



A University of Sussex DPhil thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

<http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/>

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details

**Following the Commitment: Development NGOs and Gender Mainstreaming – the case
of Oxfam GB**

Franz F. Wong

Thesis submitted for the degree of DPhil in Development Studies

School of Global Studies
University of Sussex

January 2013

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....

Summary

University of Sussex

Franz F. Wong
DPhil in Development Studies

Following the Commitment: Development NGOs and Gender Mainstreaming – the case of Oxfam GB

The thesis is concerned with relationships between different conceptualizations and understandings of gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB during 2001-2006 and focuses on two sites of policy and practice: Oxfam House and an Oxfam project in Cambodia. Drawing on anthropology of development literature, I observe that while the mainstreaming strategy was becoming further embedded in the organisation, it also evolved differently in each research site. Gender policy and practice were not necessarily linked, and policy did not drive practice; different drivers were at play.

In Oxfam House, understandings of gender mainstreaming among senior managers were informed by perennial feedback that the organisation's gender work was wanting and perceptions that previous gender efforts were overly critical and uninspiring. These understandings influenced inter-related imperatives, pursued by senior managers, of assuming organisational leadership for gender and making "gender accessible". Both of these contributed to rendering the promotion of gender equality a contested process. In contrast, the project case study in Cambodia, which Oxfam viewed as a "successful" gender mainstreamed model of community-based disaster management, demonstrates a process of taking on gender issues characterised by mutual benefit and reciprocity. Regional gender advisors and project staff needed to work together to secure their places in Aidland. Unlike the drivers of policy in Oxfam House, the drivers of gender mainstreaming practice were the demands and uncertainties of Aidland and, in the light of these, the maintenance of project relations and reproduction of "success". They also concerned localised contingencies of social relations of gender and relations of aid.

I conclude that while gender mainstreaming policy and practice are connected by formal organisational structures, they can also be unrelated due to different micro politics within these respective sites and, relatedly, from the varying degrees of autonomous decision making exercised by Oxfam staff and their understandings of gender and their particular interests.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with most endeavours, a thesis involves and affects a host of people.

I am indebted to my former colleagues at Oxfam GB who trustingly opened themselves to my queries and unquestioningly supported my research, providing me with moral support, comradeship and access to information and knowledge. To them I owe a great amount of gratitude and I can only trust that they read in this thesis the respect that I have for them as development workers and colleagues.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisors, Drs. Ann Whitehead and Elizabeth Harrison, for their wisdom, guidance, patience and understanding throughout my studies. Without their education, this endeavor would not have been worth it.

A special thanks is due to Kirsty Milward-Bose and Roo Griffiths for their diligent and insightful editing of the final drafts of this thesis.

I thank my KIT colleagues for their understanding, support and inspiration, particularly Maitrayee who encouraged me from the beginning and was a great source of inspiration and mentor.

My family has been a continuous source of support and reassurance, particularly my brothers, John and Johann, as well as Alice. I thank them for their indulgence.

Maja has been a constant companion and source of energy, support and motivation. To her I owe my ability to complete my degree and remain faithful to my ideals.

Lastly, I want to thank my mother. Her steadfast belief in my capacity to finish helped me question less my own capacity. It is to her that I dedicate this thesis, in part to acknowledge her own struggles as well as her efforts to raise her three sons as she did.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acronyms	viii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Gender Mainstreaming, Development NGOs and Oxfam GB: an explanation of the research focus	2
Overview of the Thesis and Research questions	11
My History with Oxfam GB as an Advisor and Researcher	12
Structure of the Thesis	14
CHAPTER 2 THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING	17
Introduction	17
Gender Mainstreaming: a critical historical overview of shifting meanings	18
The Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming	26
Approaches to researching and understanding gender mainstreaming	31
Organisational development	31
Organisational ethnography	34
Anthropology of development: policy, practice and critical interfaces	38
Conclusion	46
CHAPTER 3 APPROACHES AND CHALLENGES TO RESEARCHING OXFAM GB	48
Introduction	48
Data Collection: methods, source of information and timelines	48
Oxfam House	50
RMC for East Asia	52
Cambodia country programme office	52
Gender Impact Assessment	53
Limits and Challenges of the Research	59
Constraints of the research design and data collection	59
Positionality, reflexivity and writing from the inside or out	62
Conclusion	70
	iv

CHAPTER 4 THE RESEARCH CONTEXT OF OXFAM GB: A REMARKABLE AND CONTESTED HISTORY WITH GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT	71
Introduction	71
Overview of Oxfam GB	71
History of expansion and change: a brief summary	71
Oxfam’s mission, aims and structure	73
Oxfam House in Oxford	77
Regional Management Centres: RMC for East Asia	79
Country programmes: Oxfam GB in Cambodia	82
“Following the line” and “Feeding the beast”	86
From GADU to Gender Mainstreaming: shifts in strategies	90
Introduction	90
The legacy of Oxfam’s Gender and Development Unit	93
Getting gender on the agenda	94
From GADU to the Gender Team	99
The reining in of GADU	102
Gender mainstreaming infrastructure within Oxfam	105
Global structure	105
Regional gender structure in East Asia	107
The promotion of gender equality by OGB in Cambodia	109
Downward information dissemination; Upward reporting	110
Conclusion	110
CHAPTER 5 SHIFTING MEANINGS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING	113
Introduction	113
Gender Assessments during the Post-FROSI period	113
The 2002 Gender Review	113
The Oxfam International Gender Assessments	121
The 2003 Update of OGB’s Gender Policy	123
Explaining the differences	128
The 2003 update of Oxfam GB’s Gender Policy: How it came to be	133
Conclusion	136
CHAPTER 6 OXFAM GB’S IMPERATIVES: LEADERSHIP AND MAKING GENDER ACCESSIBLE	138
Introduction	138
Gender Leadership and Making a Difference	139

Making Gender Accessible	147
The language of gender	151
The shifting of gender advisory support	156
The myth of the gender police	161
Conclusion	170
CHAPTER 7 COMMUNITY-BASED DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN CAMBODIA: A MODEL GENDER MAINSTREAMED PROJECT	172
Introduction	172
Gender Mainstreaming in Oxfam GB East Asia	173
Overview of the Project	175
Background to Oxfam GB in Cambodia	175
Project context	178
Objectives, scope and approach of a gender mainstreamed project	179
Project activities	182
Gender Mainstreaming and a “Model” Project in Disaster Management	185
Improved living standards	186
Increased confidence and capacities to respond to floods	188
Community mobilisation	188
Challenges to the CBDM project as a model	191
Conclusion	194
CHAPTER 8 THE ENGENDERING OF PROPOSALS AND REPRODUCTION OF “SUCCESS”	197
Introduction	197
The Mainstreaming of Gender in Project Proposals	198
Gender hegemony or the maintenance of project relations?	204
“Women are vulnerable to floods”	210
The Reproduction of Engendered Success	215
Conclusion	222
Chapter 9 THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE NAME OF SUCCESS	223
Introduction	223
Integration in the Project	224
VCDM Members as Brokers and Translators	235
Conclusion	242

CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSION	244
The Policy and Practice of Gender Mainstreaming in Oxfam GB	244
Different Institutional Locations-Different Drivers	247
Relationships between Sites	251
Mainstreaming Gender in DNGOs	254
Researching Development Policy and Practice in Development NGOs	256
 REFERENCES	 261
 Annex A Oxfam's Policy on Gender Equality (2003 Final Version)	 285
Annex B Oxfam's Gender and Development Policy (1993 Version)	287
Annex C Oxfam's Gender Equality Policy Statement (2003 Draft Version)	293

Acronyms

AIR	Annual Impact Report
BIC	Buddhists in Cambodia
CBDM	Community-based Disaster Management
CD	Cambodia Development
CPM	Country Programme Manager
DNGO	Development non-governmental organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FROSI	Fundamental Review of Strategic Intent
GAD	Gender and Development
GADU	Gender and Development Unit
ILO	International Labour Organisation
NCDM	National Committee for Disaster Management
n.d.	no date
n.r.	no reference
NMW	National Machinery for Women
NRI	National Resource Institute
OGB	Oxfam Great Britain
OI	Oxfam International
OinK	Oxfam in Kampuchea
PfA	Platform for Action
RMC	Regional Management Centre
SOW	Subordination of Women
SRF	Social Relations Framework
UNDP	United National Development Programme
UNIFEM	UN Fund for Women
VCDM	Village Committee for Disaster Management
WID	Women in Development

Chapter 1

Introduction

The focus of this thesis is on gender mainstreaming within a large international development NGO, Oxfam Great Britain (OGB), and its different sites of policy and practice. I worked for the organisation as a Regional Gender Advisor for East Asia for three years, initially from September 2002 to August 2004 then again from November 2007 to October 2008. During this first period, I had come across a number of situations about the policy and practice of gender mainstreaming that were initially frustrating, then later a source of interest that I wanted to explore as part of my PhD studies. I had arrived with great respect for the organisation, but after some time the patina of its reputation for being a leader on gender and development wore off. I had come to realise there were different, sometimes contentious, understandings about gender, development and how gender issues needed to be promoted in the organisation and its programmes. It was this contradiction – the reputation on the one hand and the realities of organisational politics on the other – that became the impetus for this research which spans the period of 2001 to 2006.

Established in 1943, OGB¹ aims “to work with others to alleviate poverty and suffering” and its values are empowerment, inclusiveness and accountability (Internal document. Oxfam GB, 2006). Working in over 70 countries with some 3,000 local groups, the organisation works in five areas, known as Aims, that are formulated as the rights of individuals to be secure, skilled, healthy, safe, heard and equal (Internal document. Oxfam GB, n.d.). Among these is a specific objective to promote gender equality. As the largest charity in Great Britain, Oxfam had about 5,000 staff and 22,000 volunteers in 2005. The organisation, based in Oxford, raised about 60% of its annual budget, about GBP130M in 2004, from unrestricted sources including from over 550,000 regular private donors.

¹ While Oxfam was known as Oxfam UK and Ireland, this was changed to Oxfam Great Britain in the late 1990s with the establishment of Oxfam Ireland. For the purpose of this thesis, I refer to Oxfam Great Britain as OGB.

OGB's experience with gender and development is a long, contested and remarkable history of over 25 years². From the mid-1980s, it became known as a pioneer among development NGOs with the establishment of a stand-alone internal gender unit, accumulated experience with gender training and as a major publisher of gender and development literature. Still, review after review found the organisation's gender work wanting and it was facing perennial challenges. Despite a strong gender policy framework and the increasing adoption of gender mainstreaming since the mid-1990s, leadership, commitment and staffing were continuous concerns throughout the organisation, although these manifested themselves differently within the organisation's headquarters and in its projects.

As a multi-sited ethnography, this research includes OGB headquarters and the Cambodian country programme – using the case of a single project – as well as the intermediary site of the regional office for East Asia. It explores the links between the policy and practice of gender mainstreaming by focusing on different understandings and its promotion between and within these sites in the period 2001-2006. This follows a major organisational strategic review in 1998, which had far reaching direct and indirect implications for the organisation and gender mainstreaming.

This chapter introduces my research by explaining the significance of its main subject, gender mainstreaming, with particular reference to development NGOs. I then describe the how a focus on OGB offers a unique research opportunity given its long-standing experience with addressing gender issues in the organisation and its programmes, its reflective publishing and the access offered due to my previous experience with the organisation. Still, as I discuss in this chapter, my history vis-à-vis OGB also complicated my role as a researcher. This chapter also outlines the main research questions and the remaining chapters of this thesis.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING, DEVELOPMENT NGOS AND OXFAM GB: AN EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH FOCUS

This section provides an explanation for the research focus by way of an overview of the approach as adopted by development organisations with a particular attention on

² It should be noted that OGB's efforts to institutionalize gender concerns within the organisation and its programmes represent early initiatives among NGOs in Britain if not elsewhere.

development NGOs in general and OGB in particular. “Gender mainstreaming” has become part of mainstream development discourse (Prugl and Lustgarten, 2006) since the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, which marked the wide endorsement of the term by governments and the UN. This can and should be seen as welcome attention to the engendering of development assistance and development organisations with gender mainstreaming as the main strategy for addressing gender issues through development. Gender policies and strategies as well as the establishment of gender infrastructure – such as gender advisory posts, focal point and networks – are now *de rigueur* practices of gender mainstreaming. Gender training, almost a rite of passage, has become the ubiquitous response to address gender awareness, knowledge and skills.

Overall, however, the period following the achievements of the Beijing conference did not yield improvements in women’s condition and position as was hoped. “Progress” for women has been uncertain (Molyneux and Razavi, 2005: 25). In some cases, gender inequality had taken on different forms, resistance to women’s public participation had increased and previous gains had been reversed. A number of analyses that emerged around the 10th anniversary focused on gender mainstreaming highlighting a paradox: the ways in which it was taken on in different settings was different yet, at the same time, also similar.

That gender mainstreaming has become entrenched with greater institutionalisation has also meant bureaucratisation and, as a result, the undermining of those elements that originally constituted it as a change strategy. Lost from the initial conceptualisations have been complementary strategies such as women’s empowerment, which has also been coopted as the approach has become “mainstreamed”. As gender mainstreaming and associated ideas have been taken on by development and government institutions, they have become interpreted through their particular paradigms. This has led to observations that gender mainstreaming has led to a cooptation of the feminist foundations that lie at both the impetus for gender mainstreaming as well as its antecedent, gender and development (Cornwall et al., 2007a). Generally, there was a sense that the strategy has been coopted, instrumentalised and rendered a technical exercise (for example, see Mukhopadhyay, 2007b)

How should one understand the contradiction of the promise of gender mainstreaming, on the one hand, and its poor performance as change strategy on the other? One is to acknowledge that the popularization of gender mainstreaming is not indicative of a common understanding of the term. March et al. (1999: 10) describe the meaning of “mainstreaming” and its aim as “contested” terrains due to different understandings. These need to be understood against shifting meanings over time and across different contexts. For example, the term first emerged from and in reaction to efforts to address the exclusion of women from development, first highlighted in the early 1970s, popularly known as Women in Development (WID). During the period leading up to the Beijing conference and immediately following it, the popularization and adoption of the term marked a growing consensus within and influence, at the time, of global women’s movements³, their bringing a gender and rights agenda to international fora (Jaquette and Summerfield, 2006) and an overall increase in acceptance of gender and rights by states. The Beijing conference and its immediate aftermath are significant for gender mainstreaming because it signalled a major shift from the focus and separatism of WID to a systematic effort to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in all of an “organisation’s pursuits” (Goetz, 1997b: 5). The Beijing period was also an occasion for critical analysis and reflection of experiences to date as well as airing of concerns that served to foreshadow the general consensus that emerged during the tenth anniversary of Beijing in 2005, discussed above. Writings surrounding Beijing Plus 10 generally address the legacies resulting from, in some cases, 10 years or more of efforts to routinely institutionalise gender concerns in policy, organisational and programming processes that, as many reviews attest, failed to produce desired outcomes. Analysis of a decade of experience with gender mainstreaming also revealed a certain “ennui” (Molyneux, 2007) due, in part, to the limits of organisations to change and take on radical agendas, which became more apparent during this period. Some of these challenges were already experienced prior to the adoption of gender mainstreaming; others concerns were raised around Beijing, such as feminist agendas and women concerns being co-opted, as well as after, as illustrated by Batliwala and Dhanraj (2007).

³ In the use of this term, I do not imply that there was one global women’s movement or a harmonious and undifferentiated collective of women’s organisations at the global level.

A second line to understanding the experience of gender mainstreaming is to focus on how the analysis of experiences with gender mainstreaming has been approached. To date, research of gender mainstreaming and WID/gender units, whether in state bureaucracies or development agencies, has primarily used standard organizational study approaches that see organizations as “machines” (Wright, 1994: 18, Shore and Wright, 1997) that can be disaggregated with each constituent part respectively analyzed (see for example Jahan, 1995). This assumption seems to ignore other forms of organizations, such as “organization as culture” (Wright, 1994: 19), which is a critical distinction when we consider organizations as being gendered (Goetz, 1997b) and constituted by power relations (Goetz, 1994).

Relatedly, the relationship of gender policy and practice is often assumed to be linear and positivist that leads to a deficit perspective and an analysis based on identifying a lack of “inputs” that are said to be critical to mainstreaming gender such as leadership, commitment, resources, training, policies etc. The emphasis of such work is on the failure of policy to be implemented and a disjuncture between institutional policies and practice (Prugl and Lustgarten, 2006: 54).

While gender mainstreaming has, in many ways, been studied, there are opportunities to take a different approach. What have not been fully explored are alternative methodologies to understanding organisations and the relationships between policy and practice. Also, previous research of gender mainstreaming and WID/gender units are limited to desk reviews, interviews and short-term field visits where breadth seems privileged over depth as most studies include multiple organizations. This is particularly the case with development NGOs (see for example, Tiessen, 2007 and Wallace, 1998).

What have been the experiences of development NGOs (DNGOs)? How do they compare with other development agencies, whether multi-lateral or bi-lateral? Much of the literature on organizational experience with institutionalizing gender equality is either on state bureaucracies or multi- and bi-lateral agencies. Relatively speaking, there are fewer systematic studies on DNGOs⁴, and what does exist are individual anecdotal accounts.

⁴ Much is also focused on northern European DNGOs as opposed to North American, Southern or Eastern organizations. Where literature is available on the latter two, (“available” at least in the sense of

Given the commonly associated characteristics with DNGOs, one would expect their experiences to not only be different to other types of development organisations, but also more positive (others have also echoed this sentiment. See Goetz, 1997: 9, Porter et al., 1999, Wallace et al., 1997). DNGOs are considered more innovative, flexible and driven by values - such as equality, democracy, participation - that are conducive to promoting gender equality in development work and also within organizations. Additionally, for NGOs that raise their own funds from the public, they face relatively fewer restrictions on how they use their resources.

Still, DNGOs gender mainstreaming performance and achievements are strikingly similar compared to government bureaucracies and other development agencies. For example, European DNGOs are characterized as past the “gender is a good idea, accepted in theory” stage but rarely go further (Macdonald et al., 1997: 30).

Leadership, management and commitment are said to be needed to move beyond this. One review found that documentation from UK-based NGOs was mostly gender unaware and that few NGOs had addressed gender issues in policies and procedures (Wallace et al., 1997) while at the same time gender equality initiatives faced lip-service, marginalization and resistance. Those responsible for promoting gender equality within organizations found themselves marginalized and over worked. Obstacles included ignorance or misunderstanding about gender, cultural resistance by partners and NGOs’ reluctance to question it (Macdonald et al., 1997: 38-40).

Studies reveal that DNGOs are no less “gendered”, both in terms of their organizational structures, practices and beliefs as well as their programmes (Rao and Kelleher, 1997, Yasmin, 1997). Goetz (1997a) concludes that the structural differences between governmental and non-governmental organizations and their respective receptivity to needs and interests of poor women are not as great as would be expected; class and gendered hierarchies are more significant particularly at the grassroots level.

accessible from the UK), it is either literature written from a Western paradigm (and usually edited and published by Westerners) or a non-Western paradigm that is sometimes conceptually inaccessible (cf. Sharma, 2004).

Tiessen's (2007) study of gender mainstreaming of some 35 national and international NGOs in Malawi echoes studies of multi and bi-lateral development organisations. She contends that gender mainstreaming was understood as needing to happen elsewhere, in projects not in organisations, but happened nowhere, despite the discourse of gender mainstreaming being everywhere. In other words, gender mainstreaming was pursued as a technical, apolitical and unfocused process.

Given DNGOs' social development mandates and supposed commitment to people-centred, participatory and empowering approaches, listening and incorporating the voices of those normally marginalized, at the least, would be *de rigueur*. Again, the gendered nature of DNGOs not only belies this apparent comparative advantage but also sets up a certain hypocrisy. For example, women's participation in decision-making at the grass-roots level is not matched their participation in organization management (Yasmin, 1997). "Male priorities (still prevail) through a process of cooptation" (Miller and Razavi, 1998b: 16).

DNGOs do not appear immune to the pressures of organizational survival despite their relative financial independence described above. Competing demands and pressures to increase participation, impact and efficiency and to scale up operations compromise their "comparative advantages" which may, in the end, be inimical to the empowerment of women and to the NGOs' advocacy roles. This is exacerbated as NGOs become more involved as service delivery agencies (Mayoux, 1998, Miller and Razavi, 1998b, Wallace et al., 1997).

As a case study, however, OGB offers a number of advantages compared to other DNGOs. Firstly, it offers an opportunity to better understand gender mainstreaming without the usual constraints of previous studies. These include the lack of an explicit commitment to gender equality, the absence of a mandate conducive to the promotion of gender equality, financial and programming constraints due to numerous and diverse stakeholders and limited and undocumented experience with promoting gender equality (Goetz, 1997, Miller and Razavi, 1998a, Razavi and Miller, 1995). OGB has had a gender policy since 1993, it explicitly links the promotion of gender equality to its aim to relieve poverty and suffering and it raised more than 60% of its funds from the

British public in 2004, an indication of an endorsement of its work, allowing it more financial autonomy than if its funding base was more restricted.

Moreover, OGB's long history with gender and development and efforts to promote gender equality (see Chapter 4) distinguishes it from other DNGOs which have been pursuing gender mainstreaming for a shorter period. For these latter organisations, their challenges concern getting gender on the agenda (see for example Tiessen, 2005 and Wallace, 1998). For OGB, its challenges are both recurring whilst others have emanated from the organisation's long history with gender that have contributed to a complex organisational context informed in part by previous efforts.

For example, *gender works* (Porter et al., 1999a), a publication by OGB on OGB gender and development efforts, captures perennial challenges in Oxfam's history – such as insufficient management commitment and leadership. Published six years after the establishment of Oxfam's gender policy, its contributors found its implementation “patchy” (Melrose, 1999: 109), “mixed” (Iddi, 1999: 77) and “difficult and challenging to implement. Success and failures, and innovative work and resistance, co-exist” (Porter, 1999: 9). Iddi (1999) writes that while the organization has shifted from WID to GAD, programmes, at least in Burkina Faso, remain women-focused where they are “add-ons” to projects. Eade (1999: 289) describes her challenges in fulfilling her mandate to “genderise” Oxfam's well-known *Field Director's Handbook* where her charge was simply interpreted by the organization as “tinkering in the margins of the text.”

gender works also raises new challenges, such as balancing the personal and professional and women facing a glass ceiling (Melrose, 1999) as well as a lack of understanding, coupled with diverse understandings, of “gender” and the implications of moving from a WID to a GAD approach. While WID was fairly straight forward - staff needed to include women - a gender approach remained misunderstood and theoretical causing confusion for staff and partners. Such misunderstanding seemed to have pervaded all levels of the organization. Melrose (1999), then the Policy Director, states that “[d]espite the extensive discussion that took place...it is clear...that part of the problem lies in the very different understanding of what the policy means.” (108)

Lastly, OGB is a major source of knowledge and literature on gender and development issues in general and institutionalizing gender more specifically. Much of this body of work is based in the organisation's own experiences and is substantial both in depth, with material dating back to the 1980s, and in breadth, with Oxfam being a major publisher on gender and development since the early 1990s. These in addition to archival information allow for considerable secondary information sources unavailable for other DNGOs.

Together these offer OGB as an ideal research site for greater insight into DNGOs and their efforts to promote gender equality. Focusing on understanding the challenges of "mature" gender mainstreaming may provide insight for those organisations that have relatively less experience. In particular, research on OGB provides an opportunity to explore two inter-related themes. One concerns disparate understandings, appreciation and conceptualizations of the promotion of gender equality. March et al. (1999) emphasize that for organizations to promote gender equality both in their organizations and therefore in their programmes, there needs to be an understanding of the goal and how it will be achieved. OGB's gender equality policies, strategies and plans suggest such an understanding; its practice indicates otherwise, gender equality and how it is achieved have different meanings within the organization. Moreover, such disparate understandings are not just indicative of different levels of awareness; they are also reflective of differences in appreciation and conceptualization of the nature of gender inequity, the relationships between development and gender equality and how development organizations promote the latter.

A second related theme concerns the paradoxical existence of coherence and incoherence in and between policy and practice. OGB's gender equality policies, strategies, plans and initiatives not only suggest an informed understanding of the goal and means to achieving gender equality, but there appears a certain consistency and coherence to this understanding, again as evidenced in its gender equality policies, strategies, organizational procedures and plans. At the same time, OGB's gender work has often been described as "patchy" at different occasions since 1993. The patina of coherence is deceptive as it is also characterized by incoherence, contradictions and conflict. In particular, the focus on OGB's Community-based Disaster Management

project in Cambodia provided an opportunity to explore this contradiction given its status in OGB as a gender mainstreamed model project.

OGB as a case study is also conducive for research due to my position and history with the organization, as described above, which offered both access and insight that would otherwise not be easily obtained with an organization with which I was less familiar and known. OGB had approved my researching it as part of my DPhil studies and the Cambodia country programme invited me to participate in a gender impact assessment of its projects as part of my research. These provided an opportunity to be actively engaged and make a “practical contribution” (Mosse, 2005: 12) thereby facilitating longer-term participant observation. Extant knowledge of the case studies that feature in my research allowed for more in-depth and contextualised understanding than if I had not previously been exposed to them.

OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My impetus for this research is to explore different understandings of gender mainstreaming and the “disjunctures” between policy and practice. I suggest that a linear understanding of the relationship between these, while common to the analysis of gender mainstreaming, do not reveal the “social worlds” of policy. Development organisations as well are not comprised of unrelated atoms, free of value as Weberian understandings suggest. They are not homogeneous entities but are comprised of individuals and relations that are diverse, complex, multi-faceted and political. Gender mainstreaming as well is a political process. What these understandings of institutionalizing gender, policy and organisations suggest is a focus on the micro politics. They beg for different approaches to policy and practice and an appreciation of individuals as agents who are part of and constitute organisational structures but are not necessarily completely dominated by them. Instead of focusing on a policy-practice continuum, I assume a relational perspective of understandings in different policy spaces characterised by critical interfaces where different understandings merge, collide and are created through the making of meaning and bringing to bear extant understandings of gender, organisations and change.

My main research question is “What are the relationships between different conceptualisations and representations of the policy and practice of gender mainstreaming, in the case of Oxfam GB?”

In addressing this question, I focus on a number of related research questions concerning different understanding of gender mainstreaming and the roles of individuals and their relationships in furthering gender mainstreaming.

- What are different understandings of gender mainstreaming in OGB? How have they evolved? How are they practiced? How are they related to different formal, informal and hidden roles and structures within the organisation?
- How are policies and practices of gender mainstreaming related to each other? What evidence exists to demonstrate a link between policy and practice? What are these links? How are these related to different understandings of gender mainstreaming?

- What roles do individuals play in the policy and practice of gender mainstreaming? How are they competing? How are they complementary? What informs their practice?

MY HISTORY WITH OXFAM GB AS AN ADVISOR AND RESEARCHER

As mentioned previously, I have a history with OGB, having worked for the organisation for 3 years as a gender advisor, which complicates my position as a researcher of gender mainstreaming in Oxfam. For this reason, I explain in detail how I came to focus on the organisation for my PhD research and summarise some of my challenges. I was first accepted to undertake a PhD in 2002 at the University of Sussex⁵, but I deferred for two years, as I had accepted the position of OGB Regional Gender Advisor for East Asia, a role I held from September 2002 to August 2004 (in Hanoi) and then from November 2007 to October 2008 (in Phnom Penh)⁶.

My experience of working for OGB between 2002-04 led me to focus my research on gender mainstreaming within OGB. Several institutional innovations had left me with unanswered questions⁷, and I found I wanted more generally to understand what was happening to ideas about gender equality that I was promoting and which I had assumed were shared within the organisation. As mentioned previously, I started my work with OGB with great respect for the organisation as a leader on gender and development, but working on the inside, wore off. This was not a case of misrepresentation: I think my expectations had been informed by what I wanted to see. But it was this contradiction – the global reputation on the one hand and the realities of organisational politics in its gender work on the other – that I wanted to understand. In October 2003 I approached the regional office for East Asia to conduct my PhD research on Oxfam which was approved in March 2004.

It would be misleading to suggest I wore the hat of a researcher during my first stint with OGB from 2002-2004. I enjoyed the job and working with the organisation

⁵ My research proposal, entitled “Operationalising Donor Gender Policies through a System of Stakeholders – Working through a Broken Telephone?”, was a multi-agency study to analyse the implementation process and critically identify and analyse facilitating and hindering factors.

⁶ During the intervening period, I was on sabbatical from Oxfam to undertake my PhD studies. I resigned from my post in order to be able to spend more time on my thesis.

⁷ Two of these, relating to the 2003 updating of Oxfam’s Gender Policy and the CBDM project in Cambodia, are featured in this research.

tremendously, and the work was mostly exciting and professionally satisfying. Unlike many gender advisors (Smyth, 1999), I faced relatively little resistance and had good relations with most staff in the region. The position was not without its challenges, but I had great support from my managers, who provided me with a fair amount of autonomy, and colleagues, some of whom I still consider friends. Still, with my research interests piqued from my professional experiences, as explained above, I made a point of saving documentation after Oxfam approved my research in 2004 that allowed me full access to OGB staff and documentation.

My identity and position as a former Oxfam staff member both facilitated and complicated the research. I had previous knowledge of the organisation, contacts and access. This is not to say, however, that my knowledge and familiarity of OGB was complete but it was sufficient to allow me an entry-point. Still, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, my identity raised a number of challenges concerning potential conflict of interests, issues of trust and my own bias. Most critically, however, I was challenged by evolving and gaining an etic perspective while maintaining my partial emic perspective and understanding the difference between the two. This was a concern while in the “field” (van Maanen, 1979) as well analysing and writing up data interpretively (Marcus, 1995). It was also a matter of understanding that data collection and interpretation are inter-twinned and mutually informing processes belying the often dichotomous distinction made between these “phases” of research. I have attempted to address these concerns through transparency and reflexivity about my positionality and own subjectivity to attain “strong objectivity” (Harding’s, 1993: 72). In this thesis I endeavor to be cognizant of my assumptions and transparent of what actually happened during the research.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In addition to this introduction, this thesis is comprised of 9 other chapters.

In Chapter 2, I explore the theory and practice of gender mainstreaming by way of a critical historical review where I identify gaps in understandings of gender mainstreaming which provides a justification for a focus on the micro-politics of organisations. I then suggest a different way of thinking of gender mainstreaming drawing on organisational ethnography, as a counterpoint to organisational development which has informed much of the thinking on gender mainstreaming, as well as anthropology of development with a focus on policy-practice, multi-sited ethnography and critical interfaces.

Chapter 3 is where I describe how the research was conducted and outline its design and data collection, particularly in terms of methods, sources of information and timelines. Critical to this discussion is a reflection of my position as researcher as well as a former OGB gender advisor. While offering access, this also posed challenges such as attaining an etic perspective, briefly mentioned previously.

Chapter 4 explains the organisational context for my multi-sited organisational ethnography and provides a mapping of OGB for readers to understand the different research sites and related organisational structures that I refer to in the thesis. I provide an overview of OGB and its global, regional and country structures more generally but also in terms of the promotion of gender equality, which is prefaced by a historical tracing of contestations about its gender work with a particular focus on the increasing adoption of gender mainstreaming.

Chapter 5 explores how gender policy emerged and analyses moments that served to further the organisation's adoption of gender mainstreaming. In particular, I focus on key assessments of OGB's gender work and consider not only the influence they had on the organisation, but also how they were addressed by senior managers. I suggest that these responses signaled a shift in direction in how gender mainstreaming was understood and structured. This is illustrated by the updating of the original 1993 Gender Policy in 2003.

Chapter 6 extends the analysis of gender policy and its drivers and considers how policy is shaped by the balance between institutional and individual imperatives and ideologies. In particular, I explore two gender mainstreaming policy imperatives: One concerned the mainstreaming of gender leadership and predominance of senior managers along with a shifting in how gender advisory services were provided. Another related imperative was “making gender accessible” in order that staff would know what to do. I explain and analyse senior managers’ rationales and understanding of gender from the perspective of making it accessible and how the agenda was in part informed by perceptions of why OGB’s past gender efforts had failed.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 explore how these changes played out at the level of implementation. They focus on OGB’s Community-based Disaster Management (CBDM) project in Cambodia, which the organisation considered as a “model” of disaster management and an example of a gender mainstreamed project. As a case study, it stands in contrast to gender assessments of OGB, described in Chapter 5, that reiterated that its gender work was wanting. I suggest that while the adoption of gender mainstreaming was furthered by post strategic review structural changes, the practice of gender mainstreaming was informed by different contingencies. I explore how the local site of implementation plays a more critical role in the practice of promoting of gender equality than does organisational policy, both of which, however, were informed by organisational changes. I also look at what differences OGB makes to women’s lives and their integration into the organisation’s work.

