheelchairs, walking-frames and children’s pushcars. Urban space must be designed with “places for people to be” in mind and with routes that are compatible with people’s lives.

Recommendations

- The quality of public space as a meeting place.
 - Urban furniture
 - Cleanliness
 - “Places to be”
 - Creating intermediate spaces between the private and the public
- Collective safety in public places
 - Good lighting.
 - Clear and well-organised placement of green zones and paved zones in public places.
 - Good maintenance of public space.
 - Vandal-proof.
 - Avoiding as much as possible the creation of potentially dangerous places (infrequently used pedestrian tunnels, badly-lit carparks, etc.).
 - Combining vulnerable areas with activities that involve supervision.
 - Avoiding the growth of macro-shopping centres on the outskirts of cities, as a means of protecting local markets and shops; creation of green zones at all levels of planning.
 - Intermediate spaces must allow for playing space for children, recreational and meeting space for the neighbourhood youth and adults, and must favour the rest and safety of women and the elderly.
 - Pedestrian streets providing a relaxed, pleasant and safe setting.
 - Special attention to design criteria in facilities: mixed uses, lighting, visibility from neighbouring windows and streets for added safety, night use, ergonomic, etc.
 - Accounting for the needs of different groups of women and families, especially the most vulnerable: women heads of households; elderly women; immigrant women; women victims, etc.

Quality of housing

Well-designed housing which is flexible in terms of functions and use is a key factor. It enables residents to carry out chains of complex tasks with ease, and adapt to the changes that come with the human and family life-cycle. When homes are adaptable to the changing needs of families and individuals, people are likely to remain in the neighbourhood, thus contributing to the development of strong social links.

Recommendations

- Housing designed to adapt to different activities, types of family and life-stages.
- Adaptability to people's activities.
- Adaptability to people's life cycle.
- Interior layout of homes. Different needs of different types of family: families headed by women, the elderly living alone; parents with adult children; adults living alone. Type and size of rooms, relations between rooms. Adaptation to the new roles of men and women in the family, and new lifestyles.
- New housing policy. Roles of public and private sector. Role of the voluntary and cooperative sector. Regulation, funding, subventions and tax incentives. Role of direct public promotion.
- Solutions for specific segments, in particular households headed by women and the elderly.
- Innovative alternatives to home ownership.

Preparing policies from a gender perspective

In order to achieve high quality urban development, it must be possible for interested parties (equality offices, community associations, women's consultative bodies, etc.) to contribute to planning from the earliest stages and participate in the overall development process.

Recommendations

- Promoting policies for public education and correct use of the city.
- Participation in amendments of urban planning legislation, in drawing up of plans and actions to ensure a mixture of uses.
- Integration of urban planning and transport and infrastructure policies. Institutional modifications: structures and processes of inter-institutional coordination and conflict resolution.
- mechanisms to protect stipulated uses and prevent rezoning.
- Identification of institutional settings for integration of the gender perspective.
- Definition of structures needed at local level.
- Identification of differential gender impacts of urban planning legislation and short-term legal changes.
- Identification of specific present planning practices leading to discrimination against women.
- Identification of specific methods to integrate women's needs into each aspect of formal and informal planning: for example, preparation of plans, project development, monitoring and consulting procedures.
- Consideration of distributive effects of these processes on different groups including women (single-parent families, elderly, salaried or unsalaried).
- Identification and definition of instruments enabling introduction of the gender variable in definition and evaluation of urban policies and planning, for example indicators and statistics.
- Evaluation of different impacts on men and women of public investment in urban development: for example, motorised transport, public transport, facilities.

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