Chapter 7 sets the stage for the case study and outlines the project as well as OGB in Cambodia’s claims of having established a model that has mainstreamed gender. Despite this, the project was controversial and its claims as a model were contested.

Chapter 8 investigates the development of project proposals in more detail. While influenced by regional policy imperatives, the insertion of gender awareness into project design was also concerned with the maintenance of the interests of strategic groups, in ways that contrasted with the policy making situation in Oxfam House. In the case of the CBDM project, the notion of women as particularly vulnerable to floods was central to the discourse of project success. I explore the origins of this notion and how the discourse integrated it and was reproduced.

Chapter 9 explores the role of women in the apparent success of the project. I suggest that the project's "success" was partly due to the co-optation of women under the auspices of promoting gender equality. Under the guise of promoting women's participation and leadership, women members of village committees provided their labour, acquiesced to imposed gender roles and experienced increased dependency on men in service of the project. I then explore these observations within the context of project brokerage and translation.

The final chapter returns to the main research question of the relationships between different conceptualisations and representations of the policy and practice of gender mainstreaming, and draws together the main findings from each of the main sites. I demonstrate that policy does not inform practice. Rather the overriding drivers of the policy and practice of gender mainstreaming are those to be found respectively in sites of policy definition and practice. I go onto explore why these drivers are different in these sites and end with reflections about gender mainstreaming.

Chapter 2

The Theory and Practice of Gender Mainstreaming

INTRODUCTION

Previously I have described the contradiction of gender mainstreaming between the promise it once held and its disappointment as change strategy despite its widespread popularisation. To understand this paradox, one needs to appreciate that there are different, often contested, understandings of the term, which itself has changed over time. Still, the way gender mainstreaming has been pursued has been remarkably similar with its practice also having become more entrenched. Also similar has been the way gender mainstreaming has been researched and analysed. In particular, gender policy, practice and outcomes are understood as linearly and unproblematically related. The failure to produce gender outcomes is understood as a lack of or poor implementation as well as missing commonly identified factors, such as leadership, commitment and staff skills and knowledge. Similarly, organizations are seen in Weberian terms as rational entities, based on idealised notions of bureaucracy, and efficient machines (Yanow et al., 2011, forthcoming) that implement policies unproblematic.

This chapter provides the context of the emergence of gender mainstreaming, through a historical overview of the thinking behind the approach and a critical analysis of its practice, and identifies gaps in how it has been analysed. I highlight the relatively little attention paid to the role of micro-politics of organisations as well as the assumptions of linear relationships between policy and practice. I explain how previous efforts to understand gender and development organisations have predominantly relied on organisational development approaches that seem to be inappropriate for the study of DNGOs and fail to uncover the micro-politics of organisations. From this analysis I explore two fields of literature – organisational ethnography and anthropology of development – that provide a theoretical framework for my research.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: A CRITICAL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SHIFTING MEANINGS

The wide popularisation of gender mainstreaming among governments and development agencies since the 1995 Beijing Conference is not indicative, however, of a common or constant understanding of the term. Moreover, there has been much confusion (Rathgeber, 2005) and contestation (March et al., 1999) about the approach, its aims and about the means to achieve them. This diversity of understandings concerns shifting meanings over time and across different contexts, which is the focus of this section. In particular, I examine how the term originally emerged from and in reaction to efforts to address the exclusion of women from development, first highlighted in the early 1970s⁸. I trace the trajectory of gender mainstreaming across three periods: its origins in the 1970s, the period leading up to the Beijing conference and immediately following it, and the period surrounding its tenth anniversary in 2005.

While gender mainstreaming is often associated with the Beijing conference, its origins can be traced to the 1970s and the UN Decade of Women (1975 to 1985). It reflects two main areas of concern about Women in Development (WID), popular at the time among development agencies and governments as a means to address the ‘exclusion’ of women from development. First, although WID initiatives resulted in some improvements in women’s material conditions, there was little improvement in women’s status; the inclusion of women in development was emphasised, but the nature of women’s relational and structural subordination was ignored (Razavi and Miller, 1995b) and unequal gender power relations remained unaltered (Goetz, 1997b). Secondly, WID initiatives were predominantly characterised organisationally by separate WID units or, in the case of governments, National Machineries for Women (NMW). Programmatically, women’s concerns were addressed through specific women-focused projects that were undertaken separately from other initiatives. Despite WID Units and NMW, women remained marginalised from organisational decision making and resources, women’s issues continued at the periphery, and women-focused projects did little to improve their position relative to men.

⁸ The emergence of Women in Development (WID), often associated with Boserup’s (1970) *Women’s Role in Economic Development*, has been documented elsewhere. See for example, Moser (1993) and Rathgeber (1990).

Gender and development⁹ offered an alternative to WID with its focus on social relations of gender and critique of dominant development paradigms. Miller and Razavi (1998a) trace the conceptual roots of GAD to the work of the Subordination of Women Collective and a related workshop and conference. In a critique of WID, the Collective highlighted the inadequacy of studying women as a homogeneous category and in isolation of the relations between men and women; relations that are both “socially constituted” and “not necessarily, nor obviously, harmonious and non-conflicting” (Whitehead, 1979: 10). GAD advocates also attempted to “develop a theory of gender which was integrated into and informed by gender analysis of the world economy” (Pearson, 1981: x cited by Razavi and Miller, 1995a: 15). These two themes – social relations of gender and critique of “development” – are also to be found in the concerns of Southern feminists who raised them “consistently” since the beginning of the Decade of Women (Jahan, 1995: 8; for example, see Mohanty et al., 1991 and Sen and Grown, 1985).

Gender mainstreaming can be associated with GAD as an attempt to address the marginalisation of women resulting from WID (Jackson, 1997, Baden and Goetz, 1998), and its adoption by development organisations can be seen as parallel to the “shift” from WID to GAD (Staudt, 2003). By the time of the 1985 World Conference on Women in Nairobi, “gender mainstreaming was born” (ibid. 51) with calls for diffusing responsibility for addressing gender issues across the breadth and depth of organisations. Women’s groups, particularly those from developing countries, raised concerns about the limits of an integrationist-separatist strategy. Calls for a more transformative approach were made, for example by UNIFEM, one of the first agencies to pursue a mainstreaming agenda, which advocated a change of the mainstream itself.

Following the 1985 conference, other agencies had also adopted the approach. For example, Miller (1998), in writing about this period, remarks on two mainstreaming approaches taken on by UNDP, the World Bank and ILO. One was the establishment of gender units or the strengthening of previously established WID units, such as by

⁹ Both WID and GAD broadly describe a number of approaches to addressing inequity between men and women (Levy, 1996 and Moser, 1993). Both, but GAD in particular, are difficult to define. CCIC (1992) provides a rare comprehensive description of GAD: in this interpretation, GAD is being used to describe approaches that represent an alternative to WID, and where gender and social relations of gender are core considerations, and the goals are equal gender/social relations (CCIC, 1992).

setting up focal point systems. Second was the establishment of procedures for spreading “responsibility for WID/gender concerns across the organisational context” (ibid: 151). Such initiatives, however, faced constraints. Focal points had weak mandates and authority, were poorly resourced and lacked capacity. Gender-related questions in project approval forms were completed perfunctorily. What is interesting is that while efforts to diffuse responsibility for gender were attempted as alternatives to WID efforts, the approaches and subsequent challenges were not dissimilar. “Infrastructure” established to promote gender mainstreaming experienced similar constraints as did WID units. Little of the learning from the WID era seems to have been considered in the early, pre-Beijing era of gender mainstreaming.

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (PfA) is a testament to the achievements efforts since Nairobi as well as other UN sponsored international conferences in the 1990s. The agreement of governments to its Strategic Objectives is significant in terms of the extent of the commitments to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment, which were formulated on a structural analysis of women’s disadvantaged position. In terms of mainstreaming, governments committed themselves to promoting “an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, including, as appropriate, an analysis of the effects on women and men, respectively, before decisions are taken” (United Nations, 1995: various paragraphs), which was a clause repeated in a number of Strategic Objectives, including those related to the UN itself. What is particularly noteworthy about the understanding of mainstreaming in the PfA is that it was seen as a *means* to the *ends* of achieving the various Strategic Objectives, which concerned different areas of strategic interests of women. Gender mainstreaming in the context of Beijing represents one of the most systematic approaches to integrate gender concerns, link gender mainstreaming with gender equality, women’s empowerment and position women at the centre-stage of development (Jahan, 1995) and development organisations.

The support by governments and coming together of women’s organisations does not, however, imply a harmonious process at Beijing. The preparatory conferences, involving women’s organisations from around the world, and the conference itself were

conflict ridden among governments¹⁰, between governments and civil society and among women's organisations themselves. In particular, among the latter, there were already concerns for a cooptation of analytical concepts of gender with the popularisation of gender mainstreaming. These included fears that gender analysis was becoming a technocratic discourse due in part, as explained by one critic, to the “professionalisation and 'NGOisation' of the women's movement and the consequent lack of accountability of 'gender experts' to a grassroots constituency” (Baden and Goetz, 1998: 39). Questions were raised as to whose interests and positions were being served by gender mainstreaming and the costs of deploying instrumentalist strategies in order to convince mainstream development organisations to adopt a gender agenda. There was also a concern about what was being mainstreamed and the limits of the mainstream, and as Miller (1998; 151. My emphasis) suggests, the “extent to which gender mainstreaming within *development institutions* can have a transformatory impact on the development process.”

Still, gender mainstreaming became the main approach following from Beijing for state bureaucracies and development organisations such as OGB. The periods running up to and following the conference were characterised by a number of different analyses, diagnoses and efforts to develop systematic approaches. A number of extensive reviews were conducted that provided accounts of gender mainstreaming efforts, particularly of development agencies (Geisler et al., 1999, Jahan, 1995, Razavi and Miller, 1995c) and by NMW (Byrne et al., 1996, Goetz, 1995).

Two publications especially stand out. First is Goetz's (1997a) edited collection, *Getting Institutions Right for Women*, which was influential in pointing out the gendered nature of organisations, which are governed by institutions or rather “rules”. Focussing on the “institutional politics of pursuing feminist policy ambitions” (ibid: 3), the authors build on experience with gender mainstreaming by that time and analyse organisational resistance to change, dilution of feminist aims and the compromises needed to forward a gender agenda organisationally. With its focus on the institutionalisation of gender concerns, the work of some of the contributors, such as

¹⁰ Debates and controversies prior and during Beijing concerned a number of issues including the term “gender” itself. Friedman (2003) claims the Beijing PfA was the most contested of all texts emerging from the various conferences. See Baden and Goetz (1997) and Friedman (2003) for descriptions and analysis of these.

Goetz (1997c, 1997b) and Harrison (1997), represents an extension of the intellectual thinking of the SOW collective to gender mainstreaming, which was not an original concern during the 1970s. In particular, the emphasis on individuals, which Goetz (1997b) and Jackson (1997) claim as being previously overlooked, is an important contribution to the gender mainstreaming literature. Individuals exercise agency, despite constraints posed by organisational and social structures, and in doing so, bring their own ideologies and interpretations, where career and job security are also considerations. *Getting Institutions Right for Women* is also significant for its consideration of NGOs, which previously had not been a focus¹¹, and the finding, as described previously, that NGOs are no less gendered, hierarchical and dominated by male privilege, even with their presumed advantages.

The second is Pearson's and Jackson's (1998) *Feminist Visions of Development*, which is another critical publication coming out of the immediate post-Beijing era. Inspired by the conference, the collection of essays find their roots in gender and development and reflect on contemporary debates, "paradoxes and uncertainties" (ibid: 5) in gender analysis of development. While 25 years had passed since the initial work of the SOW collective and a different global context meant different challenges, such as the structural adjustment policies and their impact on developing countries, the contributors find resonance with the previous work: "Issues of representation, of positionality and of practice transform old questions of integration, interests, struggles for resources and well-being, but do not replace them" (ibid). While not particularly concerned with gender mainstreaming, they recognise that the propagation of "gender" has also produced a diversity of meanings, such as from its conflation with poverty (Jackson, 1997).

The 10th anniversary of the Beijing conference also served as an opportunity for reflection on what had happened since the international endorsement of the PfA. For some, it was an occasion for renewal; for others, despondency. In *Beijing Plus 10: An Ambivalent Record on Gender Justice*, a summary of a series of papers commissioned for the occasion, Molyneux and Razavi (2005) reflect upon the previous 20 years and conclude "Gender inequalities have reduced over time but they have also proved to be

¹¹The other major study on NGO experience with gender mainstreaming during this period is Wallace et al. (1997).

remarkably resilient in the face of change” (ibid: 4). What is interesting about Molyneux and Razavi (2005) is how the research is positioned and referenced to the idea of “gender justice”. According to Mukhopadhyay (2007a: 2. My emphasis), this signals gender mainstreaming losing “its credibility as a change strategy [and] the language of justice, rights and citizenship [...] being *brought back*”.

Much of the analysis around the 10th anniversary was on gender mainstreaming, and it too reflected different perspectives while also focusing on how wide spread the approach had become. For example, Rai (2003) edits a collection of articles that focus on NMW in the era of gender mainstreaming (as opposed to during the WID era). She comments that NMW have been critical in promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming by making gender more visible despite them facing constraints such as a lack of financial and human resources and clear mandate. Her positioning of gender mainstreaming as being critical and core to wider processes contradicts Goetz (2003: 89) who shows less confidence in her essay on NMW in the same collection. She cites inter-ministerial politics as exacerbating the “hierarchical and undemocratic nature of bureaucracies, and their hostility to agendas which challenge accustomed organisational patterns” while also preserving patronage relations. Goetz’s continued¹² concern about the potential for bureaucracies to transform and undertake progressive change not only echoes those first raised around the Beijing conference – (and even prior, for example see Ferguson, 1984) – but was increasingly evident around the Beijing Plus 10 reflections.

In one of these, Prugl and Lustgarten (2006) focus their attention on UNDP, the World Bank and ILO. In contrast to most other studies from this period, they are not interested in the question of whether gender mainstreaming has “failed”, but as a “site around which global gender politics operate [where it] *takes on meaning through organisational processes and politics*” (ibid: 54. My emphasis). Overall, they found “cooptation of feminist agendas into broader organisational priorities” in the case of UNDP (ibid: 60) and an adjustment of “feminist arguments to the logics of liberal economics [and isolation of] gender analysis from finance and macroeconomic interventions” in the case of the World Bank (ibid: 64). Similarly, while the ILO has

¹² See also Goetz (1998) and Baden and Goetz (1998).

had a long historical concern for women workers, Prugl and Lustgarten (2006) conclude that long standing core commitments, in this case to tripartite agreements between unions, employer organisations, and governments, “demand [...] a co-optation of feminist purposes” (citing Lotherington and Flemmen 1991: 68). They warn that organisational strategies are not the same as movement strategies: both are needed and the latter, in particular, as a way to support the holding of development agencies accountable.

What is interesting about Prugl and Lustgarten’s findings is that they contrast Razavi and Miller’s (1995c) study of the same organisations from ten years earlier when the issue seems to have been more about getting gender on the agenda. For Prugl and Lustgarten, the challenge is keeping it there while maintaining integrity of the process of institutionalising feminist concerns in the face of competing agendas and, more broadly, organisational mandates and remits. These may not always be so compatible with promoting women’s interests, even if they appear to be at first glance, such as UNDP’s commitment to participatory sustainable development. Prugl and Lustgarten’s study illustrates the complexity, difficulty and, relatedly, the slowness of transformational organisational change as well as the need to study gender mainstreaming historically.

Prugl and Lustgarten’s study is also illustrative of the further entrenchment of gender mainstreaming, which should be seen as a success with stronger policy frameworks, increases in resources for mainstreaming, deeper and more extensive gender infrastructures, but also a weariness (Haddad, 2004). Challenges persist but are of a different nature. The generation of writings surrounding Beijing Plus10 concern the legacies resulting from, in some cases, 10 years or more of efforts that, as many attest, failed to deliver on the promise gender mainstreaming once had. Accordingly, some studies from this period took a much more longitudinal perspective, such as Pialek’s (2008) PhD research on OGB, which is also one of the few studies that concentrates on development NGOs. Pialek focuses on policy “impasse” to describe “an all-encompassing and *long term inability* of a broad policy ambition to be transformed into

sustained and consistent practice” (ibid: 7. My emphasis)¹³. Still, many other studies lack such a historical perspective (see for example Moser and Moser, 2005)

Pialek’s approach to analysing gender mainstreaming, a decade after Beijing, is representative of one line of investigation that characterises literature during this period that either explores it as a failed strategy (Sandler, 2005) or one that still had potency and should still be pursued, although with adaptations (Tiessen, 2005). Many of these studies tend to assume a deficit perspective and linear relationships between policy and practice (Mehra and Gupta, 2006, Moser and Moser, 2005). While such an analytical perspective is not necessarily unique to the Beijing Plus 10 period, it does contrast with others that took a different tack. An example of this is a series of publications based on a collection of reflective writings that emerged from a 2003 workshop entitled *Gender Myths and Feminist Fables: Repositioning of Gender in Development Policy and Practice* (Cornwall et al., 2004). Focusing on the struggle for interpretive power and the undermining of feminist intent by development institutions and the way they function, contributors to these publications seek ways to repoliticise feminism in gender in development. This call comes from a number of contributors who observe how a “transformative agenda has been captured by power, coopted and instrumentalised, and its political vision has been neutralised, where not excised” (Molyneux, 2007: 234). Similar to concerns expressed during the Beijing era, responses to gender mainstreaming have been bureaucratic and technical where the “political project of equality [has been] normalised in the development business as ahistorical, apolitical, de-contextualised and technical project (Mukhopadhyay, 2007b: 135-136).

Almost 20 years after Beijing, gender mainstreaming has certainly become popularised as the main strategy for pursuing gender through development. With this process of propagation and greater acceptance, it has become further entrenched within the mainstream while, at the same time, increasingly undermined as a change strategy. Also coopted from the initial concept have been complementary strategies, such as women’s empowerment. As gender mainstreaming and associated ideas have been adopted by development and government institutions, they have been adapted to fit with particular organisational paradigms. Almost two decades after Beijing, gender mainstreaming has

¹³ Such studies, however, are few in number. While others do take a long-term perspective, such as Tiessen (2007), they lack a historical analysis.

become concerned with not only getting gender on the agenda, but keeping it there – a situation which has been accompanied by a weariness (Molyneux, 2007) from over 20 years of struggle and resistance, due in part to intransigent, and now understood as gendered, organisations, which became more apparent during this period. While such challenges were already experienced prior to the adoption of gender mainstreaming with WID, other concerns were raised around Beijing, such as feminist agendas and women concerns being co-opted, as well as after where the focus was not so much on getting gender on the agenda, but what happened to the idea once it did become part of the mainstream.

The Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming

Despite shifting meanings and emphasis of gender mainstreaming, approaches have been remarkably similar (Subrahmanian, 2007). They commonly entailed establishing gender policies and strategies (Moser, 2005) that were meant to demonstrate and communicate organisational commitment to the promotion of gender equality as well as guide organisations on how they would “implement the policy”. Often, gender policy concerned an organisation’s programme activities as well as organisation itself in an acknowledgement that organisations themselves are gendered (Goetz, 1997a), and that this is related to their outcomes, which are also gendered, reflecting an inward-outward looking dynamic (Rao and Kelleher, 1997, Macdonald et al., 1997).

That organisations have gender policies, even progressive ones (for example, see Geisler et al., 1999, in reference to UNDP) is obviously not a guarantee that they will be implemented or result in gender outcomes. Not surprisingly, what is most noted is not the absence of policy, but rather the nature of the policies adopted (Prugl and Lustgarten, 2006) and the quality or lack of implementation, both at headquarters and in the field. Failure in policy implementation is particularly linked to a lack of organisational leadership as well as commitment, not only among senior managers but staff more generally, to the agenda being promoted by the policy.

To support the implementation of policy, many organisations established “gender infrastructure” that most commonly included staff with supposed “gender expertise”, often in the position of gender advisor and sometimes collectively organised as a “gender unit” or similar organisational structure dedicated to promoting gender equality

and gender mainstreaming (Tiessen, 2005). Such staff were assumed to have particular knowledge and skills that would help others to know what to do. Often they worked with “gender focal points” who had the remit to be working on gender in addition to other formal organisational responsibilities. Collectively they were commonly organised as a gender working group that often was not part of the formal organisational structure but was seen as an informal committee with a specific, and often assumed, time-bound task of mainstreaming gender.

The deployment of staff with particular knowledge about gender can be an acknowledgement that gender work is a specialist work (Beveridge et al., 2000: 395) requiring a range of skills (Byrne et al., 1996; Goetz, 1995) as well as attitudes and knowledge in order to undertake a variety of often conflicting roles. This acknowledgement is generally held by those working as gender specialists while others do not necessarily see gender expertise as the purview of gender specialists and question whether gender specialists are the only holders of this specialist knowledge¹⁴. Others make a distinction between specialist knowledge and “populist knowledge” (Beveridge et al., 2000: 390) with the former involving gender experts “with specialized training as well as a sophisticated understanding of gender relations” (ibid) and the latter “a range of individuals and organisations” (ibid) who participate and access policy-making and to whom experts and officials are supposed to be accountable.

Beveridge et al.’s distinction is an illuminating one if only to reveal the assumptions behind “gender expertise”. It highlights the division between specialist knowledge as the exclusive domain of certain individuals, whether practitioners, development professionals or academics (Prugl and Lustgarten, 2006), and more populist notions of knowledge. Intertwined with this distinction is the assumption of *a* knowledge, one that privileges certain understandings of gender over others. For example, evidence from practice reveals often dogmatic, rigid, linear-binary interpretations and applications, or what Standing (2007: 103) calls a “gender and development hegemony” based on a “myth of a right and a wrong way to ‘do’ gender in policy contexts” applied through “policing or even shaming” (ibid, 106). Moreover, as Lazreg (2002: 133) suggests, “gender expertise is now part and parcel of an international order of things, the

¹⁴ For example, Prugl and Lustgarten (2006: 61) note how in the World Bank, managers are assumed to have “a high level of gender expertise [despite] never work[ing] as gender specialists”.

arrangement of which it sustains rather than upsets”. What these authors point to is the sometimes complicit role of those who impede change rather than supporting it.

In addition to the deployment of gender advisors and establishment of gender focal points, gender mainstreaming often entailed engendering of organisational and programmatic processes such as the design and development of development projects. This often included the requirement of a gender analysis, often conditional upon project approval, as well as gender aware monitoring frameworks. Tools and guidelines were developed to instruct and support staff to mainstream gender in their organisations and programmes (Moser and Moser, 2005) and serve as mnemonics in the form of checklists. For many critics of gender mainstreaming, the popularisation and wide production and dissemination of such resources have contributed to the co-optation and de-politicisation of gender and development (Standing, 2007). Such “tools” encouraged “box ticking”, instead of critical engagement and analysis (Cornwall et al., 2007), and promoted simplistic application of gender analytical concepts.

Similar criticisms have been leveled against another common approach to supporting staff to mainstream gender in their work: gender training, which represents a broad range of approaches and “sub texts” of development, change and their implications for women (Kabeer, 1994: 264)¹⁵. Gender training was provided to raise staff awareness of gender and related concepts, increase understanding of its relevance to development and develop skills in gender analysis and planning. In many cases, gender training was seen and used as a panacea (Ahikire, 2007) to the challenges of gender mainstreaming whether they concerned a lack of understanding, knowledge, skills, commitment or organisational support or outright resistance. Rather, the popularity of training seems to reflect a technical understanding of gender mainstreaming where the engendering of development is a matter of filling in knowledge and skills “gaps”.

¹⁵ What and how particular understandings of GAD were propagated, as reflected by different training approaches that embodied different analytical frameworks, is significant, inasmuch as they represented different treatments of gender, gender relations and, in particular, the degree to which the latter is considered as a power relationship characterised by cooperation and conflict. They differed in their acceptance or rejection of dominant – namely economic, market-oriented – development paradigms, with some reproducing the notion of development planning as a linear process. Lastly the degree to which each were taken up in trainings and by development organisations differed, with the Department of Planning Unit Framework approach being the most widely popularised, particularly in its analysis of triple roles and gender needs. See Kabeer (1992) for more detailed analysis of the different training frameworks.

The discussion above provides an overview of how gender mainstreaming has been approached. What is common to these processes is that they, to some degree, assume a positivist approach and focus largely on the mechanics of mainstreaming, where policy, practice and outcomes are assumed to be linearly related (c.f. Moser, 2005). At the basis of the assumed relationship between gender policy and practice is that the former is supposed to guide, or can even guide, the latter. For example, Jahan (1995: 11) takes a rational linear approach and looks at policy objectives, describes agencies' approaches, assesses institutional and operational strategies (the practice), measures progress (the outcomes) and draws conclusions based on a comparison of all of these assuming a causal link between policy, practice and outcomes.

The emphasis of such an approach is on the failure of policy to be implemented or, as often noted, to put policy into practice and a disjuncture between institutional policies and practice (Prugl and Lustgarten, 2006: 54). This view contributes to a deficit perspective and an analysis a lack of "inputs" that believed to be critical to mainstreaming gender such as policy, leadership, commitment, resources, capacity, etc.

The problem with deficit perspectives is that they tell us little about what happens in the process of mainstreaming gender. Behind the façade of mainstreaming policy frameworks and infrastructure is the doing of mainstreaming, and this is the purview of social actors interacting through social relations. As a number of writers observe, gender policy implementation is a political process entailing "struggles over meanings and pragmatic measures [...] in order to determine courses of action and pursue specific gains" (Woodford-Berger, 2007: 126). Such struggles occur at the micro level of interactions among social actors in the context of organisations and inherent politics that constitute them (Wright, 1994). What happens to and results from gender mainstreaming is contingent on the nature and outcomes of such contestations. For example, Eyben (2007) documents what at first glance appears as differences in content of information booklets published by Britain's department for international development. What she reveals, however, are different power struggles subject to particular policy emphasis at the time. They also represent overall differences between managers, who were concerned with pleasing and maintaining the status quo, and advisors who wished to persuade to change policy. Similarly, Mukhopadhyay et al. (2005) describe the "gender routes" several southern based NGOs took in undertaking

gender and organisational change processes. These entailed continuous negotiations and persuasion which were realised, in some cases, when different spaces were opened up for gender advocates to voice their concerns and agendas which, in turn, fostered a sense of commitment and accountability. Each “gender route” was different and iterative but no less contested. As the authors write “In order to make gender equality come alive in their organisations and their work, [the NGOs] engaged in implicit power struggles that, during the course [of their route] became explicit” (ibid: 9).

When individuals are considered, such as in the case of gender advisors, focus is on their agency but not the organisational structures, within which they operate, or their relationships with these. For example, what is interesting about Standing (2007)’s and Lazreg (2002)’s observations, previously cited, is that while others have also focused on the roles and experiences of gender advisors as part of mainstreaming infrastructure, they are two of the few who scrutinise their sometimes complicit role in the co-optation of a gender agenda based on their own positionality within mainstream development. In contrast, Goetz and Sandler (2007)’s observations about gender training exclude an analysis of the contexts in which trainees keep knowledge gained from training to themselves.

Still, what these observations do point to is the micro-politics of organisations for processes, exchanges and decisions that lead to the particular outcomes of gender mainstreaming. Part of the problem, however, is a lack of empirical studies on gender mainstreaming more generally (Mosesdottir and Erlingsdottir, 2005, cited by Pialek, 2008) and at the micro-politics level of gender mainstreaming policy and practice in particular. Given the nature of such interactions, being contingent and often implicit, how does one go about studying micro politics of organisations and their efforts to institutionalize gender concerns?

APPROACHES TO RESEARCHING AND UNDERSTANDING GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The nature of my research on gender mainstreaming and OGB presented a set of challenges related to the context of the research; namely, how do you study a large, well-established and complex organisation that works in over 70 countries¹⁶ but from the perspective of micro-politics? In this section I describe particular organisational ethnography and anthropology of development literature which offered ways of thinking about micro-politics of gender mainstreaming policy and practice. As a point of departure, I first critically review how DNGOs have attempted to understand gender in their organisations, which primarily has drawn on organisation development approaches. In a critique of these, I explore organisational ethnography as an alternative approach to understanding organisations. Relatedly, in contrast to how gender mainstreaming policy and practice is seen as linearly related, I describe different understandings of the relationship between policy and practice, particularly from an actor oriented perspective and from the vantage of strategic groups and their involvement in webs of relations with differing, sometimes contrasting and, at the same time, complementary motivations. This exploration of organisational ethnography and anthropology of development literature provides a theoretical framework for my research.

Organisational development

Previously I have argued that there has been relatively less research on gender mainstreaming in DNGOs and the organisational challenges such agencies have faced. This is not to say that in practice DNGOs have not paid attention to themselves as organisations. Compared to other development agencies, northern DNGOs, in particular, have acknowledged the need to address gender issues both internally in their organisations as well as externally in their programmes. For Plowman (2000), this seems to have come from three inter-related forces: a recognition of feminist analysis that organisations themselves are gendered and are therefore an object for change; pressure exerted by southern partners; and internal advocacy by gender activists. Demanding gender aware programming from southern partners, whilst not addressing gender inequity within their own organisations, created a certain hypocrisy that did not escape their partners from the south.

¹⁶ See Hovland (2005), who faced similar questions with defining her “field”.

A number of NGOs, such as Oxfam Novib in the Netherlands, turned to organisation development (OD) to better understand their organisations and to affect gender aware change. Previously, they had already been exploring OD approaches since the early 1990s (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2005) with an interest in organisation and human resource management after years of a focus on training that bore meager improvements in organisational effectiveness (Plowman 2000). The extension of OD to addressing gender and organisations, however, was not problematic, mainly due to the roots to OD and its initial conceptualization as a gender unaware process.

OD¹⁷ has its roots in the private sector and earlier efforts to apply ‘scientific’ approaches (Wright, 1994) to better understand businesses and enhance their efficiency. While OD encompasses a broad range of methodologies for understanding and changing organisations, it has mostly remained silent on issues of social change more generally and gender issues in particular. As Kelleher (2002: 4) notes, organisational learning, an off-shoot of OD, “has never claimed to be about transforming power or gender relations [...] it leaves the authority structure intact”. To address the historical gender unawareness of OD, a number of academics and practitioners took a closer look at the nature of gender and organisational change. These efforts, however, address the issue from a variety of perspectives and rationales, which include differences in the aims of gender and OD initiatives. Some work emphasises increased organisational performance, while other work prioritises the promotion of gender equality – although, as we see later, these are not always distinct differences.

Much of the thinking on gender and OD focuses on increasing efficiency and effectiveness and stresses a ‘business case’ as a way to both overcome the limits of traditional, gender unaware OD approaches as well as to persuade decision-makers who would not be convinced by equity arguments (Ely and Meyerson 2000b). Other approaches focus on gender equality as an organisational change aim though with different emphasis. Some stress gender equality in the organisation “to make the workplace a fairer and more hospitable place for women” (Ely and Meyerson 2000a: 589). Efforts with this aim have a long history in the private and public sectors where

¹⁷ I use the term organisational development to broadly describe approaches to studying and improving organisations described in this section. These are sometimes referred to as organisational behaviour (Bates, 1997) or more generally organisational studies (Czarniawska-Jorges, 1992)

emphasis is placed on establishing more equitable workplace practices. For Kolb et al. (1998), this ultimately requires addressing the systemic causes of gender inequity in the organisation itself. Others emphasise organisational change as a way to produce gender equality outcomes such as gender aware development results (Macdonald et al. 1997: 8) where the explicit assumption is that organisations need to be gender aware in order to do so.

Others, however, set their sights higher for gender outcomes. For example, Goetz (1997: 2) notes that the aim is “to routinize gender equitable forms of social interaction and to challenge the legitimacy of forms of social organisation which discriminate against women.” Rao and Friedman (2000) link organisational change to organisational transformation with the wider goal of societal transformation. Other gender and organisational change proponents do not view goals of organisational change and gender equity as cause-and-effect processes but as mutually reinforcing. For Ely and Meyerson (2000a: 591), a ‘dual agenda’ is possible as “very often the same processes that create gender inequities also undermine an organisation’s instrumental objectives”.

Empirical evidence, however, does not seem to support the realisation of such “dual” agendas: despite their apparent inter-relationship, gender equality goals must be privileged. Research by Bailyn et al. (1996) reveals that gender-related organisational changes resulted in addressing both work-family issues and furthering business goals. They also note, however, that such efforts did not address “true gender equity” (ibid: 8) as this required changes at the family level, which was beyond the scope of the research. For Ely and Meyerson (2000a), the gender agenda was “lost” in their action research project to promote gender equality and organisational change, even though it was part of the initial organisational change strategy and seemed to resonate with company staff. Keeping it on the agenda implied continuous effort.

More critically, at the basis of OD approaches to gender and organisational change are assumptions about organisations, which has underscored the analysis of gender mainstreaming, as indicated previously. Much has taken positivist perspectives and have

focused on the mechanics of mainstreaming that understand organisations as “machines” (Wright, 1994: 18, Shore and Wright, 1997). With this approach, organisations are viewed in terms of their constituent parts – policies, staff, structure - and organisational development analytical categories are employed (Hinton and Groves, 2004). Behind these are implicit assumptions about the nature of organisations, organisational culture and the purpose of organisations. Ideal organisations are seen as rational and efficient entities devoid of values and inefficiencies. Organisational culture is understood, or is rather pursued, as something homogeneous and static to bring cohesion (Hirsch and Gellner, 2001). Such views tend to ignore other perspectives that may be critical when we consider organisations as being imbued with different, often competing, ideologies and where individuals operate as agents but within wider organisational and social constructs. How does one avoid the pitfalls of standard OD approaches?

Organisational ethnography

Organisational ethnography¹⁸ offers a different way to approach an understanding of gender mainstreaming. While OD has its roots in anthropological approaches¹⁹, as evidenced in such seminal research as the Hawthorne experiments and Manchester studies, a number of ethnographers distinguish between OD and organisational ethnography drawing, understandably, on tenants of the traditional ethnography, as developed from a long tradition of cultural anthropology. What is organizational ethnography? Why is it appropriate to the study of gender mainstreaming and gender and organizations? The methodology will be described by a discussion of ethnography and a comparison with more commonly used OD approaches.

In discussing organizational ethnography, Bate (1997) describes three conceptions of ethnography – as a method, as a paradigm and as a way of writing – which he contrasts to organizational behaviour. As a *method*, ethnography is more of an “attitude” (Bate, 1997: 1152) that is much less concerned with knowing, a priori, “how to” do the

¹⁸ The terms ‘organisational ethnography’ and ‘anthropology of organisations’ (or ‘organisational anthropology’) are often used to describe similar approaches to studying and understanding organisations and sometime are used interchangeably. I use the term organisational ethnography to emphasise the methodology as well as inter-related methods, the latter of which are not always made explicit in anthropological literature that I have used in my research.

¹⁹ This rich history of the influence of anthropology on OD has been well documented by others (Czarniawska-Jorges, 1992; Wright, 1994) as has their divergence and recent convergence (Yanow, et al., 2011) and the potential from this (Vermeulen and van Strobbe, 2005).

research, the concern of organizational behaviour, than with just getting into the field and “doing it”. It is only being in the field where the research can gain from serendipity, what Hendry (2003: 507) considers the “most valuable part” of anthropological work. Fieldwork is seen as an iterative and learning process, an act that lends itself to “finding the right question” (ibid). In this way, the approach seems appropriate for researching understandings of gender mainstreaming, given that it “cannot be defined a priori but takes on meaning through organisational processes and politics” (Prugl and Lustgarten, 2006: 54). Similarly, ethnography as *paradigm* entails a particular “frame of mind where learning to ‘think culturally’ about an organization” is critical (Bate, 1997: 1153). As will be explained below, culture in this sense does not refer to a uniform, consensual “organizational culture” as stressed in OD. Lastly, ethnography is a *way of writing*. Representations of experiences and theory making are through text where “narrative or rhetorical style” are key (ibid: 1151).

In particular, it is the different notions and treatments of “culture” in OD and organisational ethnography that seems most strongly distinguish them. The former sees culture as something to be simplified, created and shared in an attempt to create a uniform, unchanging “organisational culture” (Bate, 1997; Wright, 1994). For ethnographers, metaphors for organisations – machines, organisms, culture – are themselves cultural, and concern issues of power and contested meaning making (Wright, 1994). Organisations are multi-cultural milieu, through which anthropologists need to interpret “what is going on” (Wright, 1994: 23); despite the appearance of uniformity, conflict within organisations is alive and well (Hirsch and Gellner, 2001). In this sense, organisational ethnography adopts the notion of culture as a basis for explanation and methodology (Jiménez, 2007).

Relatedly is the consideration of “conflict”. With its emphasis on fostering homogeneous organisational culture, OD approaches tend to want to smooth over conflict, particularly observable conflict (Lukes, 2005) in formal settings. Organisational ethnography attempts a cultural understanding from conflict between formal and informal dimensions of organisations with an emphasis on the latter (Bates, 1997). It is in the often overlooked and everyday of organisational life where meaning is made (Yanow et al., 2011). Such an understanding is derived not only from seeing conflict as only oppositional, but also how “opponents” further their respective and

often diverse and contrasting agendas through the pursuit of a common culture and mutual accommodation as well as the “‘cross-cutting ties’, the paradoxes and unexpected alliances which maintain both the system and its inherent conflict” (Wright, 1994: 12). It is these “subtle forms of collaboration, in which terms of inter dependence [are] agreed [...based on...] informal rules” (Bates, 1997: 1159) that suggest a more dynamic and diverse organisational culture than that promoted by OD. These are political processes that the ethnographer attempts to “to track, describe, and explain” (ibid).

Such a focus on conflict-consensus emphasizes the notion of power and, in particular, its relation to knowledge; a relation that Mosse (2001: 175 citing Gaboon 1996) states needs to be made “unusually clear” by ethnographic work in organizations. Furthermore, according to Jiménez (2007: xiii), the “institutionalisation of power has been the central focus concern of anthropology of organisations.” The focus again is on anthropological understandings of ‘culture’; the processes of “continuously organizing and negotiating order” (Wright, 1994: 20) where “certain ‘essential meanings’ become authoritative in specific historical perspectives” (ibid: 22). As Haugaard (2003: 93) states, such social order is derived from predictability “created through the reproduction of meaning” through structuration and confirming structuration. In the case of organisations, understanding and negotiating formal or, more commonly, informal “rules of the game” is how meaning is made and consensual social power is reproduced (Haugaard, 2002). Such an understanding of power deviates from an emphasis on conflict - whether overt, covert or latent (Lukes, 2005) - and requires understanding how consensual power is created through the collaborative pursuit of different interests, which is expanded on later. With organisational ethnography’s emphasis on conflict and this understanding of power, research into organisations and gender mainstreaming calls for a different focus than OD studies and one that emphasises both difference *and* consensus, not either-or as early human relations approaches stressed (Jiménez, 2007), and what lies behind these.

Another distinguishing feature of ethnography is its “commitment to methodological holism” (Hirsch and Gellner, 2001: 7) where everything in the research context is grist-for-the-mill. A main contribution of the Manchester studies was the focus on context that required seeing organisations not as closed systems but rather needing to

understand the influence of external factors and wider social structures (Wright, 1994). As Bate (1997: 1156) contends, “thought and behavior cannot be properly understood outside the context in which they are situated; it is knowledge of context that renders them intelligible.” Still, Hirsch and Gellner (2001) caution to not read too much into the notion of context. This requires the ethnographer to “adopt a curious kind of cross-eyed vision, one eye roving ceaselessly around the general context, any part of which may suddenly reveal itself to be relevant, the other eye focusing tightly, even obsessively, on the research topic” (ibid: 7). It is through this ethnographic process that reveals “contrasts and shadows” providing “a comparative and critical edge”, particularly in the study of policy and practice (Jiménez, 2007: xxv and xxiii).

Context refers to temporal, physical or institutional, but what seems particularly critical to the study of gender mainstreaming, as indicated previously, is the importance of understanding history. OD tends to be future-oriented with its emphasis on vision and mission and short- and long-term plans. Organisational ethnography embraces and attempts to understand the past as a way of understanding the present and future, for organisations are better understood as a continuing system across time (Pettigrew, 1979). But, as Bate (1994: 1156) insists, “history should not actually be studied historically, however. It is in the everyday that the anthropologist searches for the past, in such things as rites and rituals, myths, stories and sagas, ballads, and anecdotes.”

Still, despite the emphasis on context, organisational ethnography is also distinctly “actor-centred” (Schwartzman, 1993) where the aim is “representing the lives of others, and in particular conveying a ‘flavor’ of what it looks and feels like from the ‘native’s point of view”” (Malinowski, 1922 cited by Bate, 1997: 1160). The appropriate focus of people’s lives comes not from the researcher, but from those being researched so that the patterns are found “both in the data/perceptions and by implication in how the people studied present order and systematize their lives” (Hirsch and Gellner, 2001: 8). For Yanow et al. (2011), organisational ethnography’s focus on the interplay between context and actors provides relief to the often binary treatment of structure and agency. In particular, it consists of “an orientation toward subjective experience and individual agency with sensitivity to the broader social settings and the historical and institutional dynamics in which these are embedded.” (ibid: 7).

Organisational ethnography, while informed by cultural anthropology and classic tenets of ethnography described above, has also required a questioning of these, particularly in a “mobile, changing, globalizing world” (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 3). Within such a world, the basis of anthropology, “field” and “fieldwork”, are the object of scrutiny and re-thinking. For example, rather than abandoning the notion of fieldwork, “the field” as a source of knowledge is de-privileged (ibid). For Marcus (1995), multi-sited ethnography is almost as inevitable as the need to change notions of the “field” and “field work”. It represents a move from a single site focus to an analysis of how “cultural meanings, objects, and identities (circulate) in diffuse time-space” (Marcus, 1995: 96). It is not just a matter of being multi-local but trans-local (Hannerz, 2003) where the strategy is “following connections, associations, and putative relationships” (Marcus, 1995: 98). Such an approach seems appropriate to the study of OGB given the multi-local, global nature of the organisation.

Anthropology of development: policy, practice and critical interfaces

While organisational ethnography provides a methodological framework for studying gender mainstreaming and DNGOs, which stands in contrast to how these organisations have approached gender and organisations previously, it does not help to understand what happens in the practice of policy. For this I turn to a diverse and related body of anthropology of development literature.

As described previously, most analysis of gender mainstreaming suggests a linear relationship between policy and practice where the role of the former is to guide the latter (Moser, 2005). When policy-prescribed actions fail to happen or policy outcomes are not forthcoming, a common diagnosis is that policy has evaporated or there are gaps in implementation. Hobart (1993: 3) suggests such a view is misplaced, not because of a lack of theory or a good theory, but from “the limitations of a paradigm” and inappropriate application to processes that are in fact “non-natural and involve reflexivity”. Van Ufford (1993: 154) explains disjunctures between policy and practice by describing policy formulation, occurring at the centre, as mostly concerned with image projection, with political centres remaining “relatively ignorant of what is going on”. Relationships between policy, practice and outcomes are characterised by “contested political spaces or policy communities” that arise from a range of diverse

interests, agendas and needs (Shore and Wright, 1997: 15). Resistance, cooptation and lip service are manifestations of these struggles.

Given the contested relationship between gender mainstreaming policy and practice, as the previous review describes, what is the purpose of gender policy? Might it serve other aims such as bringing coherence, as well as legitimacy and motivation, to an otherwise constant state of change and contestation? What makes for good policy – its ability to mobilise political and practical support among otherwise divergent interests – does not make for good practice; “good policy is unimplementable” (Mosse, 2005: 230). For Mosse (2005b), success is a matter of creating an illusion of coherence and stability by using mobilising metaphors that “*conceal* ideological differences so as to allow compromises and the enrolment of different interests [whereas] a significant part of development practice involves the *reproduction* and *stabilization* of policy models which both conceal and provide authoritative interpretations of practice” (230-231, My emphasis).

Development projects are the practice of policy and “important instruments of aid” (Salkeld, 2008)²⁰. They are arguably the main focus on which development agencies place, or more accurately “load”, their multiple aspirations. Still, just as policies are viewed as related rationally and linearly to practice, projects are presented as planned interventions designed to achieve predetermined outcomes as a result of the provision of inputs²¹. Underpinning the paradigm of development projects are assumptions of homogenous and harmonious intra-project relations. Given the uncertainty of development (Buvinic, 1986), though, and the fallacy of planned interventions, an alternative view is to see projects as contested spaces comprising different groups of people with divergent priorities (Arvidson, 2004b). Interactions are concerned with mutual enrolment whereby projects become means to accommodate diverse interests

²⁰ Gould (2004) suggests that, in the 21st century, development assistance is concerned less with projects and more with policy. While other forms of assistance are certainly now more common, particularly since the Paris Declaration of 2005, I argue that projects are still just as important to understanding development, given that governments still use them and they are still instances and manifestations of policy. Also, Crewe and Harrison’s (1998) observation that the development project is an “important way in which these ideas, and those that apparently challenge them, are negotiated between the various groups involved in development” is still valid.

²¹ See Wallace et al. (2006: 36) on why, despite concerns about the assumptions of planned interventions, the reduction of complex realities and ill-conceived causal relationships, the fallacy continues to dominate.

and produce “success”. Seeing policy and practice in this light, as well as their *inter-*relationships, provides insight into the often noted observation of the “failure” of gender policy to be implemented. The nature of the question changes from a deficit perspective – what is missing that policy was not implemented? – to a more preliminary one of “How are policies and practices of gender mainstreaming related to each other?”.

If policies and their practice in development, projects, are not necessarily “linked” but more concerned with creating consensus among divergent views, what does one research to understand what goes on? Bierschenk (1988: 146) suggests that the focus should be on the different groups of actors, or “strategic groups”, and their interactions at critical interfaces, which represent “an instance of policy delivery” (Lipsky, 1980: 3). Such groups engage in struggles of “perspective, interpretations and concepts, material resources and political power” (Bierschenk, 1988: 158-159). Such an approach recognises the agency of strategic groups and the power they possess, even if this is to refuse participation, such as noted by Goetz (1997c). For in the end, despite power differentials, strategic groups need each other, directly or indirectly, in order to pursue their own interests.

Eyben (2006) and others focus on unequal power relations within and between development organisations. For Hinton and Groves (2004: 5), this requires an understanding of both the “choices being made by individual actors and their position and power within the system” and the relationships between actors “in the system as a whole – recognizing that the system has its own emergent dynamism and internal logic”²². As such, an understanding of the relations of aid requires an understanding of a web of relations²³ where power is central, and where unequal power relationships, generating compliance and resistance, abound (2006). For Eyben (2006), power in aid

²² Proponents of a relational perspective to development aid adopt complexity theory in understanding how change happens (Hinton and Groves, 2004). At the basis of complexity theory is an understanding that change is constant, beyond comprehension in its totality and unpredictability. As a result, a systems approach is necessary to understand the relationships among various actors, not just the actors themselves. This approach contrasts with mainstream development perspectives, which assume linear positivist notions of change and relations between policy, practice and outcomes.

²³ Relations of aid are often described as an “aid chain” (e.g. Wallace et al., 2006). For Eyben (2006), this metaphor is limited in terms of understanding the actors and their relations, as most are both recipients *and* providers of development aid, belying the binary categories of “donor” and “recipient”. Eyben prefers the notion of a “web” to convey the “diversity and complexity of networks and connections of power between the plethora of organisations that constitute the international aid system” (2006: 2). I adopt Eyben’s term as it helps to reduce the use of binary terms, particularly “us” and “them” (Crewe and Harrison, 1998: 187).

relations can be seen as A getting B to do something, whereby power can be visible, hidden or invisible. It can produce an effect, such as resistance, also an expression of power. It can also be approached as relational, whereby aid agencies reproduce certain knowledge – particular ways of understanding and seeing the world – through the development and deployment of instruments and procedures. This has the effect of legitimising particular world views, or ideologies in the sociological use of the term (1993), while excluding others. For Shutt (2006b: 86), understanding the reproduction of “systems of thought [...] gives clues as to why some actors are conferred with more symbolic capital that functions as social relations of power than others”. She draws on Haugaard (2003) to show how more power or capacity are not always about control over funding, but also concern “knowing and communicating” (Shutt, 2006b: 80). She also alludes to “consensual power that is created through collaboration to achieve mutual goals” (ibid). Such an understanding of structure, as a web of relations of power, offers a counterpoint to how individuals are seen in literature on gender mainstreaming which, as noted above, tends to ignore the organisational context in which they operate. In particular, it is helpful to start to understand the sometimes complicit role of supposed gender advocates as noted by Standing (2007). Additionally, building upon the nature of power as understood in organisational ethnography, described above, and Shutt’s and Eyben’s ideas of power, it becomes possible to understand different and shifting understandings of gender mainstreaming and how some become dominant through everyday micro-politics of organisations.

This stands in contrast with much of the literature on strategic groups and their relations which emphasises the context of development, namely, categories of groups involved in projects, such as donors, development NGOs (DNGOs), community groups and beneficiaries (Bierschenk, 1988). Also, when analysing the relations of aid in projects, relations as manifested in projects are privileged, despite being informed by dominant extant social relations, as highlighted by a number of observers (Shutt, 2008). For example, mainstream development perspectives treat organisational and project relations as value-free and neutral. Take for instance the organogram, which focuses on one dimension of relations among project actors – who reports to whom. Actors are treated as undifferentiated “atoms” linked by solid and dotted lines which describe how they are to act, akin to Weber’s notion of organisations as machines and that underscored by OD approaches. Absent is an understanding of project actors as social

beings, with particular characteristics, values and attitudes informed by their own individual backgrounds. Also absent is a way to understand these groups and, more critically, their motives and agency.

For example, strategic groups – whether local DNGOs, government officials, village committee members or direct beneficiaries themselves – adapting their values, behaviours and attitudes in order to access project resources is a familiar narrative in the development literature to explain how projects “misbehave” (Buvinic, 1986)²⁴. There are three explanations as to what is happening: adaptation, adoption and projection²⁵. The motivations of these groups are, of course, multiple and shifting, but there is one clear dividing line in the literature on this. On the one side are those who view strategic groups as motivated primarily by self-interest to capture resources and benefits, whether monetary, physical or intangible, such as status, and “act according to their own interests” (Bierschenk, 1988: 146)²⁶. Other observers of strategic groups and their motivations take a more nuanced approach and attempt to understand the particular social and historical contexts in which strategic groups work and relate. For example, Arvidson (2004a: 241) demonstrates how organisational staff start their careers with “an ideal image of the altruistic development worker” but contradictions and confusions inherent in development organisations, particularly local DNGOs that are vulnerable to the whims of the international aid system, result in ambivalent and contradictory motivations ranging between altruism and self-interest²⁷.

Seeing acts of adoption, adaptation and projection as “deceit” and motivated primarily by self-interest represents the perspective of those doing the intervening and their *own* interests, even if this is for wider altruistic aims²⁸. The goals of planned interventions

²⁴ Buvinic (1986) uses this term to describe how economic development projects for women take on welfare orientations. While I use the term to describe generally how projects fail to achieve their stated goals, I also draw on Buvinic’s analysis of how perceptions of project staff contribute to “misbehaviour”.

²⁵ For example, see Crewe and Harrison (1998: 157-158), Mosse (2005: 78) and Bierschenk (1988: 231) for respective examples.

²⁶ For Olivier de Sardan (2005), project staff are motivated by gain and the intended “beneficiaries” are seeking safety and minimising risk; seeking aid; and monopolising aid opportunities to increase or obtain privilege. This analysis of motives is echoed by Mosse (2005: 78).

²⁷ Similarly, Bierschenk et al. (2002, cited by Mosse and Lewis, 2006: 12) avoid “heavily normative representations” of renegade strategic groups as either “parasites” or emerging forms of civil society and locate their actions within “the fragmented politics of the postcolonial state”.

²⁸ Shutt (2006a) discusses how perceived acts of self-interest are seen as “subjective interpretations of those living in recipient countries” (Shutt, 2006a: 85-86). I would argue that systems of local meaning also influence all strategic groups implicated in relations for aid. Jackson (1997: 162) makes a similar

are seen as ultimately undermined, projects become side tracked and “unintended outcomes” result (Rees, 2005). As Harrison (1997: 73) suggests, “[i]t may be wrong to suggest a neat causal relationship”. In particular, such acts become distorted and misunderstood when seen from the paradigm of planned interventions and inherent “ideal-typical, time-space conceptions” (Long and van der Ploeg, 1989: 230). Even when acts of agency are considered, such as the case of women “subverting” project goals, these acts are viewed from a perception of “male bias, in accordance with a concept of power in which action equates with power and masculinity” (Jackson, 1997: 161).

What should we make of the motives of those who do not fall in line and openly subvert official plans? Adopting an “actor-oriented perspective” (Long, 1992), one view is to consider such acts as representations of agency, with personal gain but also opportunities and power at stake (de Sardan, 2005: 163). For example, projects may misbehave owing to subversive acts by women who do not follow the official script that project design imposes. These practices are “contingent and performative, reflecting choice and agency, to variable degrees, of all social beings, as well as constraint” (Jackson, 1997: 161)²⁹.

Goetz (1997c) and Jackson (1997) see “project failures” as acts of social change and note “the significance of cultural and political influences, and the potential of well-placed individual agency and leadership to effect systemic change” (Hinton and Groves, 2004: 5). This alternative view understands acts of subversion – whether through insincerity or agency and defiance – as representative of interpretation and transformation which occur when external interventions, and the ideas that they bring, interact with “contexts” other than those from which they originate (Crewe and Harrison, 1998). As Long (1992: 35) states, “external interventions enter the life-worlds of the individuals and groups affected and thus come to form part of the resources and constraints of the social strategies they develop”. With the multitude of knowledge

point that both project staff and participants are “subjects constituted partly by the constellation of institutions within which they exist”.

²⁹Still, seeing such acts as expressions of oppositional perspectives and acts of agency must be viewed within the context of wider power relations (Hinton and Groves, 2004). For example, according to Goetz (1997: 194) who found that women credit officers subverted microcredit projects through their use of personal discretion, viewing these as an expression of “some natural solidarity or sisterhood” between bureaucrats and their beneficiaries would misconstrue the dominant allegiance of project staff to their superiors and not their clients.

contexts from which strategic groups work, both across groups and within them as individuals (Long and van der Ploeg, 1989: 231), a wide range of diverse understandings are bound to emerge and “so-called external factors become ‘internalized’” (ibid, 229).

While the process of internalisation helps to understand what happens to “external” ideas, Harrison’s (1997: 73) “hybridization of externally induced values” is more nuanced in explaining “partial internalisation” through a process of giving and making meaning. Rather than seeing project participants primarily motivated by personal and immediate gain, they internalise the external through their particular systems of “knowledge and meaning” (Mosse, 2005b: 170)³⁰ drawing upon available discourses (Long, 1992: 25). Such a perspective requires viewing the actions of strategic groups from an understanding of the contexts – social, developmental or otherwise – in which they are working. In particular, we need to understand the “the diversity of social codes and norms of behaviour which serve as references to these strategies” (Mosse, 2005b: 187) of those doing the “developing” as well as those “being developed”. What emerges is that such actions are results of complex processes informed by different values, ideas and beliefs brought to bear by different members of strategic groups. As Shutt (2006b: 86) from her research in Cambodia states, the translation of motivations into interactions within the context of development projects is an interpretive process shaped, “not only [...] by the social relations of power in Aidland, but also by local systems of meaning”.

A focus on strategic groups, on understanding their relations as a web and their intentions from an “actor-oriented perspective” offers insights to the study of the relationships between gender mainstreaming policy and practice and, in particular, the micro-politics of institutionalizing gender concerns. Such a focus recognizes both individual agency and competing as well as complementary interests compelled as well as mediated by organisational structures. In this manner, individuals and their inter-relationships are interrogated for their roles in the policy and practice of gender mainstreaming?

³⁰ See also, Bierschenk (1988: 146) and Shutt (2006a)

Taking a much broader perspective, a multi-sited ethnographic approach releases the researcher from the confines imposed by more traditional understandings of the “field” and “field work” while organisation ethnography allows for a letting a focus to emerge. Still, where and what does one study to understand policy and practice given the multi-sited nature of the research subject, Oxfam GB, as a global organization? Hirsch and Gellner (2001:4) note that “[r]ather than working inside an organization, the anthropologist sometimes researches at the 'interface' between organizations and 'the people', a situation for which anthropological skills and awareness can be argued to be particularly suited.” Such interfaces of micro-politics are often sites of explicit and implicit conflict (Lukes, 2005) and, in the case of the research, of different understandings and practices of gender equality. These conflicts can be seen within the formal system – “the map of the organizational structure, job descriptions, the hierarchy of decision-making, the goals, rules and policies” (Wright, 1994: 17) – and, perhaps more illustratively, in the informal system – “the way individuals and groups in the organization relate to each other” (ibid). For Bate (1997: 1159) it is the interplay or process between the formal and informal, the struggle of meanings and making meaning, in other words the micro-politics, that the ethnographer needs to “track, describe and explain”.

Focusing on “critical interfaces” is particularly key, given the broad and complex nature of OGB as a case study, as it is here that one can observe “struggles over meanings, representations and images [... that] are central to understanding development institutions, policies and outcomes” (Arce, 2000: 32). Long (Arce and Long, 1992b, Arce and Long, 2000, Long, 1989b, Long, 2000, Long, 1989a, Long and Long, 1992) is most widely associated with the notion of interfaces. He defines them as “the critical point(s) of intersection or linkage between different social systems, fields or levels of social order where structural discontinuities, based upon differences of normative value and social interest, are most likely to be found” (Long, 1989a: 1-2). They are where policy is applied and transformed by acquiring new meanings. Being “social and epistemic”, they also are where “discontinuities are managed through such practices as deferral, accommodation, negotiation, selective appropriation, and distantiation or absenteeism” (Arce and Long, 2000: 3). Such critical interfaces lie behind and comprise the appearance of coherent policy (Mosse, 2001). Within the context of multi-sited ethnography, interface analysis is a way of examining “connections between levels

and forms of social process and action, and exploring how those processes work in different sites – local, national and global. [It is] tracing ways in which power creates webs and relations between actors, institutions and discourses across time and space” (Shore and Wright, 1997: 14). Moreover, these “are affected by, and in turn themselves influence, actors, institutions and resource-fields that lie beyond the interface situation itself.” (Long, 1989a: 2)

Where then are such interfaces? As meetings points of different stakeholders, their perspectives and their interests, they most obviously are physical, face-to-face encounters but also, especially in multi-sited ethnography and in the world of information technologies, they entail other “spaces” – cyber space, discontinuous space – where boundaries meet (Villarreal, 1992) and differences and negotiation of these differences are played out. Long (1989a: 2) reminds us not to just focus on physical interfaces “as the analysis should situate these within broader institutional and power fields.”

CONCLUSION

The concepts of organisational ethnography, multi-sited ethnography and critical interfaces were instrumental in designing the research with its focus on understandings of gender mainstreaming and the micro politics of policy and practice. In particular, organisational ethnography provided clues of a focus and what to scrutinise: areas of conflict and convergence, informal rules behind the practice of formal procedures, and contexts that lie beyond as well as submerged in the organisational structure.

Anthropology of development literature on policy and practice helped me research and think in a more nuanced and critical manner and challenge my own assumptions about the organisation developed, in part, from working with it. Research on development policy (particularly Baviskar and Mosse), in particular, was instrumental to consider my data differently and ask rudimentary questions that challenged conventional development thinking. This was especially important to negotiating the tensions of my status as an Oxfam employee and researcher, described in Chapter 3.

As stated previously, research on gender mainstreaming has primarily been on single sites; multi-sited ethnography provided suggested of the value (as well as challenges) of not only considering more than one site, but their inter-relationships and the circulation of meanings. Marcus (1995: 106-110) suggests that multi-sited ethnography entails following the people, the thing, the metaphor, the story, the life or the conflict. For this research on Oxfam, I follow the commitment to gender mainstreaming.

Chapter 3

Approaches and Challenges to Researching Oxfam GB

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines how I approached the research. I first the data collection phase, focussing on the different sites of my research, the methods used and sources of information. The last section discusses the challenges and limits of the research both from the perspective of my identity as a former OGB gender advisor and my position *vis-à-vis* the research, as well as from the perspective of the research design. While my identity offered access, my work at OGB also raised ethical concerns and posed particular challenges for the research.

DATA COLLECTION: METHODS, SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND TIMELINES

Data for this research were gathered during two periods. The first concerns data I collected when I was working with OGB between 2002 and 2004. From this time, I draw on documentation as well as email correspondence concerning two case studies featured in the research: the development of proposals for the CBDM project in Cambodia and the 2003 updating of OGB's Gender Policy. Knowing that I was going to focus on OGB in my research, I retained what I thought would be important sources of information after I received permission from OGB to conduct my research on the organisation. These included my emails and other electronic files, including initiatives that I worked on, and copies of OGB's intranet, as made available to staff and volunteers, on CD. The latter in particular proved invaluable as an institutional record of the organisation's policies, communications, studies and reports.

The second period includes data I collected as a PhD student and conducting fieldwork between September 2005 and August 2006. This period can be divided into three phases, described in further detail below:

- October to December 2005 in Oxfam House
- January to June 2006 in Cambodia, which included fieldwork in the RMC in Bangkok in three visits spread over a four-week period
- June and August 2006 in Oxfam House.

Subsequent to this, I collected data sporadically up until 2011. This consisted of phone interviews as well as archival research for four days at OGB's headquarters in March 2009.

I initially chose three of OGB's different planning processes through which to track understandings of gender mainstreaming: country programme planning and review; programme and project design; and annual impact reporting. This approach quickly became unfeasible, for a number of reasons. First, these processes excluded a focus on the involvement of Oxfam House, except the latter, in which headquarters was involved only marginally. Second, my timing was off. During my fieldwork period, the Cambodian programme was not involved in country programme planning and review, and any project design would have extended beyond my timeframe, with the result that I would perhaps have missed key moments.

What did emerge, as described below, were key events that I could observe, and these became my focus. Events that occurred during my time as Regional Gender Advisor from 2002 to 2004 also came up as relevant to my research, particularly as the timeframe for the research, 2001 to 2006, took shape. Soon into my research at Oxfam House, it became clear that the arrival of Barbara Stocking in 2001 was relevant to the pursuit of gender mainstreaming, which helped delimit the period of research. As a result, I augmented data collected during my time at OGB as a Regional Gender Advisor by conducting interviews and collecting additional organisational documents, particularly communications, which I previously did not have access to.

As described below, I used a variety of data collection methods including

- In-depth, semi structured interviews with key informants from three key sites of Oxfam House, the RMC and the Cambodia country programme with a focus on the CBDM project including current and previous staff, such as former GADU members
- Focus group discussions with participants from the CBDM project
- Participants observation in all three sites, as described below
- Accumulation of organisational, archival and project documentation including policies, reports, proposals and organisational and personal communications in hard and electronic copy

In total 110 informants, 74 women and 36 men, were involved in my research, all of whom I interviewed, sometimes twice, except in the case of CBDM informants, some of whom participated only as focus group discussion participants (see Figure 1). In all cases, informed consent was sought from informants who were briefed of the purpose of the interview or discussion, were asked if the interview could be recorded (except in the case of CBDM research), were allowed to decline or stop the interview without prejudice and were ensured of their anonymity and confidentiality. Only once was my request for an interview declined, which was later agreed to after repeated requests.

Figure 1 Research participants

Research Site	Female Informants	Male Informants	Total Informants
Oxfam House	28	2	30
RMC	8	8	16
Cambodia Office	9	3	12
CBDM project participants	29	23	52
<i>Total</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>110</i>

Oxfam House

During my time at Oxfam House, OGB was in the process of developing its Strategic Plan (2006-2010). This became a focus for my fieldwork at Oxfam House and allowed me to observe different but related processes, including the finalising of OGB's Gender Equality Strategic Framework (2006-2010) and the development of other thematic plans that were to contribute to the wider organisational strategy as well as to supporting initiatives, such as an organisation-wide system for monitoring, evaluation and learning. While these processes are not included in my thesis, they provided opportunities to observe the links between activities concerning these processes in Oxfam House and other levels, such as regional discussions supposed to feed into the development of the Oxfam International Strategic Plan, which was to serve as a basis for OGB's Strategic Plan.

During my research at Oxfam House (October to December, 2005; June to July, 2006), I conducted 14 formal interviews³¹ and participated in meetings of the Corporate Management Team, the International Directorate Senior Management Team, the most senior body concerning programming, and the Assembly – a biannual, three-day gathering of volunteers, staff and Council members. I attended staff meetings, briefings, consultations (for example “Have Your Say”) and trainings, such as in gender mainstreaming and health and safety. When not participating in meetings, I sat with the Programme Policy Team, with the gender and other advisors, reviewing files and other organisational documentation, conducting further interviews and observing goings-on³². When I had the chance, I would sit with people from other departments and visit the few staff I knew outside the Programme Policy Team in their work area. I wanted to create opportunities for casual encounters and informal discussions.

During my period at Oxfam House, I spent a fair amount of time trying to figure out how the organisation went about developing and deciding on its strategic three-year and annual plans. Part of the challenge was that these processes were complicated and very few people had the whole picture (Hannerz, 2003). Even staff who had worked at OGB for more than 10 years said, “If you find out how decisions are made, let me know” (field notes). Planning also tended to change from cycle to cycle and was processual. A senior policy staff person regularly involved with OGB planning processes described them as “more of an art [...] there are no clear guidelines [...] They go back and forth and then they become policy” (Interview. Wright, 2008).

When I was not interviewing or observing meetings, fieldwork at Oxfam House was mostly uneventful given the nature of work people do at headquarters, much of which is at individual desks and involved communicating through cyber-space. During these

³¹ I conducted eight additional interviews between 2007 and 2011 of staff who were working or had worked at Oxfam House, for a total of 22 interviews. These latter interviews were held mainly with former members of GADU, when I needed to complete information garnered about the unit from publications and archival material.

³² I was fortunate to have been at Oxfam House just as it moved to its current location in Cowley. The new offices had limited space and staff were required to archive or dispose of any documentation they could not accommodate. I inherited documentation from gender advisors that would otherwise have been thrown away.

times, I would be doing other work³³ besides my research, but would keep an ear open for conversations and observe staff interactions.

RMC for East Asia

The main reason for me spending time at the RMC was to attend meetings of regional and country-level staff, including those from Cambodia who feature in my case study, and to observe interactions among differently positioned staff. My second aim was to conduct interviews with regional staff: in total, I interviewed 12 staff. Lastly, I wanted to observe what the managers did. I was familiar with their role when I was working as a regional advisor but had spent very little time in the regional office, and my interactions had been concerned primarily with gender work. So when the Regional Programme Manager invited me to “shadow” him, I took him up on the opportunity. I sat in his office for two weeks, attending meetings with him as well as other activities, such as interviews. This was not a particularly high-value research activity, given its lack of focus, but it was helpful to get a sense of what the Regional Programme Manager did and allowed for numerous informal discussions.

Cambodia country programme office

My research in the Cambodia country office included participant observation, documentation review and interviews. I regularly attended Senior Management Team meetings as well as meetings of programme staff. I shadowed the National Gender Advisor in her work and observed staff inductions, meetings of the gender network and meetings with project partners. During this period, I held 10 formal interviews³⁴, excluding those concerned with the Gender Impact Assessment (GIA), discussed below. When I was not in meetings or shadowing staff, I rotated desks so as to be able to sit with different teams. This afforded me opportunities to socialise and hold informal discussions with staff.

Compared with my time at Oxfam House, the fieldwork in the Cambodia office was busy and engaged. This was primarily because of the GIA, but also because of other events that occurred at the time, concerning not only the Cambodia programme but also a number of regional OGB events taking place in Cambodia as well as regional Oxfam

³³ This included paid consultancies, such as editing a PhD student’s thesis.

³⁴ All were with OGB staff; except one, which was with a former OGB Hong Kong staff and key informant on gender issues within OGB in Cambodia given her long history working in the country and with OGB in particular.

International events such as the consultation on the Strategic Plan, in which I participated.

For the most part, the research was conducted in English. At times, however, translation was required, and this was provided by an OGB staff person with whom I had worked since 2002. This was the case in external meetings with organisations with which OGB worked and, as described below, during data collection for the GIA.

Gender Impact Assessment

The GIA was conducted between February and June 2006 and focused on three projects, one of which was the Community-based Disaster Management (CBDM) project in Takeo province, which became a focus for my research. In November 2005, an OGB programme coordinator with the Cambodian office, contacted me, knowing I was planning to be based in the country office. The idea was that, while Cambodian staff would conduct the GIA, it would also be a learning experience for them and one which I would support and facilitate. I worked with four Cambodian staff: three project officers, each responsible for one of the projects being investigated, and one gender officer.

The aim of the GIA was to “assess the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming as a strategy and approach in our programme to achieve gender equity” (Internal document. Gender Working Group, 2006) and had three main questions:

- What input has OGB provided to partners to help them to mainstream gender in their organisation and programme?
- What changes have been made in the attitudes and actions of partners to address gender inequity?
- What changes can be seen in men’s and women’s lives in terms of gender roles and relations?

The rationale was to see what difference OGB had made with partners and in communities, in order to come up with “concrete examples that [staff] can get their heads around [... to provide examples of] the differences that we want to see” (Interview. Smith, 2006).

GIA of the CBDM project

This section describes the part of the GIA that focused on the CBDM project. In total, three of 13 villages where the CBDM project was being implemented were included in the assessment. These were selected mainly based on the knowledge of the OGB staff member responsible for managing the project, using three variables: vulnerability to flood; remoteness from social services such as education and health; and participation of women in village committees for disaster management (VCDMs), as indicated below.

Village	Vulnerability to flood	Remoteness	Women's participation
Sang Ke Chaur	More vulnerable	More remote	Less active
Bantey Slek	More vulnerable	More remote	More active
Anchang	Less vulnerable	Less remote	More active

A total of 61 participants were interviewed, which included 11 (9 women) VCDM members of a total of 15, and 48 (28 women) beneficiaries out of approximately 300 in the entire project.

We spent six weeks preparing, planning and practising for the assessment. None of the team members, except myself, had previously undertaken field assessments, and everything, from research questions to design, sampling, questionnaires and methodology, had to be developed. I led much of the preparation and planning, and we held regular team meetings, usually two or three times a week, to review our work and plan the next steps³⁵. During this period, we

- Reviewed project documentation to gather information and evidence from project files on the three main assessment questions;
- Undertook a sampling exercise, which lasted two days per project, and included a brainstorming and prioritisation of possible sources of information for each assessment question;
- Designed questionnaires and interview and focus group discussion guides, pilot-tested them and revised them accordingly;
- Developed coding systems for informants to ensure anonymity;
- Practised using the tools as well as interviewing protocols and techniques.

³⁵ Logistics were undertaken by the staff member responsible for the project.

Data collection

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Generally, the former was reserved for TD staff, members of the project committees established for the project, commune councillors³⁶ as well as village chiefs. They were held usually at the informant's residence. Efforts were made to conduct interviews at their respective houses in private which was sometimes difficult to negotiate and not always possible. There was little private space to conduct interviews in this manner and other family members would be curious about the meeting. Project beneficiaries, as direct recipients, and project committee members took part in FGDs. FGDs with the former were conducted as single-sex, usually at the house of the chair of the project committee. FGDs of project committee members were mixed-sex and followed up with individual interviews with key project committee members such as the chair and vice-chair

Sampling of committee members was relatively straightforward where FGDs included those members who were available with all key project committee members being interviewed. Selection of beneficiaries was somewhat less structured and depended on who was available to meet the team as well as a random sampling. Generally, GIA team members were free to randomly choose among those who were available with little interference from project committee members.

Semi-structured interviews and FGDs were based on guides developed for the GIA (see below) and conducted by a team of three staff from the six-person GIA team³⁷.

Interviewees were informed that I was a PhD student and would use the interviews for my personal research which was separate to that of the GIA and that they would remain anonymous and their answers confidential, and that they were free not to participate or to stop the interview at any time. They were asked for their verbal consent to participate under these conditions.

³⁶ The Commune Council is the lowest tier of Cambodian government.

³⁷ These were all OGB staff, and included the three Project Officers, the Gender Officer, a translator and myself. Interviews and FGDs were conducted by a team comprised of the Gender Officer and two Project Officers who were not involved in that particular project. The GIA Team decided during the planning that there would be a conflict of interest if Project Officers conducted field work in project areas for which they were working.

Of the 61 participants interviewed, I attended interviews and FGDs for 40 informants participating through simultaneous translation. I was introduced as a team member as well as a student collecting data for my own research. On numerous occasions, although I was not leading interviews or discussions, I would ask questions through translation when responses required further clarification or points I was interested in were explored. This occurred during the discussions but also after the end of the interview as the GIA facilitator would ask if I had additional questions. Often, this would result in an extended discussion that I would lead through translation.

Data collection took about seven to eight days per project, which allowed for two to three days per village. Data collection for the CBDM project was conducted over a 7-day period. FGDs lasted about three to four hours and interviews were usually one to one and a half hours, although they sometimes extended to two hours, particularly if the discussion was prolonged with my questions. Data collection proved more physically exhausting than was anticipated, particularly as a lot of daily travelling was required, sometimes under arduous conditions, by foot or by ox-cart³⁸. Although shortening the time between field visits would have decreased the overall time needed for the assessment, this would have been physically difficult and would ultimately have affected the quality of the assessment.

Two sets of written interview records were kept, one in Khmer, recorded by team members on an alternating basis, and one in English, by me.

Data analysis and report writing

Transcripts were coded and analysed through a two-stage process. First, questionnaires were reviewed and coded as a team. Second, relevant excerpts were translated into English which were then peer reviewed at least twice, with recoding carried out as required. This was augmented with coded data from interview notes in English, based on simultaneous translation, from myself who had attended about half the interviews overall. When discrepancies arose, two sets of notes were reviewed and reconciled by the team including myself to produce a version that was used for analysis. In these cases, the original Khmer version was used as a reference to verify and revise the

³⁸ This was the first time that some of the GIA team members, including myself, had been exposed to such difficult conditions working in remote, inaccessible areas.

English version and I amended my interview notes accordingly with the corrected Khmer-English translation.

Writing of the report was based on the final revised English datasheets and was conducted by two members of the research team, with the final draft reviewed by all team members. I analysed and wrote the report for the CBDM project in English.

The GIA and my field research

The GIA was important to my research. First, it provided raw data from project participants of their experience with the CBDM project. I used only interview material collected when I had been present and the contents of which I had the chance to verify with respondents as well as with other GIA team members. This included data from 40 informants: 23 men and 17 women. Transcripts from these interviews were re-analysed separately for the purposes of my PhD research.

Second, the data offered me with a glimpse of another project reality, different from that projected by OGB in Cambodia and project documentation. This helped me to think beyond the assessment questions and those concerned with evaluation more generally, to ask, “Why are there differences between project rhetoric and what community members said? What do these differences mean in terms of understandings of gender equality and gender mainstreaming? How can I understand these differences and what went on in the project?” As explained previously, literature from the anthropology of development helped me to consider these and other questions.

Third, the GIA provided me with an opportunity to engage intensively with OGB staff. While much of what I observed does not feature in my research, this helped me to understand the context in which programme staff worked and the contingencies they faced. In particular, the GIA became an interface for tensions between GIA members and their managers and a lightning rod for on-going issues. For example, one programme coordinator asked me to comment on a team member’s performance on the GIA as part of her annual performance review. I agreed on the condition that the team member agreed to my commenting and asked that her permission be sought beforehand. Despite this, the programme coordinator continuously asked for my input without asking for the staff person’s permission.

Moreover, from the beginning, although OGB managers and staff agreed to undertake the GIA as a staff-run exercise and acknowledged that considerable time would be needed, there was conflict between the Country Programme Manager and programme coordinators and between the latter and programme officers over the time staff were spending on it.

Lastly, my interaction with the team helped to build rapport among us all but particularly between myself and the others. I knew most of the members from previous work with OGB as Regional Gender Advisor, but our interactions had been limited then to me providing training. Spending several days a week together on the GIA gradually helped to break down barriers. There were a number of times when team members confided in me about work as well as personal concerns. This is not to say that I became one of “them”: at the end of the day, I was a foreigner, a previous regional staff person and a researcher. Still, I believe there was a sense of mutual respect.

LIMITS AND CHALLENGES OF THE RESEARCH

In this section, I consider the constraints I faced in undertaking the research as well as the challenges given my identity as a former OGB gender advisor.

Constraints of the research design and data collection

The research has a number of limitations, mainly from being a multi-sited organisational ethnography, from working in a non-English context and my lack of Khmer language skills and from a lack of comparative analysis.

First, time spent in any one site was limited, and my exposure to different fields was uneven, in terms of both time and space. This is a key concern of a multi-sited approach: “dilution” from a lack of depth and, correspondingly, too much breadth (Falzon, 2009). This does not necessarily entail a “thin” ethnography, however. Thick description can result from attaining a “native’s” perspective by having established a rapport (Hovland, 2005). As Shutt (2008 citing others) argues, this relies on the relationships established with key informants for data collection (Aull Davies, 2008) and sense making (de Neve, 2006). Reflexivity, particularly of one’s positionality, vis-à-vis the research and the informants, is critical. In this case, I have attempted to contextualise my “privileged”³⁹ access to data with a constant awareness of my position as an insider-outsider, as discussed below.

For instance, I have had to be aware of the level of robustness of my data and use it accordingly. An example is my research in Cambodian villages which was short and did not include ethnographic methods that might be expected, such as participant observation. In other cases, I understood that CBDM respondents had their own agendas and were sometimes coached by OGB project staff (see Chapter 9). Accordingly, this data is only used as interview material for ethnographic interpretation of what the data represents, as a contrast to OGB in Cambodia’s claims about the project. Understanding in advance that GIA data, whether interviews or reports, were presented for particular reasons (van Maanen, 1979) provided the basis to explore motivations of strategic groups (see Chapters 8 and 9).

³⁹ I use the word “privileged” in the sense that I was fortunate that informants were forthcoming with their views and records and that they trusted me.

A related constraint is a focus on individuals and a paradox set up by my research design. On the one hand I was interested in the micro-politics of gender mainstreaming policy and practice that required focusing on critical interfaces of interactions among individual agents. On the other, this meant that even though I conducted a number of interviews with a diversity of OGB staff, the research at times tends to focus on one or a few individuals who were key to a particular case study or field of inquiry. This narrow focus does not owe to a lack of sampling but rather is indicative of how authority was vested in a limited number of people, who were not only at the interface of policy and practice but were also making policy, as senior managers, but as “street level bureaucrats” (Lipsky, 1980). In these cases, the focus on individuals is not to emphasise that their “actions translate [...] policy into practice” (O’Leary, 2006: 106)⁴⁰, but rather that they “must interpret the policy” (ibid), and it is this act of interpretation that is relevant to understandings of the micro-politics of gender mainstreaming. Crewe and Harrison (1998: 192), however, caution against over-emphasis on the motivation of individuals “because it assumes that individuals are capable of making choices irrespective of their culture”. This is problematic given that the “relative consistency of behaviour within a particular culture remains unexplained, and there is confusion about how human behaviour works in relation to time” (ibid). Gould (2004b: 17) also cautions against ethnographies becoming “the hostage of ‘situated knowledge’ and of partial truths”. Still, a “micro level social actor approach” (Shutt, 2008: n.r.) is helpful as it can reveal the highly contingent nature of understandings of gender mainstreaming.

The problem with a focus on individuals is that it makes ensuring anonymity and confidentiality more difficult, even with the use of pseudonyms as in this thesis. It requires removing any details that could be used to identify people. The disadvantage is that the use of general descriptors is tediousness for the reader and does not provide any distinction among informants. Still, I felt that on balance, these were acceptable compromises given the value of such information. Also, the alternatives, such as putting an embargo on the thesis or risking possible legal actions, were unsatisfactory.

⁴⁰ Hinton and Groves (2004) also ask that the agency of individuals or their capacity to enact change through small actions not be underestimated.

During data collection for the GIA as well as in a minority of meetings⁴¹ I observed during the research of OGB in Cambodia, people spoke Khmer and I was provided with translation by an OGB staff person. While not a professional, my translator was experienced, had a very good command of English and was someone with whom I had worked previously – I understood her strengths and limitations as a translator. Still, conducting research in a language that I do not understand presented possibilities for misunderstanding. I was aware of this and took a number of precautions. For example, if there were questions or parts I did not understand, I sought clarification during the translation if possible – or after the fact if not. As mentioned previously, I cross-referenced the GIA interview material I had noted from translation with the Khmer transcripts translated for the purpose of the GIA. Lastly, I analysed translated data for what respondents actually said and did not attempt to carry out interpretation, such as through discourse analysis.

Meanwhile, my research does not include a comparative analysis of another crosscutting theme. I could legitimately be asked whether my observations about understandings of gender mainstreaming are unique to gender or indicative of more general issues concerning policy and practice within development NGOs. In some sense, it is the unique history of the promotion of gender and development and, later, gender mainstreaming in OGB that makes it incomparable. However, I certainly explored the idea of comparability. For example, when informants spoke of gendered experiences, I more often than not asked them for comparable examples and if they thought their experiences were unique to gender. I took into account similarities and differences in perspectives on gender mainstreaming and other policy processes in my analysis and convey these in the text. For instance, I juxtapose different explanations for the moving of advisory roles from Oxfam House to the regions in early 2000 (Chapter 6), which range from a general concern with making advisory support more accessible to the country offices to ridding the organisation of particular gender advisors considered incompatible with the agenda of making gender accessible.

⁴¹ All OGB staff meetings, meetings with the GIA team and interviews with OGB staff in Cambodia were conducted in English. All Cambodian OGB staff are fluent in English, which is a requirement to work for the organisation in all but a few support positions.

Positionality, reflexivity and writing from the inside or out

One of the main challenges of the research concerned my identity and position as a former and continuing OGB staff member that both facilitated the research and complicated it by raising a number of issues related to access, trust and ethics⁴². On the one hand, I had in-depth knowledge of the organisation and its procedures, inner workings and dynamics, as well as access to the “field”, both formally and informally, given my various personal contacts. If ethnography is about gaining the perspectives of the “natives” (Bate, 1997, Hirsch and Gellner, 2001), both the empathy and access offered by my position and identity should have been a benefit to the research (Mosse, 2001). Shutt (2008: n.r.) suggests that “what is discovered during research depends on the quality of relationships that exist between [...] researchers and research informants/participants”. For the most part, my assumption that I would be privy to information that an outsider would not have access to was borne out. On the other hand, there were, of course, dilemmas and complications due to my identity and former position that affected both data collection and the processes of data interpretation and writing. In this next section, I discuss these particular issues as separate phases of my research and then provide an account of how these were addressed.

During data collection, my former identity posed a number of ethical issues, particularly concerning access and trust. First, there was concern relating to conflicting and competing interests. At the time, I was on leave from OGB but planned to return to my previous position (and did so in 2007). What would I do if I uncovered information that compromised my job security, either because it “upset” the organisation or reflected badly on my performance as a gender advisor?⁴³ How does one balance professional interests with academic ones when they come into conflict?

⁴² Of course, I am not the only member of Aidland (Gould, 2004a) who has turned the focus of research onto both their field of work and the researcher as a participant in this. “Aidnography”, as a subset of the anthropology of development, has in recent years become more common (e.g. Eyben, 2005a; 2005b; Gould and Marcussen, 2004; Mosse, 2005b; 2011). Others have written about how being an “insider” and an “outsider” is problematic given the blurred distinction between these interrelated roles (Mosse, 2005b), although development anthropologists have long been keenly aware of their complicated position vis-à-vis the “object” of their research (e.g. Arce and Long, 2000). Throughout this chapter, I particularly draw on the work of Eyben (2005a and 2005b) given her reflections of her role as a development anthropologist and long-time former staff of a large development agency.

⁴³ Eyben (2005a) discusses a similar ethical issue.

Related to this was the issue of trust and relationships, which can lead to a “personal identity conflict and discomfort” (Eyben, 2005a: 3). A number of former colleagues, many of whom acted as key informants, have remained friends and acquaintances. How would our personal relationships affect my analysis, particularly if they were portrayed negatively or if I knew that they would have disagreed with what I was writing?⁴⁴ Also, how could I use information provided to me in confidence without betraying their trust and compromising my promises of anonymity? Although I use pseudonyms, positively identifying the informant might not be so difficult with a little knowledge of OGB, particularly as I focus on a few individuals in key positions. Accordingly, I attempted to meticulously and sufficiently anonymise my sources, upon the strong advice of my supervisors⁴⁵.

In other cases I found myself in difficult positions because of an assumed identity by former colleagues with whom I had a former relationship. For example, as I mention previously, a programme coordinator asked for my informal comments on a GIA team member’s participation as part of her formal performance review. While I wanted to assist him and her, I also felt that the process should be transparent and asked that he seek her permission beforehand. When he did not, after repeated requests to me and my same response, I did not agree to provide feedback, which strained my relationship with the coordinator. In this and other cases, my identity as a former colleague and researcher was confusing for others, which was only exacerbated due to my status as an observing-participant in the case of the GIA. Still, in such situations, I was clear that I could not compromise my ethical responsibility and principles of confidentiality, as a researcher but also as a former employee, not only with research “subjects” but also with research colleagues.

For example, the GIA was conducted on behalf of OGB to assess its impact which, as I mentioned previously, was already assumed to be positive before the work was undertaken. For some GIA team members, they too were similarly predisposed and

⁴⁴ Gould (2004b: 10) also highlights “a tension between the basic requirements of mutual trust and accountability upon which ethnography is predicated, and the scepticism that drives the ethnographic inquiry”.

⁴⁵ This was done for all interviews and internal communications. In the case of discussing formal positions, such as Oxfam’s Director, Barbara Stocking, and Human Resource Director, Jane Cotton, I use their real names and draw on secondary data available in the public domain. In addition, real names are used in the case of archival sources as these were attained in the public domain.

became defensive when critical observations arose. In such cases, my role as researcher overlapped but was also de-lineated. As I was invited to join the GIA in part to support the strengthening of staff capacities, I used my research experience to help team members develop rigorous approaches and, in this example, make *evidence based* observations. In my role as PhD researcher, I was clear about my interest in the data and need to be able to independently use it. In some cases my analysis used in this thesis and conclusions are not the same as those included in the final GIA report for OGB, which I did not author. This is due in part to the different questions being asked (the GIA focused on the impact of Oxfam's efforts; I was interested in explaining why respondents answered the way they did) which meant a different focus. OGB was much more interested in evidence of impact while I was interested in anomalies (Hirsch and Gellner, 2001). Being clear of my different roles and my obligations as a researcher to OGB and myself provided a basis to keep them separate.

Similarly, at times I felt confronted by sometimes conflicting expectations. For example, the key foci of the research are political and highly charged issues such as the engendering of organisations and the role of gender advisors. Some of my former gender colleagues had issues they wanted to surface and saw my research as a way to do this (see Eyben, 2005a for similar concern). Even if I agreed with them, what would I do if the evidence was not sufficiently robust to make the assertions they offered? This was complicated by my own experiences and biases. Sometimes, informants derided gender advisors more generally, and specific acquaintances in particular, and my first inclination was to come to their defence. Trying to retain distance was all the more difficult because I understood the struggles some of the gender advisors had faced (*c.f.* Broussine and Fox, 2003). Of course ethical issues are not confined to field work but are also acute in interpretation and writing, discussed next.

Ethical concerns, such as those resulting from my identity and position as a former employee and a researcher of OGB, as described previously, featured in all aspects of my research. In particular, however, the process of "writing up" is critical, for that is when the "privilege and authority of the anthropologist [is] unambiguously reassumed" (Marcus, 1995: 112). Different imperatives and contingencies gain prominence than during data collection, which is primarily concerned with gaining trust and access. As

Long (1992: 270) suggests, the researcher “in the final analysis [is] responsible for the construction of the ethnographic text”⁴⁶.

The problem of maintaining sufficient distance, while retaining the authoritative knowledge I gained from my previous position, became most acute during this period, not least because the phase of data analysis, interpretation and writing was a protracted and discontinuous one that spanned a period of four years. My previous experience with OGB prevented me at times from gaining and maintaining an etic perspective (Wallace et al, 2006) and “learning to be surprised” (Eyben, 2005b: 1). When designing the research, I was concerned with maintaining the tension of participant observation, “so as to ensure that one is close enough to see what is going on, but not so close as to miss the wood for the trees” (Bate, 1997: 1151). My challenge during data analysis and interpretation turned out to be of a different sort: at times, I did not realise I was in the woods, what the woods were or how I related to them. It was not easy to detect the “minute inconsistencies and variations among actor renditions” (Gould, 2004b: 13) that ethnography requires. Often, I would not let my empirical data speak, either by missing such minutia or, more commonly, by overstating the case (Gould, 2004b). Getting the interpretation “right” entailed many rewrites and constant probing by my supervisors.

My initial interpretations were infused with Oxfam jargon, which I initially adopted unquestioningly. This was made worse by my exiting and re-entering the world of OGB and not being conscious of particular perspectives I assumed when I was wearing my OGB hat⁴⁷. As Eyben (2005a: 2) describes, there “were problems of exit”. At other times, my observations and analysis were punctuated with rhetorical flourishes and lacked nuance. I also struggled not to project my own experiences from OGB onto what the data were saying: as Eyben (ibid: 2) writes, “a former employee’s construct of the organisation might blind her from observing recent changes”. This challenge was exacerbated by my return to Oxfam in 2007, the only period when my roles as researcher and Oxfam staff overlapped. While I was analysing and writing, I was

⁴⁶ Mosse (2005a: 937) writes that turning “relationships into data, and placing interpretations in public, can also disturb and break relationships of fieldwork” (Mosse, 2005a: 937). Eyben (2005a: 5) also refers to this period and identifies publishing as a key ethical moment that can be perceived as a “betrayal of friendships formed during the research process”, or even long before in my case.

⁴⁷ After an initial year of data analysis during my sabbatical from OGB, I resumed my position as Regional Gender Advisor in 2007 and attempted to do both: work during the day and study during the evening.

juggling with different ways of thinking and writing required at work. With strong encouragement from my supervisors, I decided to dedicate myself to writing and left my position with OGB which both freed up time and allowed me to immerse myself in the data for longer periods. Still, the process of writing and being challenged by my supervisors were critical for me to sufficiently shift emphasis from emic to etic perspectives. Achieving this shift whilst retaining the insight gained from emic knowledge helped me gain perspective of the “field” data and a more nuanced perspective. While I was critical of Oxfam during data collection, despite efforts to resist initial judgements, this changed to critical analysis and interpretation during my writing. It was during this period that I could focus on asking less “what” and more “why” and “how” questions, which became the basis for drafting chapters with the engagement of secondary critical literature, much of which does not feature in the final text due to space limitations.

Related to my ability to write ethnographically and convincingly is a concern for objectivity – not in the sense of being able to convey the “truth”, for such positivist notions have generally been discarded (Hendry, 2003), but in relation to being able to establish sufficient credibility for my perspective to be considered worthy alongside other perspectives. As a former OGB employee and later with a working role in one of the arenas of data collection, how do I analyse myself and events in such a way as to convey both an insightful emic understanding *and* a convincing etic perspective to ensure an overall credible account? How then do you do interpretation?

I attempted to address these concerns through reflexivity about my positionality, described next. I pay attention to these issues so as to be transparent about my assumptions and what actually happened during the research, and also because I believe that part of reflexivity is being transparent about how I approached the research problem.

Ethnography is about interpretation of different perspectives (Mosse, 2001) from the perspective of the ethnographer. As such, the ethnographer can get close but can never exactly mirror the perspectives of those being researched, and positivist ideals such as “objectivity” are abandoned (Harding, 1987) or rather, more accurately, enhanced. By introducing the “subjectivity of the researcher”, objectivity, or in Harding’s (1993: 72)

words, “strong objectivity” can be attained. This concerns “locating the researcher in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter” where the subject as well as the object of research are the objects of “critical, causal, scientific!-social explanations” (ibid: 71). For Arce and Long (2000:8), “good ethnography...must repudiate the idea of the detached and ‘objective’ or ‘neutral’ observer”.

“Reflexivity” is critical, particularly with multi-sited ethnographies (Marcus, 1995), that is, working with your own biases “to uncover what may be deep-seated but poorly recognized views on issues central to the research, and a full account of the researchers’ views, thinking, and conduct” (Broussine and Fox, 2003: 32 citing Olesen, 1998). In aidnography (Gould, 2004a), reflexivity must be extended to the interfaces between the researcher and the subjects of Aidland being researched and interwoven with fieldwork as well as data analysis (Long, 1992). All research projects must be seen as socially situated in an acknowledgement that all knowledges are socially situated (Harding, 1991).

Accordingly, awareness of my positionality was critical to my ability to attain “strong” reflexivity and “objectivity”. It entails more than an uncritical use of “buzzwords” and studying the meaning they acquire as suggested by Nuijen (2004). “Researchers are also differently positioned depending on why they want to know” (Eyben, 2005a). They have their own interests that must be surfaced “as part of the forces that sustain...and reproduce” their positionality and struggles over “relevance, legitimacy, and/or practical applications” (Lazreg, 2002: 123). For example, during analysis and writing of thesis, I had to remind myself to ask, “Why am I including this material?” “Is it just interesting for me, as a former employee, or is it offering something to the overall thesis?” Still, while asking these questions allows for some perspective, how do you know what you know?

Gould (2004b: 15) suggests that the range of things we can know first-hand is extremely narrow and highlights “socio-spatial positionality [... as] a pivotal point of epistemological reflection for ethnography”. Three dimensions of this are particularly relevant to aidnography and its multi-sitedness: spatial, social and normative. Spatial positionality concerns the very real physical limitations of conducting research as an individual, or even a team. How much can you really know given the vastness of the

“field” and the practical challenges multi-sited ethnography throws up? As Hannerz (2003) suggests, this is a matter of knowing what you know and what you don’t and being clear about what part of the “site” your data represents. It’s not claiming to study the “entire cultural and social life” (ibid: 208) or every facet of people’s lives, but rather how they may be related to the focus of study. In my case, I have had to not only be careful of what my data and analysis represent but to also how far I could legitimately extend such representation and make possible links. For example, I previously discussed the research’s focus on individuals which often begged the question of whether my observations are individual or representative of something wider and, if the latter, representative of what?

Social positionality is about how one is situated between the supposed extremes of being an “outsider” and an “insider”. As Gould (2004b) suggests, these identities are hypothetical; they often co-exist and overlap. It is more helpful to think of them as perspectives from different vantage points that limit what you know but in different ways. From an emic perspective, you don’t always see the woods from the trees; from an etic perspective, you don’t understand the localised meaning given to the trees. I had to learn that rather than acting as binary opposites, these perspectives are inter-related and mutually informing. For example, much of this research focuses on gender advisors and, at some points includes my own direct experiences working in this position for OGB (see Chapter 8 for example). While my past offers insight into the challenges about this role, it is obviously from this perspective that I am more strongly informed, and not, for example, from that of Oxfam staff with whom advisors engage, even when I had attempted to appreciate this. Not only was it necessary to be aware of the limits of my experience, but I also needed to attain an actor oriented perspective (Long, 1992) which included understanding the limits of my ability to do so.

Normative positionality is similar to Harding’s concept of “strong objectivity” and concerns acknowledging that aidnography is not nor could ever be “value free” (Gould, 2004b: 11); aidnographers are critical of development rhetoric but also “feel compelled to defend the very principles donors invoke” (ibid) to pursue normative agendas. This limits what you know by accepting “that’s how things are done around here” without acknowledging, or even entertaining, that there may be a political agenda. This is different from the blindness of a solely emic perspective, but is related: it is

understanding that the field and the perspective of the field on the part of the researcher and the researched are politicized. In my case, and based on my previous experience, the challenge was to get the “micro-politics” right to raise myself above the inter-personal minutiae in which I was ensconced when I was working. For example, the case of the 2003 updating of OGB’s 1993 policy (featured in Chapter 5) is one which I was initially involved in. At the time, there was a lot of mistrust and positioning, of which I was part. In order to understand the wider politics the case represented, numerous re-writes and re-analysis was required in order to become aware of my own biases and agenda that I developed while being involved in the case study, to be able to consider the interactions among staff as being more than inter-personal grievances and understand what they represented.

Writing reflexively about these positionalities requires not only an acknowledgement and reflection of the authoritative position assumed by the ethnographer, but also the responsibility that comes with such a position. What are the ethical issues in taking people’s words and making an argument from them? One approach for providing credibility is to take text back to research subjects to, at the very least, validate information they provided. Mosse’s (2005a: 939 citing Latour, 2000) notion of “objectivity”, which echoes that of Harding, is not concerned with eliminating subjectivity, but of courting it by “maximizing the capacity of actors to object to what is said about them”. In his case, he shared his writing with research subjects and informants, who included his former colleagues and collaborators from the project, which is the focus of his research.

In my case, I did not pursue this option, but have taken authorial responsibility in terms of how data was collected and in its interpretation. The option used by Mosse was not a viable one in my research given the deeply competing understandings of events and the highly political nature of the kinds of issues addressed in the research. Moreover, the point of such an exercise is not to validate the interpretation of the data, which I have assumed responsibility for, but to correct “factual” errors either in terms of what people said in interviews or what was written. It can also provide alternative points of view (Mosse, 2005a: 948). In terms of the former, I suggest that this has already been addressed in data collection, namely through attaining consent and tape recording interviews, and careful treatment of secondary sources of data. In terms of the later, I

offer my research as a “*positioned* interpretation” (ibid: 941. Original emphasis): this is one interpretation of gender mainstreaming in OGB from 2001 to 2006. There are others, which are a source of this research. I conducted interviews and collected documents and analysed them not for their “truth” but for what they represent according to my interpretation, for which I take responsibility.

In sum, my challenge in conducting this research involved how to make the most of the opportunities provided in a transparent and, in the end, convincing manner. This has entailed constant attentiveness to my position as a researcher and member of Aidland and the sometimes contradictory perspectives and agendas these two identities entail. This in itself was a constant challenge in a number of respects. Attaining an etic perspective after and while being ensconced in the world of OGB was not an easy feat. Additionally, maintaining this while also maintaining an emic point of view that my identity as former staff and my experience working with OGB could offer also proved at times elusive. My initial binary use and understanding of these terms ignored their inter-relationship and that they are on the same continuum of appreciating and interpreting “the point of view” of those whose worlds I was researching. The challenge was attaining different perspectives of others’ perspectives to inform my interpretation of the latter. This was complicated by traversing along this continuum to not only see things as an “outsider”, but appreciating insider’s perspectives with an outsider’s vantage.

CONCLUSION

As a large development NGO, researching OGB was a daunting task. In my case, my challenges were not necessarily because the organisation was not transparent (Wallace et al., 2006) or that I lacked access. I was fortunate to have “inside knowledge and connections [that allowed for] access to people and documents” (ibid: 9). Maintaining reflexivity about my positionality, particularly in social and normative terms (Gould, 2004b), helped in being aware of this continuum but did not help to resolve the tension that etic-emic perspectives throw up. In many ways, my positionality only complicated this further.

Drawing on previous work and reflections of Aidnographers was helpful to negotiate my complicated status and resulting ethical issues. It provided a basis for which to make decisions and be clear of my role as a researcher.

Chapter 4

The Research Context of Oxfam GB: a remarkable and contested history with gender and development

INTRODUCTION

OGB is the UK's largest overseas development charity and one of the oldest. In 2006, it worked in over 70 countries with some 3,000 local groups and employed about 5,000 staff. In 2004, it raised about 60% of its annual budget, about £130 million, from the general public, including over 550,000 regular private donors.

This chapter introduces the organisational context for my multi-sited ethnography. I briefly describe OGB's aims, history and structure, with a focus on Oxfam House, the Regional Management Centre for East Asia and the Cambodia country office, all of which are research sites. I also introduce Oxfam's promotion of gender equality by way of a historical overview of the organisation's efforts and a review of its gender policies and gender mainstreaming infrastructure at different levels of the organisation. Finally, the chapter also includes a brief account of development practice in Cambodia as relevant to Oxfam's history in the country and its efforts to promote gender equality.

As a global organisation, Oxfam is complex, characterised by intricate sets of relations among different strategic groups working at different "levels". Its history is long, complicated and often one of contestation. The main purpose of this chapter is to enable readers to understand the different research sites and the related organisational structures I refer to, as well as to introduce the cast of actors (Mosse, 2005b) and some of the research themes. The complex formal relations within OGB seemingly represent a connected organisation, as in the organograms and lines of reporting and communication, but staff often exercise autonomous authority within their respective spheres.

OVERVIEW OF OXFAM GB

History of expansion and change: a brief summary

The Oxford Committee for Famine and Relief was established in 1942 in response to famine and sickness in Europe, especially Greece and Belgium, during World War II. In 1949, it expanded its activities to other parts of the world. By 1958, it had raised about

£0.5 million, in cash and in kind, and was providing grants to 27 countries; by 1960, this number had grown to 56. National staff from countries where Oxfam was working were employed for the first time in 1969.

In the 1970s, OGB's international profile was raised when it broke an international embargo by providing relief to Cambodia, which was emerging from four years of genocide. Income doubled that year to nearly £24 million, including some £12m for Cambodia. The Cambodian crisis and other emergencies – such as the Ethiopian famine in the 1980s, the Rwandan genocide in the 1990s and the Asian tsunami of 2004 – have been key to the organisation's growth in terms of income, staffing and programming. Each episode of rapid growth for the organisation corresponds with an international emergency (field notes).

As with any large organisation, OGB's history is one of continuous institutional change. One major shift occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the organisation underwent a radical restructuring process in order to become more “professional”. Previously, the structure and working culture were informal and decentralised: Oxfam had 34 relatively autonomous field offices, with some 1,700 staff loosely organised in relatively independently groups. The restructuring process introduced a “host of supporting policies, guidelines and procedures to assist line managers in performing to common standards across departments, specialisms and geographies” (Internal document. OGB, 1998: n.r.)⁴⁸. Field offices and their staff were brought into main of the organisation by having to follow common administrative policies and procedures. Also, this period saw a shift to include more advocacy as part of Oxfam's campaigning efforts (Black, 1992).

Later, in 1997/98, OGB undertook a strategic planning process, the Fundamental Review of Oxfam's Strategic Intent (FROSI). FROSI responded to a recognition that the “the organisation [was] on a course of ifs and buts” (OGB, 1998: n.r.) and that a clearer mission was required, particularly given the changed global context. The review sought to provide a new sense of purpose with a shift from relief and emergency

⁴⁸ GADU team members would dispute that they were not ‘professional’, preferring instead to distinguish between “professionalization” and “managerialism”, with the latter concerned more with “managers, targets, performance indicators, quantitative measurements, a plethora of frameworks and short term goals”. (Personal communication from former GADU-member)

response to addressing “poverty and suffering”. With FROSI came a new mission statement for OGB, as described below. Also, “change objectives” or Aims (mentioned in Chapter 1 and described further below), formulated as rights, were introduced as a way of focusing the organisation and developing consistency and coherency.

As with the earlier organisational shift, FROSI was concerned with “professionalising” staff. The organisation adopted language from the private sector that concerned performance, strategy and knowledge management. It also resulted in a smaller governance structure by decreasing the size of OGB’s board and initiated a process of establishing regional management centres (RMCs) that were meant to move the organisation away from “a traditional hierarchy to an international network” (OGB, 1998: n.r.). Accordingly, financial and human resources were shifted from Oxford to the RMCs and the role of Oxfam House was re-defined. FROSI was also a catalyst for a number of other changes that are relevant to the promotion of gender equality at different levels of the organisation, as described below.

FROSI was also significant for Oxfam International (OI), the roots of which date back to 1963, when Oxfam Canada was the first overseas committee to be established outside of the UK and Ireland. Other overseas committees were subsequently established, mainly in Europe and the United States, which over time became independent national Oxfam offices in these countries. By 1995, Oxfam International was established as a confederation of 15 independent Oxfam organisations including OGB⁴⁹. The international secretariat, based in Oxford, is intended to support collaboration among the affiliates to increase their overall impact on poverty and injustice. With FROSI, the establishment of Aims was the first of a number of initiatives to develop a common basis around which OI affiliates could harmonise their work, as part of an overall commitment to work as an international confederation.

Oxfam’s mission, aims and structure

Revised as part of FROSI, OGB’s mission, as stated in Chapter 1, is “to work with others to alleviate poverty and suffering” and its values are empowerment, inclusiveness and accountability (Internal document. OGB, 2006g). The organisation states that its

⁴⁹ Oxfam International national affiliates include Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Quebec, Spain and the US.

work is based on a belief of the rights of individuals to be secure, skilled, healthy, safe, heard and equal (Internal document. OGB, n.d.-a). These five Aims subsume nine Strategic Change Objectives (SCOs). The SCOs, or long-term objectives, are supposed to guide the whole of the organisation and to be used to judge its impact (Internal document. OGB, n.d.-a).

In 2005/06, OGB had 5,026 full time staff, of whom 1,239 were based in the UK and 3,787 in regional and country offices (Internal document. OGB, 2005). Almost all UK-based staff were British nationals whereas regional and country-level staff were generally from the countries where the respective office was located. Women comprised 66% of all staff in the UK, and 33% of all staff in the country and regional offices (ibid).

Broadly, the overall structure of OGB can be thought of in terms of three levels of activities - global, regional and country – each of which has a corresponding centre and respective remit (see Figure 2). It is a hierarchical organisation where supervision and the provision of financial and advisory support generally occur “downward” and reporting on compliance generally goes “upward”. A staff member’s relative position within the three levels is indicated by their respective job grade⁵⁰. This is not to say, of course, that staff with the highest grades are based in Oxfam House. Within each of the levels of activities, there is a combination of differently ranked staff. Still, they are ranked relative to each other, despite being the same positions. For example, a Country Director may be the most senior at country level but answers to the Regional Director who in turn is subordinate to the Executive Director.

For the purposes of this thesis, Oxfam staff can be thought of in four broad descriptive categories that can be found at all three levels, although each category is not homogeneous⁵¹. First are senior managers who are vested with authority to make decisions on policy and budgets. They usually directly supervise a number of staff and

⁵⁰ OGB has a six-point grading system for staff at headquarters and those serving overseas on international contracts. In 2002, 2.3% were senior managers (Grade A), 9.5% were Grade B, 22.5% Grade C, 40.4% Grade D, 14.7% Grade E and 10.5% Grade F (intranet. Oxfam grades. 2002).

⁵¹ My overview does not include administrative staff, who work on internal functions of finance, human resource management and information technology.

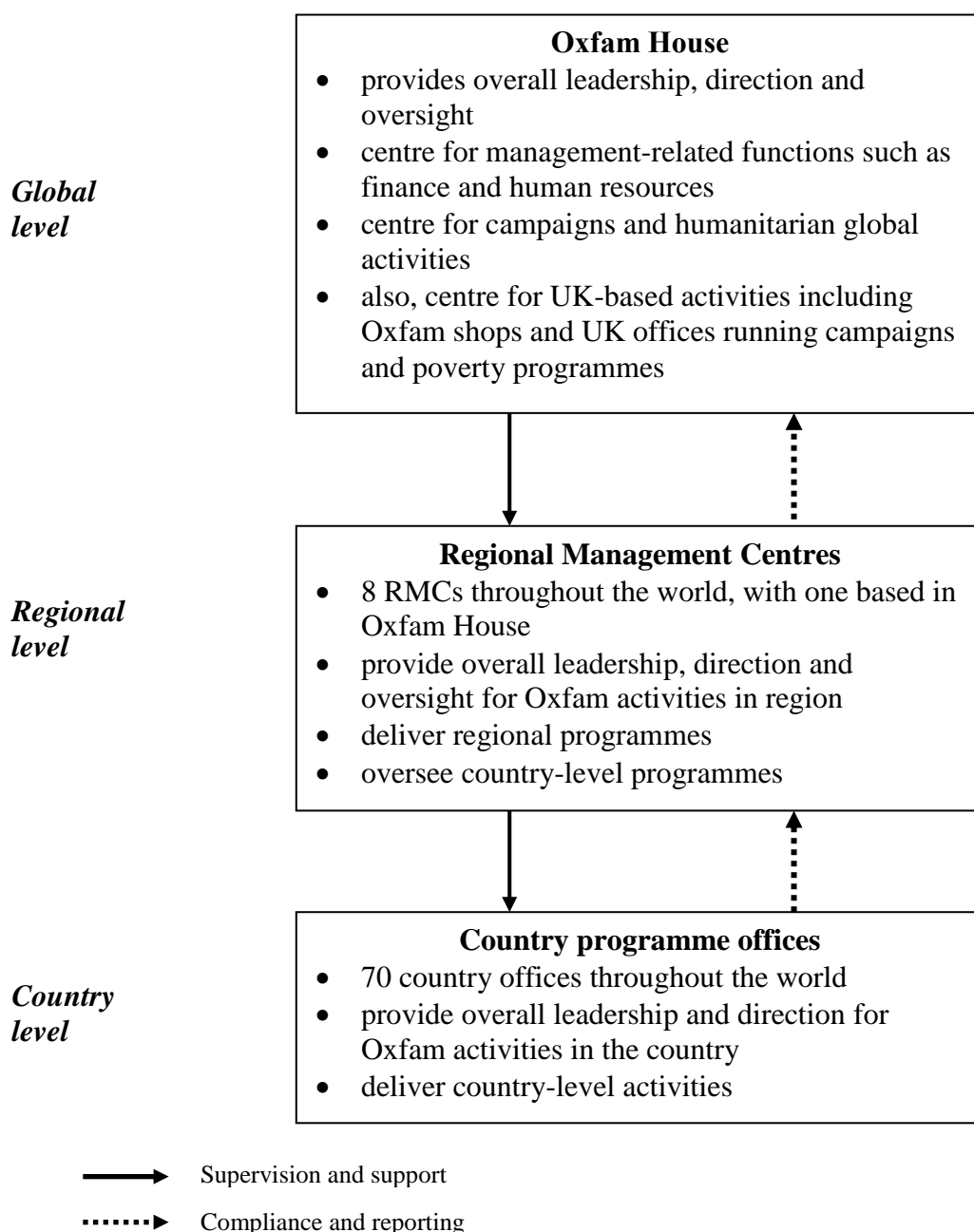
sometimes, indirectly through these, teams of staff. They include, for example, Oxfam's directors in Oxfam House and at the regional and country levels.

A second category of staff are programme managers. These too are decision-making staff with responsibility for budgets and other staff, but they take on this role to a lesser degree than senior managers and their authority is limited to their respective area, such as programme policy. Their role generally is to oversee programme areas such as programme policy, campaigns and advocacy.

Third are advisors – staff who are supposed to possess expertise in a specific area and are expected to advise other staff, such as managers or programme staff. They generally do not have any decision-making authority.

Fourth are programme staff, who take up a wide range of positions and implement activities related to campaigns and programmes. This category includes, for example, project officers in Country Offices and programme resource persons in Oxfam House. They do not have formal decision making authority but, as described in this thesis, can exercise decision making concerned with implementation.

Figure 2 The global, regional and country structure of OGB



Source: Oxfam intranet.

Oxfam House in Oxford

Oxfam House is the organisation's headquarters and included about 700 staff. It provided oversight for activities, was a locus for the organisation's management functions – such as communications, finance and personnel – and ran global activities, namely, humanitarian responses and international campaigns. It was also the centre of Oxfam's UK-based activities, such as fundraising and public awareness raising implemented through Oxfam's "charity" shops and campaign offices.

Oxfam House included the main corporate Directorate as well as six divisions and their respective departments. The Director⁵² reported to the trustees (the main governing structure of OGB), seven division directors reported to the Director and various division heads reported to their respective directors (see Figure 3)⁵³.

Figure 3 Organogram of Oxfam House

Directorate	Director Strategic planning and development, governance support, management support,					
Divisions	<i>Supporter and Corporate Marketing Directors</i>	<i>Trading Director</i>	<i>Campaigns and Policy Director</i>	<i>International Director</i>	<i>Finance and Information Systems Director</i>	<i>Human Resources Director</i>
Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporter Marketing • Corporate Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail Line • Shop Support Team • Business Development Team • Property Team • New Product Team • Trading • Decision Support Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy • Campaigns • Development Education • Media Unit • Oxfam Scotland • Oxfam Cymru • Programme Policy including gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian • UK Poverty Programme • International Funding Unit • International Human resources • International Finance and IT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Accounting • Corporate Finance • Information Systems • Legal Team • Internal Audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward Employee Relations • Human Resources Management Information • Learning and Development • Marketing/CPD HR • FIS/HR Facilities Management • Trustees Team

Source: Adapted from Oxfam intranet.

The divisions involved with "programmes" are the most relevant to this thesis. The International Division had 160 staff in Oxford (25% of Oxford's staff) and was responsible for implementing all of Oxfam's humanitarian and development programmes. In terms of the organisation as a whole, it was the largest division, with 3,800 staff worldwide (72% of all Oxfam staff) and spent most of Oxfam's budget,

⁵² In 2007, the title "Chief Executive" replaced "Director". This research uses the title "Director".

⁵³ The remainder of the UK-based staff, about 500 people, were worked in Oxfam's offices in Scotland and Wales, in offices of the UK Poverty Programme or in Oxfam shops.

about 85%. The International Division Directorate was, however, small, with six staff, but was the centre for all of Oxfam's humanitarian and development programmes. It was headed by the International Director, who had responsibility for international programmes, to whom the RMCs reported.

The Campaigns and Policy Division was critical because this was where the gender advisors were located. It had 135 staff (20% of all Oxford staff), mostly based in Oxfam House, and worked in four interrelated areas including programme policy led by the Programme Policy Team. This group developed programme policy and strategies, supported the design and implementation of programmes and undertook research and publishing. It also played a key role in developing, facilitating and monitoring Oxfam's strategic plans and, in particular, strategies for four of Oxfam's five Aims⁵⁴.

Within the Programme Policy Team, the Social Policy and Governance Group included a number of global advisors, working on gender equality, institutional accountability, health and education. During the research period, this group underwent a change: in 2000, it included four gender advisors; in 2002, new staff were hired to expand the team based in Oxfam House; but this decision was reversed in 2003 with the aim "to get more gender advisors out there in the realities", according to a senior manager (Interview. Blair, 2007)⁵⁵. By the end of 2006, two gender advisors remained in the Programme Policy Team, one had moved to work from the RMC in South Asia and three new regional advisors were hired to be based from the regions. This decision followed the overall FROSI rationale to place advisors closer to programming (Interview. Wright, 2008). Still, the cut in gender specialists based in Oxfam House also had a particular purpose. As a senior manager explains

We had a gender unit at the time I arrived and that got pruned down quite significantly with the view that it's a gender mainstreaming thing, if you like, it's that we actually have to get (advisors) embedded in our programmes. And having a small gender group here wasn't going to deliver it. (Interview. Pilkington, 2009)

⁵⁴ The fifth area concerns Oxfam's humanitarian work and is led by the Humanitarian Department.

⁵⁵ As stated previously, I use pseudonym throughout this thesis, except when drawing on published material available in the public domain.

As Chapters 5 and 6 describe, this move was more complex than the purported rationale of regionalisation and the establishment of RMCs, discussed next.

Regional Management Centres: RMC for East Asia

Oxfam had eight RMCs,⁵⁶ established in early 2000 under FROSI. OGB was careful not to portray this process as a decentralisation of decision making to the regional level, but as a matter of relocating staff closer to the countries where Oxfam was working so as to be better able to support them, according to a senior manager from the East Asia RMC (Interview. Heller, 2006). Regional directors were apparently given a fair amount of flexibility in establishing their RMC, although some key positions were mandatory, mostly in senior management and internal functions. As a result, there was a lot of diversity among the regions.

RMCs oversaw programming in country offices in the region. For example, the RMC for East Asia, based in Bangkok, was responsible for six country offices⁵⁷. Until 2004, Oxfam's East Asia programme was one of the smallest regional programmes, with about 100 staff and an annual budget of £6.5 million (Internal report. OGB, 2004c). The 2004 Asia tsunami changed this: in 2005, the regional programme had over 1,000 staff and a budget of £27.6 million (Internal report. OGB, 2006h). In 2006, OGB's East Asian regional programme included activities in all five of the organisation's programming areas, with "sustainable livelihoods" the largest⁵⁸. Its support for gender equality was £3 million or about 5% of the regional budget (ibid).

The East Asia RMC had five broad roles: providing "overall strategic leadership" for Oxfam in the region in terms of its programming and planning; overseeing programmes that included regional-projects as well as country-level projects⁵⁹; supporting areas such

⁵⁶ RMCs cover the regions of Southern Africa; West Africa; Horn, East and Central Africa; South Asia; East Asia; Caribbean, Mexico and Central America; South America and Middle East; and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States. All RMCs are located outside of the UK except the latter, which is based in Oxfam House.

⁵⁷ Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam. Oxfam also has programmes in North Korea, Burma and China (the latter through Oxfam Hong Kong).

⁵⁸ Excluding the tsunami response.

⁵⁹ In 2003, all of OGB's projects in East Asia were reformulated to fall under one of 13 regional thematic programmes, for example sustainable livelihoods or gender equality, in order to promote greater learning within the themes and across countries. In 2005, these were dismantled as too unwieldy to manage and projects were reverted back to country-level programmes. The regional programming approach had also

as finance and human resources as well as specific programming areas; ensuring compliance with Oxfam policies, objectives, standards and procedures; and providing representation for Oxfam in the region (Interview. Heller, 2006).

Two types of regional staff feature particularly in this research.

Regional managers

The Regional Director, the Regional Programme Manager⁶⁰, a Regional Human Resource Manager and a Regional Finance Manager made up the regional management committee, which was the most senior decision-making body. Their authority was measured by two factors: their spending approval authority and their “accountability” to headquarters. In particular, the Regional Director and RPM were able to approve the highest level of spending within the regional level and reported directly to the Director of the International Division in Oxford.

The RMC also had a role in influencing policy and planning in Oxford. On major Oxfam initiatives, such as strategic plans or new programmes, the regions were consulted and asked for feedback. According to a senior regional manager, however, it was not always clear how much influence they really had (Interview. Heller, 2006). Sometimes, Oxford initiatives to which the RMC had contributed came back to the RMC in an unrecognisable form. According to a senior regional manager, “What I am not sure about, is that once [the initiative] is articulated, how it influences back what we actually do on the ground” (Interview. Heller, 2006). For example, in 2006, a new gender strategic framework committed the organisation to allocating an unprecedented 20% of its funds to gender work, which was news for the regional managers. As a senior manager at the time states, “Oxford tends to make standalone decisions. We’ll meet on AIDS and get all excited. We’ll meet on Aim 5 and get all excited. So we make pronouncements, plans, decisions in isolation of each other without consideration of the other” (Interview. Fitzgerald, 2006).

created a conflict between those responsible for regional programmes and country managers (Interview. Heller, 2006).

⁶⁰ In 2005, the RMC introduced a second, temporary, RPM to oversee the Indonesia programme as well as the Asian tsunami response in Aceh, as the tsunami response was so large.

For one senior regional manager, how such decisions were communicated determined how he responded and followed through with the rest of the region. “I am not cynical about it, I just think that there are often times in Oxfam where strong statements of intent are made, and I am waiting to see [the] specific purpose in mind. [Was it made] as an influencing strategy or [...] in order to get a message across?” (Interview. Heller, 2006).

In terms of the 20% decision, such pronouncements offered room for interpretation. As Heller states (*ibid*),

What I am saying to the team, don't start re-planning your whole programme because this is not coming down as a dictate and everyone has to spend 20%. This is an idea that has come out of the meeting with the Director of Oxfam, it's going to feed into a strategy. For me what is important is the direction setting rather than the target. So don't get hung up on the 20% figure. Let's see where that goes.

Another issue relates to the clarity and consistency of messages from Oxford. For example, while the importance of mainstreaming gender and the need to make progress on gender have been made clear, the message had not been consistent. As Heller states, “the steers have been few and far between” (*ibid*) concerning gender, while others were both clear and consistent, particularly those concerning control, compliance and authorisations.

Regional advisors

Regional advisors consisted of different regional staff – advisors and coordinators – who provided advice, “technical” knowledge and support to strengthen capacity of managers and programme staff at the country and, to a lesser degree, regional level. Most worked from the RMC in Bangkok, a few work from country offices in Hanoi, Manila, Jakarta or Phnom Penh⁶¹. There were seven regional advisors and coordinators, including one for gender equality.

⁶¹ This is primarily for pragmatic reasons. Oxfam is allocated a limited number of visas for foreign workers by Thai officials, so some advisors have to work out of country offices. The assignment of a particular advisor to a particular country office is ad hoc.

The distinction between coordinators and advisors related to their relative involvement in country programmes. Both provided advice in support of programmes, but coordinators also managed programmes, undertook activities themselves and had financial responsibility. They usually had country-level counterparts with whom they worked individually and regionally. For example, the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator (RHC) worked with humanitarian teams in each country providing advice on programme design and implementation and would also lead humanitarian responses if necessary⁶². The role of the advisors, on the other hand, was generally limited to providing advice and support in order to strengthen staff capacities. They did not have country-level counterparts with whom they worked on a consistent and on-going basis and did not manage programmes and finances. For example, the Regional Gender Advisor worked with any country programme staff who requested assistance and, in some cases, national gender staff where such position existed⁶³. While regions were not told by Oxfam House, when establishing the RMCs, for which areas they needed to hire regional advisors, there was “a clear expectation that people they’d hire were more grounded [than Oxford-based advisors], close to programme” (Interview. Blair, 2007).

Both coordinators and advisors were involved in the design of programmes and the development of proposals, although their participation was not mandatory, except in the case of the Regional Gender Advisor (explained later); their involvement of advisors and coordinators was left to the initiative of country programme staff.

Country programmes: Oxfam GB in Cambodia

OGB had some 70 country offices. These oversaw the organisation’s activities at the country level, primarily including humanitarian and development programmes and projects but also national-level campaigns. Each country office was structured differently but shared common positions and structures. Here, I describe the country office of Cambodia as an example.

⁶² Over the period of my research, there were for the most part three RHCs. Since the RHC during my fieldwork, was a male, I will use “him” as the pronoun when referring generally to the post of RHC.

⁶³ During the time of this research, this was the case in Cambodia and Indonesia.

Staff of Oxfam GB Cambodia

In 2006, the Oxfam GB Cambodia office had about 30 staff, all of whom were Cambodian nationals except for the Country Programme Manager (CPM)⁶⁴ and assorted regional staff attached to the RMC in Bangkok. The annual budget for the programme was about £1 million, and the essential role of the office was to manage these funds according to OGB's strategic plan for the country and organisation-wide policies and procedures.

The CPM, a senior manager, oversaw country programme design and implementation, particularly "quality" and cost-effectiveness, and was meant to ensure compliance with OGB policies and procedures (Interview. Smith, 2006). He reported directly to Bangkok and supervised five staff – four programme coordinators and a Programme Services Manager (finance and administration)⁶⁵. The CPM managed multiple demands, some of which were generated from the RMC while others originated from various departments in Oxford, which added to the complexity of relations between Oxford, Bangkok and Phnom Penh. He often acted as a filter, deciding what messages, often "mixed", should get through to country staff. This was a matter of negotiation with Bangkok and Oxford as well as "pushing back" against "the beast", as the CPM referred to the Oxfam organisational bureaucracy (ibid).

Of the programme coordinators, two were male and two female at the time of research. All, except one woman, were Cambodians and had been working with Oxfam for at least 10 years. The fourth, a Dutch national, had joined in 2006. Each coordinator managed up to 10 programme officers and project assistants and was responsible for a discrete programme comprised of a number of projects. Programme officers managed projects implemented, in most cases, by "partners", chiefly Cambodian NGOs. They were also responsible for monitoring, which mainly involved reviewing interim narrative and financial reports and undertaking field visits. Often, their work entailed reworking proposals submitted by partners to conform to Oxfam's requirements or working with partners to revise their proposals to meet Oxfam criteria⁶⁶. Applications

⁶⁴ This title was changed to Country Director in 2007.

⁶⁵ While OGB employs both women and men CPMs, the CPM for Cambodia during the period of research was a man, and I will use the male pronoun when referring to this position more generally.

⁶⁶ Shutt (2008: 184) notes how this was a process of "translating the ideas of the local NGOs into the official development discourse and frames of their own organisations".

were reviewed by the relevant Programme Coordinator and approved, depending on the size of the budget, by the Programme Coordinator, the CPM, the Regional Programme Manager or the Regional Director.

It was at this point, during approval processes, that regional advisors often became involved, if they were involved at all. Regional managers made continuous efforts to encourage earlier involvement of advisors; in the case of gender-related staff, programme staff were “expected to draw upon gender resource people at an early stage of the humanitarian intervention” (Internal document. OGB, 2002b: 2) . However, depending on the size of the project and therefore who needed to agree to it, being able to demonstrate that the relevant regional advisor had reviewed and commented on the proposal was likely to enhance its chances of being approved. I often observed Cambodian staff evoking the names of advisors in defence of projects for which they were facing criticism (field notes).

At the interface between OGB and project partners, the role of programme officers, as described by the organisation itself, was likened to the narrow part of an hourglass (field notes). They channelled all of OGB’s policies, strategies and procedures from a myriad of different sources within the organisation into complex and multifaceted environments⁶⁷. Having to address difficult issues and deal with a range of Cambodian NGOs in what were almost always complicated relations, they were often overwhelmed and overburdened. In one staff meeting, programme officers likened the magnitude of their pressures to that of a “whale”. Unlike regional or country managers, programme officers were rarely able to “push back” against “the beast”. Still, as described in later and in Chapters 7 and 8, they can exercise some discretion when it comes to working with “project partners” and community members⁶⁸.

⁶⁷ In a presentation to the Council, the Head of the Programme Policy Team referred to programme officers experiencing “programme paralysis” owing to the different Oxfam requirements imposed on them. These include remembering Oxfam’s rights-based approach, contributing to Oxfam International campaigns and mainstreaming gender, among a litany of others (Internal document. OGB, 2005).

⁶⁸ Similarly, Shutt (2008) challenges the popular perception that national staff of international NGOs take on the “(assumed) rationality” of their employers and have little discretion. She contends that such staff, while influenced by the organisation’s policies, also exercise “agency in ways that affected what transpired within relationships with local NGO” (ibid: n.r.). Still, in the case of OGB, I found staff facing a deluge of policies and procedures they were not able to totally resist; while they did exercise agency, such pressures affected their relations with partners and communities.

One role that they could not negotiate was the need to disburse funds. This was mentioned on numerous occasions throughout the organisation, not just in Cambodia, although the “pressure” stemmed from different sources. At the country level, programmes were provided with a financial allocation every year from the RMC. This was often established as part of an annual process, whereby country programmes estimated their financial needs and negotiated with the RMC, which more often than not did not have sufficient resources to meet all countries’ requests. Once country budgets were set, the funds had to be spent within a given fiscal year⁶⁹ or would be returned to the general budget of the organisation. Under-spending usually occurred in the early part of the year, when staff were busy and there were delays in partners submitting proposals and Oxfam approving them. This resulted in a rush to spend funds allocated for 12 months within a shorter period. Although Oxfam managers actively discouraged rapid spending in a short period of time, for fear that quality would suffer (for example, see Internal communication. OGB, 2005a), spending of funds in the latter part of the fiscal year was common⁷⁰.

“Partnership” among unequals

In 2006, Oxfam was working with some 20 “partners” in Cambodia, the majority established Cambodian NGOs and two of which were women’s organisations. The three Cambodian NGOs included in the gender impact assessment (TD, NRI and BIC)⁷¹ undertaken as part of my research were illustrative of the types of organisations Oxfam worked with.

OGB’s partners varied in size and scope. NRI was national in scope and based in Phnom Penh. Established in 1997, it used a typical hierarchal management structure with a director, coordinators and project officers. NRI had about 60 staff and worked in some 300 villages in 14 provinces across the country. Focusing on “ecological agriculture” and rural development, the organisation claimed to work with over 100 international and Cambodian organisations, seven of which had been long-term supporters. OGB had been providing project funds to NRI since 2000.

⁶⁹ From 1 April to 31 March, for OGB,

⁷⁰ Pressure to spend funds sometimes comes from Oxford, when the organisation is able to raise funds for a particular humanitarian situation, such as the Asian Tsunami of 2004.

⁷¹ These are fictitious names.

In contrast, BIC and TD worked exclusively in one province, where they were based. BIC, set up by Cambodians returning from refugee camps in Thailand in the early 1990s, focused on community development and building civil society in northern Cambodia. It helped to establish and support different self-help groups in agriculture, savings and traditional Khmer dance and music. BIC had 16 staff and was non-hierarchical: staff rotate roles and responsibilities and decisions were made by consensus (Simmons and Bottomley, 2001). OGB had supported BIC since the mid-1990s as one of five long-term donors.

TD was started as an Oxfam project but became an organisation in 1996. It also works in community development, with a focus on agriculture, fishing, small business, forestry and disaster management in south-eastern Cambodia. Operating in some 20 villages, it was a small organisation with a structure that followed that of NRI, although on a smaller basis. In 2006, OGB was the organisation's key funder, supporting its sustainable livelihoods programme and "co-implementing" the CBDM project.

Relations between international and Cambodian NGOs are often portrayed as ones of unequal power, mainly because international NGOs hold the purse strings (O'Leary and Meas Nee, 2001, Yonekura Yukiko, 2000)⁷². More nuanced portrayals highlight the agency of Cambodian NGOs and their staff, who are in a position to negotiate terms and conditions and gain benefit from what is otherwise portrayed as a constraining relationship and oppressive procedures and requirements (Shutt, 2008). Few studies interrogate the relations between Cambodians who work for international NGOs and those who work for Cambodian NGOs. As Shutt (ibid: n.r.) suggests, such relations are less concerned with Northern and Southern divides but still are concerned with power, mediated by "the attitudes, behaviour and relative levels of empowerment of the individuals concerned". These themes of agency and negotiation are explored further in Chapter 8 and 9.

"Following the line" and "Feeding the beast"

As previously suggested, development organisations are bureaucracies: they are hierarchical, have a strong divisions of labour and operate by their own "procedural and

⁷² This situation of course is not limited to Cambodia. See Fowler (1998 and 2000) and Wallace et al. (2006).

cognitive mind-sets” (Razavi, 1998: 38). They also function as oligarchies where authority is vested in a select few, so-called managers. But within this category there too is a hierarchy: directors are managers with ultimate authority within particular remits with the Director having overall authority. Managers have authority usually over a particular programme area but are under the authority of Directors and/or more senior managers. The remainder, often generically referred to as “staff”, have little authority and are subordinate to their respective managers. Lastly, there are advisors, personnel who have status, due to an assumed level of expertise for which they are hired, but little decision making or control over budgets. Their power comes in their ability to access and influence managers and, more critically, directors. This understanding of OGB resonates with Eberle and Maeder’s (1997: 65) assertion of how to research organisations ethnographically: “the organizational ethnographer must be aware that different hierarchical and functional positions within an organization evoke different systems of meaning, different practices, different perspectives and voices.”

Goetz and Sandler (2007: 166) describe development bureaucracies as “a little like armies – they are complex chains of command in which rank is a key determinant of what gets prioritized and becomes actionable”. In the OGB lexicon, following the chain of command when giving orders is referred to as working “through the line”. For example, in describing how the gender policy is implemented, a senior manager describes this as “Accountability...through the line. To deliver Aim 5 (gender and diversity), for the regional directors, it is through the line to do it” (Interview. Blair, 2007). Similarly, a senior regional manager describes one of the roles of the RMCs as a “straightforward managerial function, that we are part of the line, to make sure performance management” (Interview. Heller, 2006). “Up the line” refers to navigating the organisation’s pecking order. For example, when advising staff how they could contribute to OGB’s 2007 strategic plan, Stocking advised them that “the best way is through your line management” (Internal communication. Stocking, 2006).

The “line” describes both the chain of command, from which one cannot deviate, and a boundary, based on position and the authority vested in it, that cannot be crossed. “Line managers”, staff along the chain of hierarchy, are meant to control how staff “fall into line”; the “line” is concerned primarily with reporting and compliance. Still, this is not to say that organisations operate this way on a day-to-day basis. Throughout the “line”

are acts of defiance: the selective following of rules and uptake of dictates, as well as interpretations of what gets communicated. As noted previously, regional and country managers often use the term “the beast” to describe OGB’s bureaucracy. While completing paperwork or complying with procedures is sometimes referred to as “feeding the beast”, finding ways to navigate through the organisation is referred to as “fighting the beast”.

This suggests a complicated set of relationships between different sites of OGB. On the one hand, there is the formal structure of command along the line that managers use to execute policy and decisions. For the most part, senior managers take this route despite sometimes also acknowledging that the degree to which they can decree is limited. When subordinate managers do not “fall into line”, they are seen as exceptions and dealt with accordingly.

The view from below is not that much different, particularly in terms of the formal recognition of the hierarchical structure. Regional and country managers understand their roles and responsibilities within the line either in terms of following the line (downwards) or feeding the beast upwards. Their roles are also concerned with “managing” the flow of information and power in order to protect others from the “beast”.

While the observation of both formal and informal ways of working within organisations is not new and has been made by others (Wright, 1994) and certainly by OGB staff at different levels, what is interesting is the relative orthodoxy about how things work. For senior managers in Oxfam House, their overriding belief is the ability of Oxford to make things happen through the line, despite acknowledgements that this does not always happen. For regional and country level senior managers, part of fighting the beast is to follow the rules but with the acknowledgement of the latitude they do have given the fallacy of the “line”. As a senior regional manager states

I have this image of Oxfam [House]...trying to steer things, to make things happen, with puppets and strings. But actually what they didn't realize, right at the bottom, the strings aren't actually connected. So actually the puppets are doing whatever they want to do and people that are writing the strategy [in

Oxford] do what they want...and the two things are not really joined up...So the idea that there is this command and control system where you issue something globally and it happens, it just doesn't happen. (Interview. Heller, 2006)

FROM GADU TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING: SHIFTS IN STRATEGIES

Introduction

Women have been a concern for OGB since its early days, but it was not until the 1980s, when it established its Gender and Development Unit (GADU), that the organisation first started viewing women beneficiaries as other than one group of vulnerable people⁷³. In 1993 OGB established its first Gender Policy, in 1998 gender equality became one of the organisation's long term objectives or SCOs and in 2003 gender mainstreaming became a corporate priority (Internal document. OGB, 2003c).

While the term was officially endorsed by the organisation in 2003, its usage can be traced back to 1994 (Presentation. Gell, 2001), when OGB established its Gender Policy Implementation Strategy (Internal document. Oxfam UK/Ireland, 1994) that included actions to integrate gender concerns into its analysis, accountability systems, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. As Gell (2001: n.r.) notes, however, "no profound transformation in structure and culture was envisioned". Since then, the term was used in various reviews of OGB's gender work and, later, adopted by the organisation's managers. For example, the 1997 Gender Mapping Project identified a number of strengths in Oxfam's analysis, women-focused projects, publishing and capacity building. It also concluded that mainstreaming was invisible and identified three areas for mainstreaming: "through the one programme approach across divisions, in Oxfam's work on organisational development and diversity, and in the international programme" (Internal report. Rahman and Roche, 1998: 50).

As mentioned previously, OGB conducted a strategic planning exercise culminating in the 1998 FROSI report that had a significant impact on the organisation and how gender

⁷³ In 1946, the Oxfam Committee for Famine and Relief highlighted that in particular "women and children, the old and the sick will suffer greatly... Your donation will save the lives of women and children" (cited in Whitaker, 1983: 16). Archival records concerning women and gender issues within OGB prior to GADU, however, are limited and mostly found in *The Oxfam Field Directors Handbook* (Oxfam UK/Ireland, 1976), which included "few specific references to women" (Internal report. Hardiman, 1979: 1). The second edition does acknowledge this shortcomings and need for improvement. See Eade (1999) for an account of incorporation of gender issues in this edition.

There was also, prior to GADU, a Women's Group, established in 1987 (also referred to as the Women's Group on the Equal Opportunities Working Party), at Oxfam House, which included women interested in different issues affecting them "directly and indirectly" (Internal communication. The Women's Group: n.d.).

mainstreaming was to be positioned within it. This is not to say that the review itself was particularly focused on gender issues; while it took women into account in its analysis, the proposed overall strategic directions were gender unaware⁷⁴, save for the inclusion of gender equity as one of the Aims. Rather, it was the initiatives and changes resulting from FROSI and what it included – a shift to a rights approach, regionalisation – and excluded, that facilitated a deepening of gender mainstreaming. For example, Terry’s report (Internal report., 2000: 3), “Developing the Strategic Change Objective on Gender Equity”, intends “to develop thinking on the gender equity” as one of the Aims. It proposes a “‘rights’ approach to gender equity” that required integrating or mainstreaming gender concerns not only in the other Aims but into all programming processes in such a way that “all [OGB] interventions [...] help to create ‘empowering situations’ for women, whether personal, political or economic” (ibid: 17).

A reading of the Terry report provides insight on two issues. While highlighting gender mainstreaming and noting that it was “identified by [the senior manager team] as a responsibility for all managers” (ibid: 5), Terry also repeatedly calls for research into what gender mainstreaming means for OGB, acknowledging that others are struggling with the concept, particularly gender and organisational development. Second, Terry builds upon FROSI’s acknowledgment that women are disproportionately affected by poverty and makes the argument that while women’s equal rights is a route to “wider social and economic benefits”, they are important unto themselves. Drawing on FROSI’s stress on poverty and rights, Terry extends this to a “gender approach to poverty” and, emphasises, citing Sen, that poverty is not just material but concerns capabilities and achievements. This allows Terry to expound on how gender inequality is reproduced (within and in the household and in the market) and how achieving women’s rights across all of OGB’s Aims requires an understanding of the mutually reinforcing processes of gender inequality and gendered poverty. This is significant because Terry brings to the post-FROSI period a similar analysis that informed OGB’s 1993 Gender Policy as well as the early work of OGB in gender and development, as described later. This stands in contrast to the 2003 update of the Gender Policy and understandings of the relationship between gender inequality and poverty during the

⁷⁴ During the time of the strategic review, gender was being considered. For example, the Gender Mapping Project review, cited previously, was undertaken during FROSI that “need[ed] to inform and be informed” by the 1998 gender review (Internal report. Rahman and Roche, 1998: 1).

period of this research, discussed in Chapter 5. Additionally, according to a gender advisor at the time, Terry's paper laid the basis for the 2002 Gender Review, discussed in Chapter 5 as well (Interview. Moore, 2011).

Also in 2000, OGB's senior management committee, the Corporate Management Team, agreed to a number of gender mainstreaming organisational requirements, such as the need for management responsibility and performance management to include gender criteria (Internal communication. Trujillo, 2000a). This was in response to another paper (Internal report. Trujillo, 2000b) other than Terry (2000) developed the same year⁷⁵. Moreover, gender mainstreaming was then seen as relevant for the whole organisation where each division was required to develop gender mainstreaming objectives, and various "acupuncture points" were identified: finance, information management systems, the SCOs and the RMCs criteria (Internal report. Trujillo, 2000b).

As FROSI did not include a substantial analysis of the organisation's gender work, OGB undertook an extensive gender review in 2002 (Mohideen, 2002), discussed more fully in Chapter 5. Among its many recommendations, it called for further gender mainstreaming, and one result was OGB formally defining gender mainstreaming as "a process of ensuring that all of our work, and the way we do it, contributes to gender equality by transforming the balance of power between women and men" (Internal document. Gell and Motla, 2002: 5). Another, previously mentioned, was its adoption as a corporate priority in 2003.

Gender mainstreaming progressively became part of the gender discourse in OGB: initially as part of a strategy to implement its Gender Policy, then as a management-sanctioned requirement and later as a corporate priority. This increasing endorsement and adoption of gender mainstreaming is not, however, the only part of OGB's history of engaging with gender and development issues.

⁷⁵ The Trujillo (2000b) review was based in interviews with Oxfam House staff and a review of FROSI related documentation including the gender mapping review (Rahman, 1998) but not Terry's paper, which had been produced earlier in the year. Both the Terry (2000) and Trujillo (2006b) reports were written by short term, temporary OGB gender staff. (Interview, (Moore, 2011).

The legacy of Oxfam's Gender and Development Unit

The closure of GADU is unfinished business for Oxfam, which must be addressed before it can move forward effectively on SCO 5-1, and on gender mainstreaming in the organisation, more broadly defined.

Internal report. Murison, 2002

The history of the promotion of gender equality within and by OGB is a compelling and contested one. As Murison states above, a key feature of this history is Oxfam's Gender and Development Unit (GADU). GADU is well known for its pioneering work within the organisation and its contribution to gender and development thinking more broadly within DNGOs. This section traces GADU's history in order to situate the promotion of gender equality and the increasing implementation of gender mainstreaming as a strategy within OGB during the period of this research.

To understand GADU, it is necessary to appreciate that there are different versions of its history (Williams, 1999): different actors who were involved over its 12 years of existence⁷⁶ have different perspectives⁷⁷. Also, GADU existed during a particular time and within specific circumstances within and outside of OGB, which need to be taken into account including the backdrops of gender and development research and scholarship as well as socio-political contexts within the UK and more globally at the time. Also, the challenges and opportunities GADU faced were during a certain era of OGB, and its history needs to be understood within the situation of organisational change (Interview. Stamstead, 2011) as well as changing organisational gender norms within which the Unit was working. What were acceptable attitudes and behaviours then, particularly about and towards women, would be frowned on today (Melrose, 1999). Lastly, the history of GADU, as a stand-alone unit within an organisation, needs

⁷⁶ There is even a lack of agreement on the timeline of GADU. Some refer to GADU as existing from 1985 to 1992, which is technically accurate, as it was then renamed the Gender Team (Porter et. al., 1999a: 13). Others (Murison, 2002; Williams, 1999) view GADU as existing until 1996, when the Gender Team was merged with the Programme Development Team to become the Gender and Learning Team (GALT). For the purposes of this thesis, I use the latter timeline, given that 1996 represented a major shift as well as for ease of reference.

⁷⁷ GADU was established 27 years ago and disbanded 13. While its history is the subject of several publications and is relatively well discussed, archival information of the historical record is selective. There is, for example, very little detailed documentation of internal GADU relations from 1993 to 1996. Memories of those involved are also patchy and selective not least because for some, the experience of working with GADU was personally painful.

to be understood within the wider trend, described in Chapter 2, of such structures giving way to gender mainstreaming, which was occurring more generally in development agencies.

I argue that GADU represented a particular era for OGB in its gender efforts as well as DNGOs more generally. As a focus of gender for the organisation, it faced particular challenges that were unique to what was happening at the time in OGB and the gender discourse being introduced. This is not to suggest that GADU did not face challenges that gender units in other organisations faced: for example the unit was constantly under-resourced and lacked authority as a result of its “advisory role”. During the latter half of the 1990s, these constraints became more pronounced and symptomatic of what stand-alone units in organisations were facing, in OGB as elsewhere: a dismantling of dedicated units under the guise of gender mainstreaming (Staudt, 2002). But, ironically, it was GADU’s role as a pioneer that both built OGB’s gender reputation externally, while internally for some, left a legacy of how NOT to do gender. All organisations have periods of angst and change, but gender for OGB was unique, as described below. Also, the GADU experience foreshadowed a number of recurring issues with gender work in OGB.

Getting gender on the agenda

The impetus for GADU came largely from OGB’s field offices and women’s organisations (Williams, 1999), who expressed concern that the organisation was lagging behind other development organisations in taking on gender issues. Catalytic were the arrival of the new Director, David Bryer, of the then Overseas Division, the department responsible for international work as well as lobbying by GADU staff. As Bryer states in his first memo as Director, “there is a very considerable measure of agreement that Oxfam needs to do more than pay lip service [...] it has become clear that there also needs to be an equal commitment in Oxford” (Archival communication. Bryer, 1984).

Moreover, GADU was established during a critical period for women in the global arena. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women was adopted in 1979. The 1980 Copenhagen World Conference on Women made progress compared with more fractious 1975 conference in Mexico. And the

Nairobi Conference, marking the end of UN Decade for Women, occurred in the same year GADU was established. As Williams wrote, when asked about Oxfam's efforts during UN Decade for Women, "I could save my bacon and refer to the creation of the Unit, and the work going on in Latin America now" (Archival communication. Williams, 1985c).

Overall, this was a period of global social activism against the backdrop of what Young (1993: 31) calls "the lost decade of the 1980s". The global economy was in crisis, external debt was crippling developing countries as were structural adjustment policies, which particularly adversely impacted women (Sen and Grown, 1985). For organisations such as OGB, it was a time of political action, alongside feminist demands for a "new agenda not the integration of women into dysfunctional structures and systems" (Williams, 1999: 180). This passion and commitment were said to imbue not only OGB but also the early days of GADU, as voices of Southern feminists were highlighted through the work of Southern-oriented organisations such as DAWN. Within UK development circles, women in various development agencies were lobbying internally for gender issues to be addressed within programmes and their own institutions (Interview, Stamstead, 2011).

GADU's original aims were to "act as a resource group for Field Offices and the Overseas Division and keep the issue of women in development to the forefront in Oxfam" and to ensure "practical measures [...] for implementation in the field" (Meeting minutes. Oxfam UK/Ireland, 1985). What these relatively straight forward, yet significant, aims fail to reflect were the challenges GADU would face in getting gender on the agenda, let alone keeping it at the "forefront". This was a time of pioneering – and with this came difficulties relating to the newness of the term and the idea of "gender", and differences in understandings of the implications for the organisation, the role of GADU and its unique structuring.

First, as a term, "gender" was new to most of Oxfam. As an idea, gender was understood as a way of seeing the position of women from a relational perspective, which was unique for the organisation. GADU was also concerned with understanding and connecting gender with other unequal social relations of class, caste, age, education, etc. (Walker, 1996). For GADU members, "Gender issues call just about everything into

question and so I expect we shall be looking closely at all issues, global or otherwise” (Archival communication. Williams, 1985a).

These concerns reflected gender and development thinking at the time, particularly in the UK and the Institute of Development Studies at University of Sussex, with whom GADU staff were in contact. For example, its short-term training courses, such as “Women, Men and Development” (Kabeer, 1991) was popular among NGOs such as OGB. Both drew upon earlier work of the SOW collective (Young et al., 1981), **discussed previously**, and its conference proceedings (IDS, 1979) were widely disseminated gender and development reference. GADU staff were also working with Caroline Moser, who together with Caren Levy, were providing training in gender and development planning at the University of London, amongst others such as Kate Young, also a former IDS fellow.

Second, for GADU, seeing gender and development from a relational and social institutional perspective meant challenging Oxfam. For example, its first workshop held in 1985, “Forward Looking Strategies for Oxfam”⁷⁸, concluded that “A complete change [...] is needed – piecemeal changes are not sufficient to improve the position of women; what is needed is not more women at the top, but fewer people at the top; the present structure is male-dominated, over-vertical, and static” (ibid: 6). And this was the first meeting, held within the first year of GADU’s existence. Still, these implications, and the potential for conflict, were also evident to others. For example, in reaction to the proposal for such a unit, a senior manager understood that taking initiative on gender issues “would lead us towards an entirely different kind of working style” (Archival communication. Brown, 1985). Similarly, Bridget Walker, one of GADU’s first staff members stated, noted that GADU concerned “a new language, new ways of learning and working” (Walker, 1996: 7).

Yet, while perhaps clear to GADU and other select Oxfam staff, there were also differences in understandings of gender and organisational change and GADU’s role in this, which was evident in different perspectives on seeing GADU as a temporary or permanent feature within the organisation. From the beginning, Bryer envisioned

⁷⁸ The title of which was play on the “Forward Looking Strategies” resulting from the 1985 Nairobi World Conference on Women.

GADU “not as a permanent institution but as a ginger and resource group with a lifespan of perhaps two to three years” (Archival communication. Bryer, 1984). However, Williams laments how GADU was always seen as a temporary, with the writing on the wall from the first days (Williams, 1999).

Third, the role of GADU was seen differently from its inception. The Overseas Division’s Director and GADU’s first Coordinator generally agreed on the unit’s aims, but Bryer also saw it as a “monitoring group on, for example, the production of campaign materials to see the [issue] is not overlooked” (*sic*) (Archival communication. Bryer, 1984) whereas Williams suggested it build “on the experience from Field Offices for the formation of *policy* on gender issues” (Archival communication. Williams, 1985c. My emphasis).

The ambiguity of the role of GADU was an on-going issue. During its first year, staff had to make continuous efforts to clarify GADU’s function (Archival communication. Wright, 1985) and a lack of familiarity in the organisation with its role and approach. The unit also faced an inability to reach out to the organisation as a result of overwork and limited resources. These contributed to GADU being seen as threatening and not engaging (Internal document. GADU, 1986b). Meanwhile, GADU was caught between competing expectations of being a resource and taking initiative. On the one hand, it was seen as needing to be responsive and was admonished when it took initiative. On the other, it was criticised when it failed “to ensure that decisions and issues reflect a Gender prospective” (Meeting minutes. GADU, 1987). Relatedly was an ongoing debate of the unit’s remit. While GADU acknowledged that changes in the “Overseas Programme [required] changes in attitude and structures within Oxfam itself” (Internal report. Williams, 1985b: 4), it did not have a remit to address organisational structure and staff policy issues.

Fourth, GADU was challenging in terms of its structure and the organisational context. The unit itself was a cooperative, without hierarchy in terms of structure, decision making and pay grades. Its founders wanted “to break the mould of hierarchical, top-down working” (Wallace, 1999: 190): they saw GADU as a “women’s organisation within a men’s organisation” and aimed to set an example for Oxfam as a whole (Williams, 1999: 180). OGB itself, however, was fairly loosely structured with mainly

men, in charge (Williams, 1999). Within Oxfam House itself, staff tended to work in silos with little interaction and coordination. This informal structuring also worked in GADU's favour, though. GADU staff in the early days had a direct link to David Bryer, who remained open and supportive to GADU. His penchant for face-to-face communication, according to an early GADU member (Interview, Stamstead. 2011), was conducive to informal discussions and exchanges⁷⁹.

GADU was originally conceived as being composed of representatives from various area desks within the Overseas Division, who came to comprise the GADU committee. This committee proved indispensable for GADU, enabling it to communicate with the organisation and to learn about what was happening. Meetings were regular, well attended⁸⁰ and served as a basis for information sharing among people concerned with gender issues.

Still, while GADU was in many ways the antithesis of Oxfam, the unit undertook a number of other initiatives that proved to be foundational. It regularly organised presentations in Oxfam House and compiled articles and case studies, often written by Oxfam staff, that comprised the *Newspack*, produced six times a year and to be distributed to all field offices. The earlier *Newspacks* served as a basis for Oxfam's 1991 *Changing Perceptions: Writings on Gender and Development*, one of the first of a long tradition of the organisation publishing key texts on gender and development, another contribution of GADU.

Much of GADU's focus was on the field offices, not only through the *Newspack* and publications but also through training. In 1986, GADU had a full-time training advisor and a training strategy. It could not keep up with demand (Internal report. Seed, 1990) and had to scale down its plans, but these early years served as a basis for the development, much later, of Oxfam's *Gender Training Manual* (Williams et al., 1995), which remains one of the organisation's bestselling publications (Interview, Saunders, 2008).

⁷⁹ It also makes archival research difficult. Despite numerous memos, reports and other communications from GADU to Bryer, Oxfam records include hardly any correspondence from him.

⁸⁰ Based on a reading of minutes from 1986 and 1987 of the committee's bi-monthly meetings.

Besides the early years being characterised by a number of seminal initiatives, this period was marked by constant struggles. GADU members faced resistance and hostility. For example, GADU first annual report, which records “very deep resistance to accepting gender as an issue” (Archival communication. GADU, 1986a). This was manifested in different ways, from putting the onus for gender solely on GADU to shifting responsibility between the Overseas Division and the field; from not wanting to interfere with other “cultures” to accusations of cultural imperialism (ibid)⁸¹.

Meanwhile, Wallace writes how staff experienced “overt verbal hostility from staff in the UK and overseas”, with the most hurtful from European colleagues. They were treated suspiciously, with comments like, “What are you GADU ladies plotting today?” (Williams, 1996). For one of the founders, being interviewed for this research brought up painful memories, some 20 years after the fact⁸².

As indicated previously, GADU was literally a women’s organisation within a male-dominated one. A macho culture pervaded, whereby “organisational culture equated commitment with long hours spent at work” (Wallace, 1999: 189). As one informant states, “It was a world where [political correctness] was not yet enforced and personal attacks were ignored by [human resource managers]” (personal communication). In light of this, GADU members found themselves constantly having to prove themselves, in part because they were always being scrutinised, with “every fault magnified” (Williams, 1999), and in part because of the “radical demands that working on gender issues involves” (Wallace, 1999: 188).

From GADU to the Gender Team

OGB’s restructuring in the late 1980s and early 1990s, described previously, was supported by external consultants from the private sector who, according to one GADU member at the time, “didn’t understand what Oxfam was about” (Interview, Stamstead, 2011). It focused on results, performance and increasing the organisation’s market share and shifted from field work to campaigning and advocacy. The informal style of working became more formalised, which sat uneasily for many staff who saw this as

⁸¹ These are now well-documented resistance strategies documented by others (for example, see GIDP/UNDP, 2000).

⁸² Moser (1993: 117) also documents hostility and resistance and the personal nature of these, suggesting that this is a common pattern. “When gender is first raised as an issue it is often dismissed as a joke; then personal attacks occur that question the sexuality of individuals”.

inimical to a focus on poverty (Williams, 1999). For gender advocates within OGB, there was a “profound unease” with these developments; they questioned their conduciveness to the “values of feminism and gender equality” (Porter et al., 1999a: 7). GADU was restructured and renamed the Gender Team in 1993; instead of reporting to the Overseas Director, it went through a series of line managers, effectively removing it from the locus of decision making (Interview, Stamstead, 2011).

Within the unit, the number of staff was reduced to two from four, and their roles were perceived as being under-valued by the organisation. For example, the coordinator position was given a ranking of Grade 12, whereas department coordinators with similar responsibilities were Grade 13. At stake was the value of GADU’s work. As one of GADU advisors stated, in turning down the proposed Grade 12, “I personally feel that both my job and myself as a person are so consistently undervalued by Oxfam that securing a more appropriate grade is an absolute priority for me” (Archival communication. Stamstead, 1989b).

With formal job descriptions, staff structures and reporting lines, membership of the GADU committee changed from those who were interested and committed to those who formally represented their departments. Over time, attendance waned, as participation was not in job descriptions and the committee was not included in the new organisational structure. Ironically, as a self-fulfilling prophecy, this contributed to GADU becoming isolated from the rest of the organisation, which supported accusations that the unit had become ghettoised and thereby needed to be brought into the fold of the organisation (Wallace, 1999)⁸³. The restructuring of OGB was the antithesis of GADU (Wallace, 1999). It was conceived as a cooperative with no hierarchy; the new structure emphasized hierarchy. GADU was about informal ways of working, understood as creative and conducive for gender work; the re-structuring formalized structure. GADU was about shared decision making; the changes in OGB concerned a concentration of power.

The Gender Team period was also marked by a number of milestones. One was the approval of Oxfam’s Gender Policy in 1993 after years of lobbying and two years of

⁸³ That GADU was perceived to have ghettoised itself may have some grounding: a 1986 agenda for GADU committee meeting included “GADU Territory” as the location (14 August 1986).

consultation across the organisation. This followed compulsory and voluntary training for managerial and advisory staff in an effort to build understanding and consensus. There was also a major effort leading up to and during the Beijing conference with the Women's Linking Project, seen as an innovative networking, mobilising and advocacy initiative with Southern feminists and gender advocates (March, 1999) and a manifestation of the Gender Policy. Oxfam produced significant publications, such as the *Gender Training Manual* and a guide to gender analysis frameworks (March et al., 1999).

Also, the organisation seems to have moved beyond the "getting gender on the agenda" phase to a more receptive organisational environment where the concept of gender-fair development seemed to have gained legitimacy (Piza-Lopez, 1994: 166). Gender was no longer a new term, although it was still often misunderstood (Williams, 1999). Gender training was popularised, particularly in the country offices, but stopped in Oxfam House in 1991 (Seed, 1999). Piza-Lopez, Walker and other contributors to *gender works: Oxfam Experience in Policy and Practice* refer to not only a substantial change in support for and appreciation of gender issues, but also an insertion of gender into the mainstream of OGB and an engendering of organisational processes to be utilised as entry strategies (see Walker, 1999 for example). However, they also note that to what degree gender permeated the organisation and was actually being taken on were questionable.

As mentioned previously, it was this period that the strategy of gender mainstreaming was adopted in name if not in practice as well. Gell (Internal communication. 2001) cites the 1994 Gender Policy Implementation Strategy as one of the earliest Oxfam policies on gender mainstreaming (Internal document. Oxfam UK/Ireland, 1994). As a plan to implement the recently approved policy, it assumes its implementation as being integral to overseas planning processes and that managers will take responsibility "through the line management" (ibid: 10). It also envisioned the setting up of an Oxfam House-based "Gender Policy Implementation Task Group" comprised mainly of senior managers as well as the Gender Team, which was to act as an overall resource for the implementation of the policy.

Despite GADU's accomplishments, this period seems to have been plagued by internal issues, as one former advisor commented (Interview. Weinstein, 2011). Little has been written about conflicts within GADU during this time, and while there had always been internal dynamics, these had seemed to be about creative energy (Interview. Heller, 2006). During the late-1980s and mid-1990s, though, GADU seemed dysfunctional. Advisors left, not only out of frustration with the perennial challenges of working with the rest of the organisation, but also because of the intractable situation within the team. Oxfam's Policy Director at the time observed that the gender team "was conflict-ridden [...] to the point of paralysis, much given to blaming each other and feeling victimized" (Melrose, 1999: 113).

Wallace (1999) explains that internal dissent and disagreement ultimately contributed to the demise of GADU in 1996. Internal disagreements were initially hidden in the spirit of solidarity, but the unit's cooperative ways of working proved problematic under the pressures staff faced with the restructuring. Senior managers offered little support, blaming GADU's structure and cooperative working style. As Williams (1999: 185) writes, while internal divisions were not unique to GADU, they were "subjected to particular scrutiny and sanction within Oxfam, because the unit worked on gender-related issues and was staffed mainly by feminist women".

The transformation of GADU into the Gender Team, in what Williams (1999) refers to as the beginning of the end, parallels similar slow declines of specialist units in other development organisations at the time. For example, Wallace (1998), in her study of 17 British NGOs including OGB, notes the constant pressure faced by specialist staff, some of whom were attached to units, and found that "gender fell victim to any cuts made" (ibid: 169). Razavi and Miller (1995c), from their study of ILO, the World Bank and UNDP, observe the constant resource constraints faced by internal gender advocates and speculate that "It would be unfortunate if mainstreaming were used as a cover to avoid committing resources to WID/gender" (ibid: viii).

The reining in of GADU

The end of this period was marked by the "death" of GADU (Williams, 1999: 179 and its further immersion with its transformation into Gender and Leadership Team (GALT) in 1997. GALT was a combination of the Gender Team and the Programme

Development Team or, as Williams argues, the integration of the former into the latter accompanied by a reduction in the number of advisors from five to three, with one made redundant and another's contract not renewed (Williams, 1999). Later, GALT was folded into the new Policy Department that followed the establishment of new corporate directors – who were all men (Wallace, 1999: 195).

Ostensibly, the transformation of GADU was concerned with implementing the organisation's Gender Policy as a responsibility of all staff. Approval of the policy was seen as an indication that gender was now an organisational priority (Gell, 1999, Melrose, 1999, Padmanabhan, 1999, Porter et al., 1999b). As the Head of Policy at the time wrote, "Now we are making a conscious shift to a new phase in the implementation of Oxfam's Gender Policy, in seeking to widen ownership of gender as a priority for all of us" (Internal communication. Melrose, 1996). The implication for GADU was that it had done its job of getting gender on the agenda and there was no need for a "team of gender experts" (ibid).

More than that, the establishment of GALT, or more accurately the termination of GADU, was concerned with bringing the unit into the mainstream. Since its establishment, GADU faced continuous accusations of being a ghetto and not reaching out to the rest of the organisation. Moser suggests that GADU came into being due to the decree of a senior manager, Davis Bryer, and thereby lacked ownership and embeddedness in the organisation. This, however, contradicts Williams' (1999: 182) contention that GADU was established after consultation and with endorsement of field and Oxfam House staff, particularly those in campaigns. Still, as mentioned previously, the isolation of GADU was in part a self-fulfilling prophecy with the restructuring of Oxfam in the 1990s and the eventual waning of the GADU committee, which was the unit's link to the rest of the organisation. This isolation was confirmed, as Williams (1999: 183) writes, "when GADU put up barricades and later on failed to build on the growing network of support in other parts of the organisation". As Wallace (1999: 2) contends "the unit's structure was blamed and the solution was to bring the unit into line with the new, hierarchical, streamlined management".

The dissolution of GADU under the auspices of what was ostensibly gender mainstreaming was not unique to Oxfam. The 1995 Beijing conference signalled an

endorsement of the strategy and a shift away from stand-alone units to a parcelling out of responsibility. As described above, this meant the widespread elimination of structures, such as GADU, dedicated to gender issues and a change in strategies. As Harcourt (2006) says of this period, “This was a complex and fraught period marked by the hope that government promises and policy could be “put into practice on the ground”. It saw the emergence of gender mainstreaming...”.

Within Oxfam, it was also about curtailing gender advisors. As a former senior manager states of the time, “people used to talk about the old gender unit as the gender police [...] There were real battle lines drawn around this stuff. The first move to diminish that was when (the former head of the policy team) merged the gender team with the rest of the policy advisory team” (Interview. Wright, 2008). As she observes, the unit members

certainly created an impression of being a team that did not want to play ball within an organisational corporate environment. I suspect there was a reaction. There were some very strong powerful people who were pushing and challenging the organisation in [...] ways that you would consider today as completely inappropriate. There was deliberately not doing things that had been agreed, making very strong political statements, and maybe it went all too far and blew up in reaction. [*sic*]

The irony of GADU staff being perceived as the “feminist thought police” (Walker, 1996) was that they themselves felt constantly scrutinised and ready to be pounced on when they made mistakes. Also, GADU was not envisioned by its founder as a “panel of experts, but rather as a group made up of representatives from each area desk who are concerned with the issue and prepared to put some time into it” (Williams, 1985c).

In my research, some 20 years after GADU was established, OGB informants consistently referred to GADU but in different ways. There are those such as Heller, who worked for Oxfam for 15 years, who refers to GADU years as the “Golden Era” compared to when gender later became a “technical issue of how to do it rather than an organisational commitment issue” (Interview. Heller, 2006). Others, however, as will be explained in Chapters 5 and 6, associated GADU with a time in Oxfam’s history of

promoting gender equality from which the organisation has moved on and one from which the organisation needed to distance itself in order to do so. In both cases, what becomes clear is the need for organizational ethnography research to take into account the past, not only as a way to understand the present but as part of a continuum of becoming (Pettigrew, 1973).

Gender mainstreaming infrastructure within Oxfam

As previously mentioned, OGB established a Gender Policy in 1993, and this was “updated” in 2003 as described in Chapter 5. Compared to the GADU era, when the organisation had a dedicated unit to support the addressing of gender issues, the infrastructure developed during this period and in place during the research period from 2001 to 2006 represents the adoption of gender mainstreaming by OGB at three different levels of the organisation: globally, regionally and in country programmes.

Global structure⁸⁴

Generally, three types of staff were involved in promoting gender equality at the global level. First, there were those whose gender equality roles were in addition to other management responsibilities. For example, two global gender leads, or “Aim leads” for gender, were senior managers who also coordinated Oxfam’s gender equality work and took decisions regarding gender equality policies⁸⁵. Aim leads were supposed to be members of the International Division Senior Management Team or the Campaigns and Policy Division Senior Management Team⁸⁶, so they had the authority to affect programmes and as they were thought to be best placed to understand programming. What was not a criterion was background or experience relevant to the Aim. The Gender Leads, for example, had no former professional experience working directly with gender issues.

The second group were staff whose full-time job was to support gender mainstreaming and specific gender-related initiatives. These included global gender advisors, the

⁸⁴ Further description and analysis of the global structure and the Global Gender Leads is provided in Chapters 5 and 6.

⁸⁵ This follows an OGB practice that each Aim has a lead who dedicates two and a half days a month to lead a global Aim Team comprising relevant staff from the Programme Policy Team (including sector-specific advisors), Regional Leads (usually CPMs who take on the additional responsibility of leading a particular Aim in their respective region), regional advisors and Oxford-based staff who have a particular responsibility concerning a particular Aim.

⁸⁶ These are the second most senior management committees after the Corporate Management Team.

gender advisor of the Humanitarian Department as well as staff involved in developing and sharing gender resources such as the *Gender and Development* journal. Third were what I am calling gender advocates, staff who did not have a formal remit for gender such as with the first or second groups, but still nevertheless were involved in gender issues in OGB, such as with the Gender Leadership Team, described below. They were invited to join these groups because of their interest and commitment to the issues.

In particular, the Policy Department Gender Team comprised of two global gender advisor positions (one focused on programming and organisational issues and the other on Oxfam's South Asia Campaign to Eliminate Violence Against Women). These positions were assumed by three staff at the time of the research, with two people job sharing; all had been working as gender advisors for a number of years, mostly with OGB, and had gender-related post-graduate education backgrounds. Their role was to support policy development and strategic planning, such the 2006 update of the Gender Policy, advise on advocacy campaigns and regional and country programmes and support learning and knowledge management by "acting as a bridge to harness learning within Oxfam", which included compiling reports for OGB's senior management teams (Interview. Moore, 2007). Much of the policy and strategy work as well as reporting was in conjunction with and in support of the Global Gender Leads, while advisory support was undertaken directly with regional and country programmes, usually in conjunction with Regional Gender Advisors (see below).

OGB also had a loosely structured, global Gender Leadership Team, which included senior managers and staff representing different divisions and regions of the organisation. From Oxford, the Gender Leadership Team included staff who have a specific responsibility for promoting gender equality such as the Gender Equality Programme Resource Officer as well as representatives from the Humanitarian Department, Publishing and Human Resources (the Diversity Coordinator and Advisor). It also included Regional Gender Leads and Regional Gender Advisors (discussed below) and gender advocates. The Gender Leadership Team was led by the Global Gender Lead and served as a mechanism to gather information, input and feedback for global initiatives, such as the 2003 update of the Gender Policy. Global gender advisors regularly solicited progress reports as well as policy contributions from team members that were considered inputs from their respective areas of the organisation, such as the

RMCs (Interview. Barlow, 2006 and Internal document. Pialek, 2006). It also acted as a conduit to disseminate policy originating from Oxfam House where members were expected to spread new initiatives out and down and support their implementation.

Regional gender structure in East Asia

Each of the OGB's regional programmes had its own approach to gender mainstreaming, albeit with some similarities, generally following arrangements in the global structure. For example, regional structures included both Oxfam staff whose gender equality roles were in addition to other management responsibilities as well as Regional Gender Advisors, whose full-time job was to support gender mainstreaming. I use the structure of East Asia as an illustration of the regional gender infrastructure.

The East Asia region had its own Regional Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (Internal document. OGB, 2003a) that aimed to contribute to "women and men experiencing less gender discrimination, and women having greater access to and control of resources" (ibid: 1). Adopting OGB's definition of gender mainstreaming, the East Asia strategy focused on promoting more equitable gender relations, human resource management, accountability and capacity building as well as introducing incentives and sanctions. The latter covered a series of gender "minimum standards", initially introduced for humanitarian programmes in 2002 then extended to cover all programming in the region in 2003. These included, for example, that all programmes are required to have a gender analysis (ibid).

Gender mainstreaming was led by the Regional Gender Lead, a position established in 2000 and which was appointed by the regional management team. In this research, the Regional Gender Lead was also the CPM for Vietnam⁸⁷ and undertook the role in addition to and as part of her role as CPM. Her international development experience was in management and she had no formal experience working in gender issues. The Regional Gender Lead worked primarily through the regional management team, to follow up on its decisions, and to whom reported on progress on gender in the region.

⁸⁷ In some cases in other regions, the Regional Gender Lead is a regional manager.

As previously described, the regional gender advisor position was introduced as part of the post-FROSI establishment of the RMCs⁸⁸ and the first regional gender and diversity programme (2001-2004) that focused on gender-based violence, trafficking of women and children and gender mainstreaming (Internal document. OGB, 2001c). As the plan was an ambitious one, the regional management team agreed to establish the new post of Regional Gender Advisor in 2002, that was to be filled by someone with “practical skills” as well as experience with gender mainstreaming, particularly gender analysis, gender training and strategy development (Interview. Heller, 2006). This position was occupied by myself, 2002-2004 and another person from 2004 to 2005. Both of us had worked previously with development NGOs as gender advisors. My experience was mostly with gender mainstreaming while my replacement had a background working with women’s organisations. For East Asia, the main role of the Regional Gender Advisor was to support policy development and the implementation of the regional gender strategy through the provision of advisory and capacity strengthening support. The gender advisor primarily worked with country teams and, if such a position existed, gender advisors of the country programmes. The position also called for advising and reporting to the regional management team on progress in implementing the regional strategy.

As members of the Global Gender Team, both the Regional Gender Lead and Advisor were also supposed to represent the region providing input to global gender initiatives and reporting to the global level of gender work in the region. They were as well a conduit for disseminating policy developments and related information to the Regional Management Team as well as country programme managers.

The Regional Gender Lead also chaired a loosely organised regional working group comprised of the Regional Gender Advisor and country gender leads, either gender officers or national staff with a gender remit. This was a peer group as well as a mechanism informing the development of regional initiatives, such as the Regional Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, discussed above. Members of the group were regularly asked for inputs for planning and reporting purposes and also served as a distribution

⁸⁸ Three RMCs had Regional Gender Advisors at the time: Southern Africa and West Africa in addition to East Asia.

mechanism for information from both regional and global levels to respective country programmes and country level gender infrastructures, described next.

The promotion of gender equality by OGB in Cambodia

The promotion of gender equality featured prominently as part of Oxfam's Cambodia strategy for 2005-2008 as well as its Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for Cambodia for 2005-2008 (Internal document. OGB, 2006b)⁸⁹. As part of the latter, the organisation had a structure that aimed to support Oxfam staff and partners. The Gender Programme Officer acted as the main gender resource for both Oxfam staff and project partners and also managed partner NGOs concerned with domestic violence. She advised staff on project proposals, provided gender training to project partners, participated in needs assessments and project appraisals and led two gender working groups (GWG), which featured in the strategy.

One GWG was internal to Oxfam and consisted of a "gender focal point" from each of the four programme areas. Their main role was to act as a gender resource for colleagues; as they initially did not have prior experience providing such support, much of the focus of the group was on building their own capacity. The gender impact assessment, which features in my research, was undertaken by this group and was seen as an opportunity to strengthen members. Staff became gender focal points by volunteering for the position, often with encouragement from the Gender Programme Officer. Members during the time of my research said they joined the group to increase their own understanding of gender issues.

The second GWG consisted of about 20 gender focal points from project partners. The group met every three months for a day to update each other on progress in implementing their gender mainstreaming plans, address problems and generally share their experiences and knowledge. These focal points were appointed by project partners at the request of OGB in Cambodia. Some partners had gender policies, sometimes developed at the suggestion of Oxfam. Most of the gender focal points had other responsibilities occupying different positions whereas OGB in Cambodia's partner for

⁸⁹ The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy was established after the country strategy and provides greater detail of the latter's focus on ensuring "that each programme team is working proactively on their own gender mainstreaming strategy" (Internal document. OGB, 2006a: 6).

the project featured in this research, Takeo Development, was the only one with a full-time gender focal point.

Downward information dissemination; Upward reporting

This overview of the various levels of gender infrastructure in OGB suggests that for the most part, they share similarities. They all included OGB staff who were a mixture of either those with other responsibilities besides that for gender, and those with a full time remit, as gender advisors, for promoting gender equality. For the most part, the former as gender leads were senior managers who had little or no former professional experience working with gender and development issues. Their primary role was to keep gender on the agenda, and they pursued this through the management and reporting line. The latter, as briefly described, had previous experience working as gender advisors and, in most cases, relevant educational backgrounds in contrast to gender leads.

All levels of infrastructure had some variation of a committee or working group that brought together different staff and additionally, in the case of OGB in Cambodia, programme partners. The structures were meant to be networking bodies but also served as ways to get information out as well as to centrally collect information and feed it upwards through cross memberships of these committees. For the most part, however, such cross membership allowed for “upwards” involvement; staff from lower levels of the organisation participated in committees from higher levels, but not vice versa. This served to fulfill an upwards reporting function and downward dissemination of information from higher levels.

CONCLUSION

This aim of this chapter has been to introduce the research context. I have described OGB as a large, complex organisation with a long and contested history. It has undergone significant changes in its size, approach to addressing poverty and structure that have in many ways followed similar paths to those of other northern-based development NGOs. Starting in the late 1980s, it has become a more formal and hierarchical organisation in an effort to “professionalize”, or more accurately, become more “manageable”. New lines of authority and reporting served to reinforce and

integrate organisational structure. Although managers at different levels are able to exercise discretion, their roles in reporting and compliance are solidified within this structure.

OGB's history of working on gender issues is as rich, long and contested. It parallels changes in the organisation overall and corresponding shifts in OGB's gender infrastructure. With the introduction of a more formal structure and, later, the changes in advisory functions overall, GADU advisors were brought into the fold of the organisation.

Still, centring around GADU, organisational challenges concerning the promotion of gender equality were unique to the promotion of gender equality. These shifted from initially getting gender on the agenda to later reining in those forces that got gender on the agenda in the first place. The integration and consolidation of OGB also allowed for the bringing Oxfam House's seminal gender infrastructure into the mainstream. Initially, GADU was a quasi-independent entity that was structured and operated differently in comparison to the rest of the organisation. Organisational changes subsumed the unit and clipped its wings. Moving on from GADU has been an on-going project within OGB, initially described in this chapter and continued in Chapters 5 and 6 as I analyse changes in OGB's gender infrastructure after 2001. As suggested above, GADU is unfinished business but how has its legacy informed the understanding of promoting gender equality in Oxfam House?

I described Oxfam's adoption of gender mainstreaming and its increasing dominance in comparison with the organisation's original approach with the establishment of GADU and in conjunction with the dismantling of a specialised team of staff. More than a structural change, this increasing adoption of gender mainstreaming served to undermine GADU and eventually contribute to its demise. The elimination of a standalone unit simultaneously represented a diffusion of energy in terms of who was seen as doing gender in the organisation, as well as a concentration of responsibility on managers. It also was a condemnation of what GADU had represented. These shifts in OGB paralleled trends in international DNGOs and development agencies more generally: the establishment of specialised women focused and gender units which were then dismantled, particularly after Beijing with the rise of gender mainstreaming discourse.

In particular, OGB previously did not have such a strong architecture of managers acting as gender leads, gender advisors at regional levels as well as inter-linked gender committees. In some ways, these developments can be seen as concrete steps towards mainstreaming gender in the organisation and broadening out those involved. Senior manager are taking more prominent roles and staff from across the organisation are being involved through different committees. The next chapters turn to examining in greater detail how these developments can be understood within the context of OGB's history of promoting gender equality and as its prioritising gender mainstreaming.

Chapter 5

Shifting Meanings of Gender Mainstreaming

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4, I described OGB's adoption of gender mainstreaming and its increasing dominance. I also discussed how OGB undertook a strategic review that was to make profound changes for the organisation as well as its gender work for years after.

This chapter and the next focus on the entrenchment of gender mainstreaming within OGB and how its meaning changed. Chapter 5 picks up on the period following FROSI and analyses key moments that represent further adoption of the strategy and is comprised of two main sections. The first section describes and analyses key gender assessments undertaken during this period of OGB's gender work: the 2002 Gender Review and two Oxfam International reviews, undertaken in the context of the Strategic Plan 2001-6. The second section focuses on the updating of the 1993 gender policy, which was a recommendation the 2002 Gender Review. I explore how policy emerges and what the 2003 update represents in terms of understandings of gender equality and its promotion during this period. In examining the responses to these assessments and the process of establishing the 2003 policy, I explore what ideological positions came to the fore through an examination of the micro-politics of making policy. The case of the 2003 highlights the contingent nature of policy making and allows for an examination of the interpretive processes at play.

GENDER ASSESSMENTS DURING THE POST-FROSI PERIOD

The 2002 Gender Review

The 2002 Gender Review came on the heels of a number of organisational changes in OGB: regionalization, greater emphasis on advocacy and campaigns and a "strengthening of its organisational development systems" (Internal report. Mohideen, 2002: 17). As described in Chapter 4, Oxfam's dedicated gender unit had been disbanded five years previously and its replacement, a team called GALT, had been further subsumed into the more general Programme Policy Team. The 2002 review was one of the first major tasks of this team and was to "inform the development of an organisational gender mainstreaming strategy for implementation in 2002-3" (Internal

report. OGB, 2001a: 1). In addition, the review was undertaken in the context of FROSI and the introduction of Aims⁹⁰, one of which was focused on gender equality (Internal report. Murison, 2002). The development of an objective focused on gender was starting to emerge as a stand-alone theme as opposed to one related to the other four. This was contrary to the initial proposal that it provide an overall framework for integrating gender and addressing women's rights in all the Aims, as discussed in Chapter 4. As a gender advisor from that time states, the Gender Review "was part of trying to clarify [...] our aims and objectives and action plans" (Interview. Moore, 2011)⁹¹.

The purpose of the review was to "evaluate the impact of OGB's work on gender equity and assess the ways in which the mainstreaming of gender has contributed to this" (Internal report. OGB, 2001a: 1). The focus was on the extent to which gender analysis had been integrated into OGB's programmes and factors contributing to success and failure. The review was also to provide a benchmark against which future achievements towards gender equality could be measured (Internal report. Mohideen, 2002). As a review of gender mainstreaming, it was supposed to result in options for "taking forward" the strategy for consideration by OGB's most senior programming committee (Internal document. OGB, 2001b).

The intention was that the review would consist of case studies and to be "relatively light using *existing* processes where possible i.e. annual impact reporting" (Internal document. OGB, 2001b: 1. My emphasis). It consisted of nine separate "evaluation" components that covered different areas of OGB's programming (development, humanitarian assistance, campaigns, advocacy), women's human rights, internal organisational issues and OGB gender publications. In addition, two other components covered a review of OGB evaluations and its Annual Impact Reports (AIRs), and there was an overarching synthesis report⁹². Except for these latter three, the evaluations

⁹⁰ The strategic change objectives (SCOs) were the original names given to what were to become Aims. The term SCOs was retained, however, to describe a lower order of objectives that were subsumed under the Aims as they were finally known (see Chapter 3).

⁹¹ The review was also related to FROSI and its emphasis on the need for OGB to understand its impact: it was conducted as part of the Annual Impact Review process, introduced after FROSI, which focused on a particular theme every year, gender being the focus for 2002.

⁹² The components were undertaken by different people who, for the most part, were external to OGB and included a number of well-known gender specialists, such as Helen Derbyshire and Elaine Zuckerman (Internal report. 2002) and Masha Freeman (Internal report. 2002). While many came from a background of working with mainstream development, such as Murison who had worked as a senior

generally employed the same methods of documentation review and interviews with OGB staff based in Oxfam House and in the regional offices (by telephone).

Overall, the review found that “Despite some important successes and instances of good practice, the overall picture of how OGB's programme is contributing to enhanced gender equality remains patchy” (Internal report. Mohideen, 2002). The findings applied to two dimensions of OGB: its programmes and institutional issues. Programmatically, the review found that OGB’s four impact areas⁹³ did not “consistently integrate a commitment to gender equality” (ibid: 18). There were instances of addressing gender issues, such as in humanitarian work, but they were “ad hoc” and often due to “commitment of key individuals” (ibid: 13) that was contrasted to an overall unevenness of commitment and lack of understanding (ibid: 13). For example, it found that regional plans and plans for programming for different Aims inconsistently addressed gender issues in their analysis. The case study from Senegal found that while economic development improved women’s status, they were overburdened because men were unwilling to assume reproductive roles. Women benefited at the household and community levels but their participation in local governance was limited (Internal report. Dem and Hopkins, 2002).

Similarly, in the case of its advocacy work on Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), OGB’s efforts contributed to greater civil society involvement in PRSP processes but this did not translate into engendering them. The evaluation cited policy evaporation, conceptual confusion and lack of staff capacity as contributing factors (Internal report. Zuckerman et al., 2002). OGB’s campaigns work with intellectual property rights and the cost of patented drugs lacked a gender analysis during planning that resulted in gender unaware campaigns (Internal report. Pearson, 2002).

Overall, the different components pointed to three common areas in its assessment of OGB’s programming. One was the need for “learning and development/capacity

manager with UNDP’s gender programme, others, such as Ruth Pearson (Internal report. 2002), came from an academic and gender and development background. Other components, particularly those examining internal documents such as evaluations and AIRs, were undertaken by OGB staff.

⁹³ As cited previously, these are the rights of individuals to be secure, skilled, healthy, safe and heard (Internal document. OGB, n.d.-a).

building” to address the “need for greater consistency in the integration of gender equality issues into OGB's work, structures and organisational culture” (Internal report. Mohideen, 2002: 18). Second was a need to integrate “gender equality issues” in analysis and planning, particularly for Aims and regional plans (ibid: 19). The third concerned the lack of staff with gender expertise to implement quality programmes. “Gender experts are too thinly and inconsistently spread to be able to advance gender equality issues in OGB's work” (ibid: 19).

The original proposal for the review did not include an examination of internal organisational issues but the “Assessment of OGB’s Institutional Arrangements for Gender Equality” (Internal report. Murison, 2002) proved “to be the most significant [addressing] how OGB overall might resource and organize its work on gender to optimise impact” (Internal communication. Amhurst and Farrell, 2002). Its focus was “to assess the effectiveness of current organisational arrangements to achieve SCO5-1, and propose changes for greater effectiveness” (Internal report. Murison, 2002: 12). The author considered the report to take a

broader perspective on gender mainstreaming [and aimed] to identify those aspects of OGB's organisational culture and structure that impact positively and negatively on staff ability in practice to ensure that management, planning, evaluation and reporting processes take full account of the relevant aspects of gender relations. (ibid)

The report recognized a number of “organisational strengths and opportunities for gender mainstreaming” and considered FROSI-related organisation changes as “pre-conditions for effective gender mainstreaming” (ibid: 19). These included the introduction of a “flatter, more decentralised and dynamic” structure (ibid), a new performance management system and new approaches to staff development and learning. It recognized motivation and conviction among staff, a “clear commitment to gender equality” among managers at different levels as well as leadership support that is “expressed and reinforced in OGB's very clear policy commitment to gender equality” (ibid: 14). Still, staff commitment and understanding of gender issues were found to be uneven (Internal report. Mohideen, 2002) .

The analysis of “organisational constraints to gender mainstreaming” is similar in its findings to the other components of the review that dealt with internal organisational issues. One concerned a lack of individual staff understanding of what they are supposed to do and among managers of their specific responsibilities. It noted how OGB had “not yet succeeded in ensuring that its programme staff fully understand the ways in which work on poverty for example, is incomplete without a gender equality perspective” (Internal report. Murison, 2002: 17). Communications and capacity were a second area of concern: staff faced difficulties knowing what, to whom and how to communicate about gender equality. Also, there had “been no systematic capacity building on the knowledge, skills or aptitudes needed to advance gender equality for many years” (ibid).

The review included 12 “priority” recommendations and 73 related “other recommendations/options” that focused on five areas. The first concerned programming, with the need to ensure “that gender equality issues are integrated in every aspect and at every stage of programme work” (Internal report. Mohideen, 2002: 3). Second was “Leadership, Responsibility and Accountability” and included recommendations to establish a Corporate Plan of Action to implement OGB’s gender policy. It recommended updating and simplifying it, and providing a full time Organisational Lead to “drive the gender mainstreaming process forward” (ibid: 4). It also included a recommendation to reconstitute a “corporate” gender group as a “gender advisory/focal point network” (ibid). A third area was related to knowledge management and overall recommended the development of a plan to communicate and promote learning on gender equality issues. A fourth area concerned the establishment of “an overall learning and development plan designed to increase OGB's capacity in gender analysis, programming and management” (ibid: 5). Fifth was about strengthening internal capacity, such as increasing the number of gender experts in Oxfam House, as well at regional levels, to support staff capacity development (Internal report. Murison, 2002).

In May of 2002, a summary of the review was presented and discussed by OGB’s Corporate Management Team (CMT) which agreed to a number of follow up actions.

Most concerned OGB managers such as “gender work [needing] to be done through line management” with line managers working through “how to deliver” (Meeting Minutes. OGB, 2002a). CMT members also recognised that follow up actions involved different levels. All staff needed to understand what they had to do to be gender sensitive; regionally the plan needed to be taken forward in a way that they could learn from each other; and leadership needed to be “high calibre and strategic, inspirational not dogmatic, capable of celebrating good practice” (ibid). Details of further follow up was delegated to International Directorate Senior Management Team (IDSMT)⁹⁴ while areas concerning “organisational gender issues” (ibid) were to be handled separately from programming issues.

IDSMT discussed the Gender Review in June 2002 for half a day. Prior to that, a senior manager shared a memo to IDSMT members concerning the Institutional Arrangements report, in particular, to provide “an initial steer [...] on the direction [OGB] needed to go (Internal communication. Pilkington, 2002). The “steer”⁹⁵ included reiterating an understanding about gender: that it’s a central to OGB’s work on poverty and suffering and that it concerns not just women but women and men and their relationships. It underscored that gender was the responsibility of the whole organisation as well as individuals and line managers, the latter of whom needed support. Lastly, it emphasised how the CMT and Council wanted the organisation to “develop pragmatic, practical approaches that make it easy for all staff to build gender issues into their work” (ibid). IDSMT was expected to come up with “clear and straightforward” conclusions which “must not be complex. The work itself may be demanding and require great skills and care, but that does not mean our organisational arrangements need to mystify” (ibid). The memo also included a caution about internal changes proposed by the review: OGB “may or may not” need a formal internal gender group and there may need to be some staffing changes, though this was “small-scale and not the central issue” (ibid). There was a concern about making such changes and increasing gender staff without a clear idea of what and how it was to be done.

⁹⁴ IDSMT was the most senior management committee for the International Division that and oversaw OGB’s programmes.

⁹⁵ This was a common term used by OGB managers when I conducted my research. It implied direction provided by senior managers, which in OGB parlance, was deemed a priority but was left to line managers to take into consideration and to implement as they deemed necessary (ref?)

The discussion at IDSMT in June 2002 focused on the review's key question of what was constraining the organisation and produced an agreement that the organisation should be using "existing processes and resources to implement the recommendations", many of which could be started straight away (Meeting minutes. OGB, 2002c). The emphasis should be on "everyone's everyday work" and not "ghettoised" by using experts other than as support (ibid). The result was an action plan with inputs from the IDSMT meeting (ibid) as well as from select OGB staff who worked on the review. The covering memo to the plan stressed that it had been "deliberately [...] kept simple – and manageable" and they had to "just do it" (Internal communication. Blair, 2002). It also addressed the issue of resourcing the plan, confirming plans for a four-person team based in Oxfam House and the need for regions to determine their own resourcing needs but that it was "vital that the key Regional staff working on gender [were] fully engaged and taking lead roles in sharing and shaping the way forward" (ibid). For the senior manager mostly involved with the plan, the emphasis of the plan was on making it "do-able... and practical, not overly ambitious...[otherwise] it would be put on the shelf in the 'too difficult' box", which was observed by the manager as a common fate for OGB's plans. "We're very good at producing beautiful plans but not at implementing them" (Interview. Blair, 2007)

The review and its recommendations represent the further entrenchment of gender mainstreaming for OGB in a number of respects. First, it was all encompassing and affected all parts of the organisation and all staff. The relative privileging of "everyone" doing gender is a mainstay of gender mainstreaming (Tiessen, 2007). Second, which is related to an integrationist notion of the approach (Jahan, 1995), it worked within existing structures and organisational processes. Gender mainstreaming was to be implemented "though the line" with an emphasis on leadership from existing senior managers. Current programming and internal procedures, such those related to monitoring and evaluation and human resources needed to be engendered but not necessarily revised themselves: gender just needed to be integrated. Third, OGB senior managers were encouraged to take on more leadership responsibility, and the development of the Action Plan was a case in point: it was senior managers, as members of CMT and IDSMT, that led the post-review processes.

Still, the Action Plan also needs to be understood within the context of OGB's history with addressing gender issues (discussed in Chapter 4) and of the period when the review took place; post-FROSI. Three issues in particular stand out. One concerned GADU: the review notes that the elimination of the unit was "unfinished" business (Internal report. Murison, 2002: 11). Its legacy had been a stand alone gender resource and the impression that it had had a "critical rather than a supportive attitude to the rest of the organisation" (ibid). This was still alive in OGB and continued "to be attached to all work for gender equality" (ibid). While the review did not suggest a re-instatement of a stand-alone gender unit, it did recommend increasing the number of gender advisors and "reviving a very positive aspect of GADU, this time enhanced by a more integrated structure and stronger coordinative and knowledge sharing mechanisms" (ibid: 11).

Nevertheless, the subsequent Action Plan, as well as senior managers' responses, were cautious about increasing gender advisory resources, justified in part because the needs were not yet known and the matter was not a "central issue" (Internal communication. Pilkington, 2002). In addition, such specialised persons were seen as contrary to making gender everyone's responsibility, rather than ghettoised by using experts (Meeting minutes. OGB, 2002c). The direction of the Action Plan was towards greater involvement of managers leading gender mainstreaming as well as a de-limiting of the role of advisors. As one gender advisor at the time observed "contrary to previous efforts, we (gender advisors) were not even invited to the meetings of CMT and IDSMT" (Interview. Moore, 2007). It was senior managers who presented the review's findings and led the development of the Action Plan, with limited input from OGB's gender advisors.

The second and related issue is the importance attached in the Action Plan to being simple, practical and manageable and not overly ambitious, complicated and mystifying. The emphasis was on being do-able and implementation was a matter of "just doing it". It was simplified in so far as it included about a third of the number recommendations of the review. The more complicated recommendations of addressing women's rights, those that were specific to particular programme areas and other that held staff accountable were not included in the Action Plan. Moreover, the emphasis on

practical measures was also related to the need to be positive. As a senior manager recalls of the Gender Review, “it was incredibly negative actually, about we hadn't done this, hadn't done that” (Interview. Pilkington, 2007).

The third issue related to the post-FROSI context is the emphasis of the Action Plan on the Regional Management Centres, as manifestations of FROSI described previously, assuming much of the responsibility for implementing the plan, as per their discretion. Such delegation is consistent with the further entrenching of gender mainstreaming, particularly in terms of extending the responsibility throughout the organisation.

While, the Action Plan undoubtedly further embedded gender mainstreaming in OGB, following from the overall thrust of the Gender Review, it was a particular understanding of gender mainstreaming that arose out of the historical context of OGB's past efforts to address gender issues. While related to GADU and the role of gender advisors, it also came out of the new emphasis on the role of OGB leadership and managers. In this sense then, the plan was also a response to post-FROSI shifts in structure of the organisation.

The Oxfam International Gender Assessments

As indicated previously, two Oxfam International (OI) reviews of their gender work were significant for OGB, not so much for what they found (their findings were similar to the Gender Review just discussed) but for how the findings were perceived by OGB senior managers. Both were conducted in relation to OI's Strategic Plan (2001-2006): one was part of the 2004 mid-term review of the plan and the other was a 2005 gender evaluation of the same. OGB senior managers' responses to the OI assessments give some indication of how the understanding and directions of gender mainstreaming were strongly shaped by OGB's past.

The Mid-term Review was undertaken by an independent consultant to take “stock of significant changes in the external environment and monitor progress towards the goals of OI strategic plan that focused on ‘Global Equity’” (Internal report. Burrows, 2004). It reviewed specific areas of joint OI⁹⁶ work on trade and markets, humanitarian response,

⁹⁶ In other words, the mid-term review only looked at work where Oxfam affiliates were collaborating.

the right to be heard and promotion of gender equity, the latter two were reviewed as cross-cutting, not stand-alone, issues. It echoed earlier reviews of OI's performance: progress on gender mainstreaming in the key areas of the OI strategic plan was "poor overall. There are patches of very good joint work, but they are isolated" (ibid: 3). While it noted that stand alone gender work may be better, there was a need for a deeper appreciation of the essential value of having others participate, have control and speak for themselves. Staff needed to improve competence in gender mainstreaming and there was a lack of mutual accountability among OI affiliates.

The gender evaluation was undertaken a year after the mid-term review, also by an independent consultant⁹⁷, to explore in more depth issues raised by the Mid-term Review, just discussed. Similarly, it only looked at joint work of OI affiliates and the extent gender was being mainstreamed focussing on four countries of Ethiopia, Palestine, Nicaragua and Bangladesh. It included field visits and a review of relevant documentation. Overall, the evaluation affirmed the conclusions of the Mid-term review and assessed OI's gender work as, "with a few notable and shining exceptions, mediocre in terms of its potential contribution to gender equality" (Internal report. Stuart, 2005: 31). It highlighted leadership, along with follow-through, investment, systems and accountability, as key areas requiring strengthening.

For OGB managers, the OI mid term review and OI evaluation are two examples of inputs that were seen as too critical and unhelpful. As one senior manager recalls,

There was quite a lot of negativity that was not very helpful, [the review] wasn't helpful at all...[it] came across as being very negative about all the things going on in gender issues in OI [...] So I found it very counter-productive actually. *It just made people feel bad again.* (Interview. Pilkington, 2009. My emphasis.)

OGB senior managers also felt that the OI evaluation was too critical by not being "balanced". As Blair recalls, it "was unrealistically negative [...] the evaluator] wanted to shock us. But [...] incredibly not giving credit to what positive things had happened"

⁹⁷ The author was a former Executive Director of Oxfam Canada.

(Interview. 2007). Such imbalance was considered unproductive and discouraging to staff.

I have suggested that the 2002 Gender Review and these two other assessments of the OI strategic plan were critical for OGB not only in terms of what they found, which was essentially a reiteration that OGB's gender work was wanting, but also in terms of the responses they provoked. They were considered too critical and, as indicated in the Action Plan, there was an emphasis on greater senior management leadership on gender issues, on practical follow up actions and regional management centres assuming much of the responsibility for implementing the Action Plan. The following explores these first two themes by looking more closely at one of the Gender Review's recommendations that was implemented.

THE 2003 UPDATE OF OGB'S GENDER POLICY

The Gender Review recommended that OGB update, streamline and simplify OGB's original 1993 Gender Policy "in the light of recent structural changes and the organisation's experiences, so that it is easier to operationalise" (Internal report. Mohideen, 2002: 9). In 2003, OGB updated its original policy. The purported rationale for this was to make the language more accessible and in line with contemporary thinking on gender and development: the original policy was by then ten years old and the language was deemed "outdated", as one senior OGB manager commented (Interview. Blair, 2007). The organisation's various gender-related policy statements were also seen as disparate, and an updated policy was to provide "a 'framework' document against which to set our Action Plan" (Meeting minutes. OGB, 2003b). In particular, the idea was to make the policy's "Principles, Goals and Strategies more clear for all staff" (Internal communication. Walker, 2003b).

The purpose of the 2003 Gender Policy is to represent OGB's "organisational commitment to gender equality" and to "to help staff and volunteers ensure that work improves the lives of both women and men and promotes gender equality" (Internal document. OGB, n.d.-b). It is a brief statement comprising four principles, which concern an understanding of gender equality and poverty, how the organisation will

work and for what purposes, an emphasis on empowering women and girls and a focus on internal organisational issues.

It also includes 11 strategies. The first two are overarching: 1) OGB's work will be informed by "a thorough understanding of the different concerns, experiences, capacities and needs of women and men"; and 2) OGB will work at the level of "policies, practices, ideas and beliefs" that are at the root of gender inequality (OGB, n.d.-d). Four strategies are that the organisation will 1) "seek to ensure the full participation and empowerment of women"; 2) "promote women's rights as human rights"; 3) work with "both men and women, together and separately"; and 4) emphasise the importance of gender equality in overcoming poverty and suffering and communicate its "commitment to gender equality" (OGB, n.d.-d: 1-2).

The remaining five strategies expand on the fourth principal concerning internal practices: 1) encourage sharing of "learning and best practice" where "gender training will also be made available"; 2) "devise and report on measurable objectives and actions relating to the gender equality policy"; 3) use "gender awareness and understanding [...]" as a criterion for recruitment and development of staff and volunteers"; 4) demonstrate OGB's commitment to gender equality in the setting of team and individual objectives as well as the allocation of staff and resources; and 5) pursue "family friendly work practices" so men and women can "participate fully in work and family life" (OGB, n.d.-d: 1-2).

The two policies compared

On the surface, the 2003 policy appears as an update of the 1993 original, but there are significant differences. In comparison with the 1993 policy, the 2003 policy introduces new language, not included in the 1993 version, such as "performance objectives" (A7)⁹⁸ and "family-friendly policies" (A18), as well as new programming issues – the need to work with men (A11) and references to OGB partners, for example.

Structurally, the two policies are also similar – both include a Preamble, Principles and Strategies. However, there are two main exceptions. The 1993 policy includes Objectives and provides specific strategies for different parts of the organisation:

⁹⁸ Indicates corresponding Annex and paragraph of the policies.

Overseas, UK Programme and Management (see Annex B). In contrast, the 2003 policy does not have any Objectives and excludes the assignment of strategies for particular organisational areas. Also, the 2003 policy is about a third of the length of the 1993 version (687 words compared with 2,212)⁹⁹.

Additionally, the 2003 update and OGB's original 1993 Gender Policy are different in terms of goals and understandings of gender equality, framing of issues and commitment. What do these differences tell us about understandings of promoting gender equality in Oxfam House during the post-FROSI era?

An analysis of the 2003 policy demonstrates a dilution of OGB's commitment to promoting gender equality, when compared with the 1993 document, which is manifested as five interrelated dimensions. The first concerns the policies' respective treatments of the notion of gender equality itself. The 1993 policy recognises specific issues facing women and addresses them accordingly with objectives specific to women. For example, the Preamble includes a 700-word description of the different positions held by women compared with men in various aspects of society and the differential impact poverty and development has on women and men. Accordingly, the overall Objective is to make the "lives of women better", and three of five related objectives are specific to women (B20).

In contrast, the 2003 policy privileges equal and undifferentiated treatment of women and men and, by obscuring the subordinate position of women and their related gender needs through using this equal treatment discourse, results in dilution. While it too acknowledges the particular issues women face, mainly in an 80-word section of the Preamble, its' emphasis is on the same treatment for women and men, as evident in its emphasis on the same entitlements, the same respect, the same opportunities and the same access to power for women and men (A1). Accordingly, it aims to "help staff and volunteers ensure that our work improves the lives of *both* women and men and promotes gender equality" (A3. My emphasis).

⁹⁹ The 2003 policy does, however, include a 1,338 word supplementary "Rationale", which explains the position of women globally. For the purposes of this analysis, it is excluded, following OGB's presentation of these as two separate documents.

The second dimension concerns recognition of the differences between women and men and related to policy perspectives. The 1993 acknowledgement of women's needs and interests comes from the standpoint of women. For example, the policy stresses women's agency and efforts, particularly those of Southern women, and the influence this has had on OGB's thinking (B34). It also recognises the diversity among women and that age, class, ethnicity and religion, in addition to gender, are inter-related factors affecting women's position in different ways depending on the context (B9).

Such beliefs are reflected in its policy prescriptions. For example, the 1993 policy states that OGB needs to be "sensitive to local circumstances and respect the pace, capacity and strategies of local women for change" and will promote women's own prioritising, confidence building and organisation (B16). At the same time, it conveys commonalities among women and how their subordinate position is relational to men; such relations are power relations, mutable and contextual. With this understanding, the policy states that gender relations need to be transformed (B17) and underlines how "OGB's vision and policy cannot be static, adjustments and changes may be required over time" (B21).

In contrast, the 2003 policy makes no reference to women's agency, diversity of experience or the multiple, intersecting discriminations they face. No mention is made of the need to adapt to diverse and changing contexts. When the policy does refer to women's empowerment, it is from the organisation's perspective: "women and girls will be empowered through all aspects of our work" (A5)¹⁰⁰. In this respect, policy dilution comes from an absence of a relational perspective from the standpoint of women, from the homogenisation of women's experiences across space and time and from a failure to consider women as agents for change.

The third dimension of policy dilution is the positioning of gender and development issues and their interrelationships. The 1993 policy considers gender inequity an issue in itself and the promotion of women's position and rights ends in themselves. The policy gives equal and independent weighting to addressing poverty and gender inequity: "Fully integrating gender into OGB's programme should tackle the causes of women's poverty *and* promote justice to the advantage of women as well as men" (B3. My

¹⁰⁰ See also "We will seek to ensure the full participation and empowerment of women in all areas of our work" (A10).

emphasis). Additionally, it elaborates on the mutually reinforcing interrelationships between gender inequity and poverty. It not only states the need to address “gender-related inequalities [...] to achieve sustainable development and alleviate poverty”, but also elaborates on how poverty exacerbates the condition and position of women, thereby justifying the addressing of poverty to confront gender inequity (B15).

In contrast, the 2003 policy has a more limited and unidimensional understanding of gender and development. There is less emphasis on promoting women’s position and rights as ends in themselves; the dominant rationale is to make OGB’s development efforts more effective. For example, it states that there is “a common understanding that gender equality is key to overcoming poverty and suffering” (A4). Also absent are understandings of how poverty exacerbates women’s condition and position. Dilution results from the policy not pursuing gender goals in their own right and its narrower focus on “gender-related poverty”.

The fourth dimension of policy dilution results from differences in understanding, perspectives and framing of particular issues and policy prescriptions. With its recognition of the differences between women and men, the 1993 policy emphasises women’s strategic gender interests, such as body integrity, independent access to resources such as land and employment and women acting collectively (B27-30).

With its limited acknowledgement of the differences between women and men, the 2003 policy includes fewer policy prescriptions that specifically address women’s position and related strategic interests (two versus ten in the 1993 policy). When women-specific measures are included, they are sometimes instrumentalised by becoming a means to an end (as opposed to ends in themselves), as well as de-gendered. For example, OGB is to address “the policies, practices, ideas and beliefs [that] prevent women and girls (and sometimes men and boys) from enjoying a decent livelihood, participation in public life, protection and basic services” (A9). Here, the policy is limited to the areas which concern OGB, and addressing constraints is implicitly to do with making OGB’s efforts more effective. Also, the concern with “policies, practices, ideas and beliefs” is not that they are gendered but that they happen to affect women and sometimes men. Absent is a gender analysis of social institutions that points to the

systemic discrimination of women in particular (the 1993 policy includes such an analysis in its references to patriarchy and social structures). In sum, the 2003 policy represents a dilution of commitment to gender equality in its refutation of women's gender strategic interests that emerge from gendered social institutions that (re)produce discrimination and subordination unique to women.

The fifth dimension of policy dilution concerns the extent of policy commitment. For instance, the 1993 policy employs more assertive language; as a goal, it speaks of “*confronting* the social and ideological barriers to women's participation” (B6. My emphasis). The 2003 policy adopts language that is more *au courant* within OGB and also uses less assertive terms: “We will *address* the policies, practices, ideas and beliefs that perpetuate gender inequality” (A9. My emphasis). Overall, the 2003 policy is also more tentative with its use of qualifiers and less certain terms. For example, the 1993 policy states that the organisation is “*committed to [...] developing positive action* to promote the full participation and empowerment of women [and] recognising and *helping women exercise* their rights over their bodies and protection from violence” (B5. My emphasis). In contrast, the 2003 policy uses more qualified language. It states, “We will *seek to ensure* the full participation and empowerment of women [...] and will *promote* women's rights as human rights, particularly in the areas of abuse and violence” (A10. My emphasis).

Explaining the differences

In chapter 2, I discussed how development bureaucracies tend to distil and shape information in ways that reflect the gender politics and interests of the intended users and the organisation's own development paradigm. This often leads to an elimination of potential controversial issues and a neutralisation of political content. This suggests that the differences between the 1993 and 2003 policies be understood for what they potentially represent. In this section, I explore how the differences highlighted above relate primarily to the respective organisational political contexts in OGB in which the policies were being defined, in terms of both external influences and internal dynamics.

The 1993 policy resulted from years of struggle by GADU in terms of making organisational inroads and getting gender on the agenda. As Chapter 4 described,

GADU's work reflected gender and development (GAD) thinking at the time; it is titled "Oxfam's Gender and Development Policy". GAD was influenced by socialist feminism and its concern with class and gender and by feminist anthropology with its privileging of differences across cultures and within them (Pearson and Jackson, 1998a), as well as the voices and agency of "third world women". Gender relations were seen as social, not as a biologically given, and as mutable and contextually informed. GAD was informed by a concern about women's subordination and interrogated "development" for its purported benefits for women as long as they were integrated. GADU pursued women's interests for their own sake, not solely as a means to increase effectiveness or address poverty. As Jackson (1998: 59) states "gender justice is not a poverty issue and cannot be approached with poverty reduction policies, and [...] it is important to assert the distinction between gender and poverty in the face of the tendency in development organisations to collapse all forms of disadvantage into poverty". Moreover, as a collective, GADU's concern was for working in solidarity with women and men, both within OGB, with GAD advocates in the UK and in the countries where it was working, to strengthen women's voice and agency.

OGB's "approval" of the 1993 policy represented an organisational acknowledgement of gender but also a recognition of the legitimacy of pursuing gender equality in its own right. This is evidenced in the policy's understanding of the promotion of gender equality as a means to address both poverty and women's subordination. Still, organisational commitment was not certain, and the policy reflects its emphasis on commitment in processual terms: it was "seen as the next essential step in OGB's commitment to gender" (OGB, 1993: 3), and any references to organisational commitment are treated as dynamic. For example, the policy states that it will continue "to expand OGB's knowledge of and commitment to gender issues" and "promote the understanding and commitment of OGB staff" (B15).

In contrast, the 2003 policy emerged during the post-FROSI era, when OGB senior managers were being challenged to demonstrate commitment to gender which was considered embedded¹⁰¹ but which the different internal OGB gender assessments found

¹⁰¹ For example, in Barbara Stocking's letter to staff (September, 2003), the Director reports the release of an OGB document "Oxfam's Approach" that includes "Women are especially disadvantaged so we are committed to building gender analysis and action into all our work"

to be inadequate. For example, as the 2002 Gender Review notes “There is a strong commitment to gender equality at all levels of the organisation [...] this *commitment, and especially the exercise of leadership on gender equality, is uneven*” (Internal report. Mohideen, 2002: 19. Original emphasis).

‘Commitment’ is manifested in two ways in the 2003 policy. First, the word “commitment” is used relatively more frequently compared with in the 1993 policy (five versus three times). Second, and more critically, “organisational commitment” is taken for granted as already existing in OGB, whereas the 1993 policy was concerned with promoting such commitment. The 2003 document assumes extant commitment, stating upfront, for example, that the “policy represents our organisational commitment to gender equality” (A3) and “our own internal practices, and ways of working, will reflect our commitment to gender equality” (A7) ¹⁰².

The 1993 policy’s concern with cultivating commitment is a *de facto* acknowledgement that commitment is wanting; the 2003 policy’s sole aim to “represent”, “reflect” and “demonstrate” commitment discursively creates the sense that commitment is not lacking; it already exists. The issue of a lack of commitment is effectively eliminated by assuming commitment and emphasis is shifted to the need to better communicate it. As Mosse (2003) contends, development agencies have little control over events but do exercise control over the interpretation of them. To counter uncertainty, “authoritative interpretations have to be made and sustained socially” by enrolling actors with representations as reality (Mosse, 2003: 8). The projection of “commitment” is a narrative that is more easily understood than the more difficult one of posing a problem (Apthorpe and Gasper, 1996), such as the lack of commitment. It is an attempt to exercise bureaucratic power in the face of uncertainty (Wallace et al., 2006)

Still, in the face of constant feedback that OGB’s work was wanting, the 2003 policy is also about managing expectations and not “making commitments [we] didn’t

These internal communications, known as “Letters from Barbara Stocking”, are monthly updates from the Director to staff and volunteers. They also serve as her monthly reports to the Corporate Management Team.

¹⁰² Other examples include “Our communications will also highlight our own commitment to gender equality” (A13) and “In all our work we will demonstrate commitment to gender equality” (A15).

understand how on earth we were going to fulfil”, says one OGB senior manager (Interview. Blair, 2003). Such reluctance is evident in the use of general, vague and conditional language as well as the generalising of organisational accountabilities, as discussed previously. In this light, the changes from the 1993 policy also reflect a “moving of the goal posts” in light of reluctance to making commitments that could potentially be unmet and thus seen as yet another failure of the organisation. The 2003 policy lowered the standards against which the organisation could be assessed. For example, fuzzy and qualified language allows for vague commitments. Also, the issue of a lack of accountability of managers is removed, on the one hand, by eliminating references to what is expected of them and, on the other, making everyone responsible but no one accountable (Lewis, 2006: 125). As Mary Kilpatrick, a gender advisor at the time recalls, the changes were to “lower the bar but also redefine what gender equality meant, so tools were established, with simple quantifiable measurements that had no real meaning, and no time line for compliance and no follow-up to see if measures were complied with” (Interview. Kilpatrick, 2008).

Most critically, the 2003 policy emerged during a time when OGB was adopting a “rights-based approach”, which had a particular influence on the organisation’s understanding of gender equality. The emphasis on human rights and associated liberal notions that all humans should be treated equally without discrimination was conflated with treating women and men the same, without differentiation (Mukhopadhyay, forthcoming). To do otherwise, to provide special treatment for one group but not another, would enable accusations of discrimination¹⁰³ and strengthen demands for the same treatment regardless of differences in backgrounds and experiences. This influence is evidenced in the 2003 policy’s undifferentiated treatment of women and men.

Moreover, the 2003 policy reflects a liberal feminist discourse (Tong, 1989) with its emphasis on “equal treatment of women and men”, which displaced the privileging of women and women’s subordination in the 1993 policy. The dominant use of the

¹⁰³ Kapur (2007) makes a similar case in her critique of formal equality: “In the formal approach, equality is seen to require equal treatment—that is, all those who are the same must be treated the same. It is based on treating likes alike. The constitutional expression of this approach to equality has been in terms of the similarly situated test—the requirement that those who are similarly treated should be treated similarly. Within this approach, equality is equated with sameness. Only individuals who are the same are entitled to be treated equally. Any differential treatment of individuals or groups who are the same is seen to constitute discrimination” (ibid: n.r.).

undifferentiated term “both women and men” in 2003, which is reminiscent of gender equality discourses that treat men and women the same (see Chapter 2), acts as a refutation of gender concerns specific to women as well as the need to address gender inequity as an issue in itself (Baden and Goetz, 1998, Goetz, 1994). Here, the promotion of gender equality has not only occurred for instrumental reasons but also served to actively undermine “the feminist commitment to political struggle and change” (Pearson, 2005: 176).

Liberal feminism is also reflected in the 2003 policy’s adoption of a reformist agenda (Barriteau, 2000) distinct from the 1993 emphasis on, for example, transformation of gender relations, “changes [that need] to take place in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres” and addressing root causes of women’s poverty and injustice. The updated policy does not mention the term “change” once, let alone specifying a type of change. It makes no mention of transforming gender relations (Rathgeber, 1990). It is less challenging but also instrumentalist in its emphasis of gender-related poverty and addressing gender inequality so as to reduce poverty and suffering¹⁰⁴. Moreover, this, along with a lack of acknowledgment that “development” itself can be inimical for women, conveys an integrationist agenda. This makes gender not only more appealing but also more palatable and therefore “accessible”.

In this section, I have demonstrated how OGB’s 2003 Gender Policy was more than just an update of the original 1993 policy and argued that it represents a dilution of policy commitment and reflects liberal feminist discourses. Yet OGB was known for its challenging gender and development approach, described in Chapter 4. How did this change come to be? I have suggested that the policies were specific to the contexts which they were generated. So what was happening during the post-FROSI era?

¹⁰⁴ For OGB gender advocates during FROSI, the adoption of a rights framework provided an opportunity to legitimise a gender perspective, saying that, without it, OGB would be unable to alleviate poverty and suffering effectively (Internal report. Terry, 2000). Instrumental strategies are not in themselves depoliticising: they can serve strategic purposes. For example, when Terry (ibid) argued for a “gender approach to poverty” in establishing gender equality as part of OGB’s rights framework, she also emphasised “Women’s equal rights [as being important] important for their own sake” (ibid: 17) and the need for addressing social relations and women’s position and drew upon feminist analysis (ibid: 19).

The 2003 update of Oxfam GB's Gender Policy: How it came to be

In this section, I describe how ideological positions came to the fore during the updating of OGB's Gender Policy and explore what was going on and how and why certain positions were privileged.

The drafting and finalisation of the 2003 policy was a contested process. An OGB gender advisor was tasked to lead a process that was initially meant to include only her and the editor of the *Gender and Development* journal. After the 2003 global meeting of OGB gender advisors and managers and staff with a gender remit, and at the behest of the Gender Leadership Team, the process of updating the policy was expanded to include the team. Members expressed the need for stronger and more definitive language about the organisation's aims, the expectations of staff and how the policy would be implemented. For example, Jennifer Downey wrote that "The first sentence is a bit simplistic: 'will make the lives of women better'. Let us be a bit more concrete again. [...] Instead of encouraging and promoting, why not supporting (which implies commitment financially etc.);" (Internal communication. Downey, 2003). Others voiced a concern for more accountability. For instance, a Regional Gender Advisor, Sarah Marshall, wrote, "One thing we could consider [...] to make the policy more binding by obliging, within the policy, that all regions submit a yearly gender action plan that is budgeted, based on a time table with indicators and the obligation to report on the implementation" (Internal communication. Marshall, 2003).

The draft policy, developed with inputs from the Gender Leadership Team, was not put out for comments or consultation but was "edited" by an OGB staff person from the Marketing Division. In this edit, "brevity seemed the main guiding principle", according to an OGB gender advisor (Personal communication. Walker, 2003a). She confirmed that neither she nor the Gender Leadership Team had been informed about or consulted in what was to her a "radical edit" (ibid) and what Kilpatrick, member of the Gender Leadership Team, calls "a much watered down and even weaker policy than the one that already existed" (Personal communication. Kilpatrick, 2009).

In contrast, the senior manager involved in the process recalls "tinkering" with the draft and "taking a red pen to the policy. Not only in the sense of watering it down, yes, but

also in the sense of making it easily understood, but also practical, do-able” (Interview. Blair, 2008). The reason proffered for the edit was that the draft read “a bit like it’s drafted by a committee. It wouldn’t inspire staff to read it and want to know more as part of their induction” (Internal communication. Blair, 2003). Contrary to the contention that there were a “few minor amendments [...] but none of substance” (ibid), what did emerge was an edit of the draft that was substantially different. In the end, the draft was more similar to the 1993 original version whereas the final was much more different to the original.

The final version makes less strong commitments by introducing qualifiers, omitting key adjectives and using weaker language. For example, while the draft states that “We *prioritise* work which specifically raises the status of women due to the systemic gender based oppression women face” (C6. My emphasis), the final version includes qualifiers, such as “We will *often* prioritise work which specifically raises the status of women” (A6. My emphasis). The 2003 draft is more nuanced and specific. For example, in working with men and men’s groups, the draft states the condition under which this will happen: “when they are collaborative, and not competitive, with programmes supporting women’s rights” (C11). The final only states that “We will ensure that any work we do with men and men’s groups supports the promotion of gender equality” (A11). Similarly, the final draft is less specific, for example, as to who is accountable for the policy and what staff are accountable for. As with the 1993 version, the strategies of the 2003 draft are structured around key departments within the organisation (C25, 30, 33), whereas the 2003 final does not specify any departments. Also, in terms of accountability, the 2003 final version expects less of managers. For example, while it states that managers are to “encourage groups and forums [...] to share learning and best practice on gender equality” (A14), the draft went further stating that “Managers will promote the understanding and commitment of all Oxfam staff to gender equality objectives, by leading cultural change and through performance management and capacity building” (C16). Similar to the difference between the 1993 Gender Policy and the 2003 final version, the 2003 draft and the 2003 final version also differ in how they privilege poverty and gender inequality and the interrelationship between the two. The 2003 final version is limited to “gender-related poverty” (A4, 5 and 11), where poverty becomes the sole reference point.

Eyben (2007) describes recurring battles over text and images in WID booklets produced for a bilateral agency. The resulting documents were outcomes of internal struggles about maintaining or transforming policy concerning women, informed by particular wider “currents of ideology shaping aid policy” at the time a particular book was being produced. As Eyben writes, “In the case of the WID booklets, there was one audience to please and another to persuade. Senior management was trying to please the external lobby and the gender specialists were trying to persuade the ministry staff” (ibid, 67).

Similarly, the “battle” over the “updating” OGB’s 1993 Gender Policy was concerned about competing perspectives of individuals involved with OGB’s gender work that represented wider agendas. Gender advisors and advocates saw the “updating” of the policy as an opportunity to address current gender issues in the organisation, such as the perceived need for stronger commitments and terms of accountability. In this way, their audience was managers. On the other hand, the senior manager involved in finalising the policy was concerned with managing expectations and damage control. Her edits, as she says, were for a broader audience for which she wanted to make gender accessible, not only in terms of the language being used but how the policy was conveyed in vague and inoffensive terms¹⁰⁵. As the gender advisor at the time says about the final version, it became a “marketing document [with] the depth taken out” (Interview. Spence, 2008). It was also about demonstrating change; after a series of assessments about the lack of organisational commitment, commitment was produced in the turn of text, just as Eyben writes that the “impetus [...] to produce a new booklet [was] to demonstrate change (ibid, 71).

For the senior manager involved, battling over the revisions was a response to a wider agenda. As she recalls,

I certainly remember, for example, around the gender policy, some quite heated discussions around their version and my version. Why we were going the way we were. Through all of this, I might have got to thinking, well I’m not an

¹⁰⁵ In a similar vein, van Eerdewij (2009) writes how specific targets and monitoring create negative energies for staff of Dutch NGOs she researched.

expert, of course I'm not, so I'm backing off. [But] I would very much be seeking to deliver on agenda which [Barbara] felt very strongly about. And would only be delivered to do the sorts of things I was doing. And by driving change through in a quite hard-nosed kind of way, really. (Interview. Blair, 2008)

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have documented how the 2002 Gender Review had an influence during the post FROSI period on how OGB was pursuing gender mainstreaming. The significance of it and the OI assessments are two fold. First they represent a further entrenchment of gender mainstreaming as a dominant strategy to promote gender. Second, senior managers' responses to these assessments signaled a change in how gender mainstreaming was being understood. As an example of this and a follow up to the 2002 Gender Review, I analysed the 2003 update of OGB's original 1993 Gender Policy. In addition to demonstrating policy dilution, I also analyse changes made to the original policy for indications of a change in understanding of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

I concluded that changes that resulted in the 2003 policy were due to a senior manager pursuing what she felt was an organisational agenda. Literature on gender mainstreaming demonstrates the impact individuals can have. Were the radical changes represented in the 2006 policy the result of an idiosyncratic individual or is there something more? Jackson (1997: 162) suggests that organisational staff are "are subjects constituted partly by the constellation of institutions within which they exist". The imperative of the findings of the 2002 Gender Review, despite senior managers finding them overly critical, were compelling, as indicated by the Action Plan which focused on taking action. The updating of the 1993 policy, as one of the first acts undertaken by OGB senior managers in response to the review, was a critical test case to take forward the promise of do-able actions made by senior managers in the lead up to the development of the plan. The 2003 update was also supposed to representative of commitments that the organisation could make, which I suggested was a case of "moving of the goal posts" as well as the deployment of vague and conditional language.

Still, Goetz (1997b: 15) suggests, “structuralist assumptions [...] over-determine the impact of power relations and resource endowments on individuals.” In other words, staff are not just pawns to the whims and fancies of their organisations or their leaders. Staff exercise agency and where choices are “not as a given by institutional structures of control and subordination but [are] contingent and performative” (Jackson, 1997: 162). Paraphrasing Baviskar (2007a: citing Moore, 1999), such framing of structure and agency does not, however, do justice to complex practices. It is not possible to claim intentionality on Blair’s part, in the sense of purposeful dilution of feminist aims, as this appearance only becomes possible after the fact though “factual reconstructions” offered by ethnographic research (Jiménez, 2007: xx). Rather, Blair was caught between “backing off” and delivering on an agenda that the Director was promoting and felt that it had to be driven through in a “hard-nosed way”. The next chapter explores this agenda, its impetus and basis.

Chapter 6

Oxfam GB's Imperatives: Leadership and Making Gender Accessible

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5, I demonstrated that OGB's 2003 gender policy update represents a shift in understanding of both gender equality and its promotion compared to the 1993 policy, which resulted in a dilution of policy. This shift can be understood within the post-FROSI organisational context of OGB adopting a rights-oriented framework and repeated calls for the organisation to do better in its gender work. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, key individuals were involved. Are these changes indicative of a wider organisational change or the influence of particular individuals? Where does the impetus come from for such change? What is the meaning of such changes for gender mainstreaming in the case of OGB?

This chapter extends the analysis of how gender policy emerges and its drivers, with a focus on the balance between institutional and individual imperatives and ideologies. In particular, I explore two gender mainstreaming policy imperatives resulting, in part, from the 2002 Gender Review and underscored by how it and the Oxfam International gender assessment were perceived by senior managers. One concerned the mainstreaming of gender leadership. This emanated from the perception that OGB organisational leadership was wanting in the face of the organisation's perennial challenges in promoting gender equality. I explain the different influences that affected a change in approach by OGB's director from hands-off to being more directive. Also, part of this shift was the reinforcement of senior managers as organisation-wide Gender Leads.

Another related imperative was "making gender accessible" in order that staff would know what to do. I explain and analyze senior managers' rationale and understanding of gender and how the agenda was tied into "simplifying gender" and, relatedly, a shifting of gender advisory support was provided. I suggest these imperatives and related shifts were informed by and resulted from perceptions of previous experiences in OGB with the promotion of gender equality as well as understandings resembling liberal feminism.

GENDER LEADERSHIP AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The 2002 Review, as well as previous assessments of OGB's gender work, cited, among other issues, a lack of organisational leadership on promoting gender equality. It recommended the "development of management capacity to lead and guide *gender mainstreaming* processes in ways that are relevant to their respective units, and bring results" (Murison, 2002: 10. Original emphasis). In this section, I explore senior managers' efforts to make progress on gender during the post-FROSI period and, in one's words, "to make a difference" (Interview. Blair, 2007) through their own leadership. What was behind this imperative? How was gender "leadership" understood? What does this tell us of understandings to promote gender and gender mainstreaming in particular?

Compared with previous OGB directors, Barbara Stocking was more involved in the promotion of gender equality and, over time, took a more direct approach. This was informed partly by her own professional experience and by continuous feedback on the organisation's unsatisfactory progress on gender equality. In addition, the shift in leadership strategies entailed other senior managers taking on the gender agenda and leading particular areas. With the increased prominence of senior managers in gender leadership positions came particular understandings not only of gender equality but also of its promotion.

In 2001, Stocking came to the directorship determined to make a difference in OGB's gender equality work. As a close colleague recalls of Stocking's reaction to the Gender Review,

It was fairly early in Barbara's time and it had an impact on her, it was something she personally thought was important anyway. And hearing that we were so patchy and quite unsatisfactory in our gender work galvanised her to say this was something she wanted to prioritise and move forward on." (Interview. Blair, 2008)

According to Blair, a senior OGB manager, the Director took leadership on gender issues as a result of her "personal commitment, which she brought with her into the

organisation and partly from her experience, earlier in her career, in leadership as a woman in a world where that wasn't common at all" (Interview. Blair, 2007). Stocking came to OGB as a successful career bureaucrat. With a degree in Natural Science and a Masters in Reproductive Physiology, she previously worked in health: for eight years, she undertook various senior management positions with the National Health Service (NHS). She sought the position of NHS Chief Executive before starting with OGB, but was unsuccessful in part because "I wouldn't have said 'yes, Mr Milburn' [former Health Secretary] and they probably recognised that" (Davidson, 2004: n.r.). She was known for her "can do" attitude (Slater, 2003: n.r.), which she claims she gained from studying and working in the US. Within the not-for-profit sector in the UK, she is credited with being ambitious, productive and driven¹⁰⁶. Stocking also traces many of her characteristics to her upbringing (Davies, 2007). As an only child, she says "there was no sense that girls did one thing and boys another. [My parents] thought it was possible for me to do anything" (Davidson, 2004: n.r.). Similar was her experience studying at an all women's college at Cambridge (Davies, 2007). These characteristics are evident in her outlook. Her forte is considered her communication skills, in particular her ability to "communicate simply and unthreateningly that comes from decades of working in big organisations" (Nguyen, 2009: 18-19).

Stocking certainly displays a concern for the plight of women. In her public speeches and interviews as well as in her communication with staff, she often highlights the impact of poverty on women and girls. Her statement that "being female affects women in poverty" (Nguyen, 2009: 20) is characteristic of her overall understanding and fundamental belief that gender is fundamental to poverty. For example, her monthly letters to staff often describe the harsh conditions as well as the abuse and oppression women face, often with an emphasis on women taking charge. For example, she wrote of her visit to Nicaragua (Internal communication. Stocking, 2003b), "In Siuna, we work with agricultural, public health and women's rights partners. I was particularly impressed with the work with women on rape, incest and domestic violence. Seeing the women becoming so much more confident, open and able to exert their rights was impressive."

¹⁰⁶ Stocking is regularly featured in popular media in her role as Oxfam GB Chief Executive Officer. For example, see Davidson (2004); Davies (2007); Ho and Ong (2006); unknown (2005).

She has a strong belief in women's leadership; for her, "women are good at managing different stakeholders and [...] put a lot of passion into what [they] do" (Interview with Stocking by Jesi, 2009). Ainsley Moore, former gender advisor, recalls how Stocking "latched onto women's leadership very quickly" (Interview. Moore, 2007) and how she felt that "equal numbers of women and men in power in institutions across the globe would impact hugely on many of the issues we deal with such as conflict, basic services, etc." (Internal communication. Moore, 2005). But the Director also feels that women themselves need to take the initiative. For example, in advising others on how to replicate her success, she says "Do the best you can and if you are suited you will get it. Acquire management skills" (Interview with Stocking by Davies, 2007).

Stocking's initial approach to the promotion of gender equality in OGB was non-directive for two inter-related reasons. One reason was that, as one OGB gender advisor recalls, Stocking initially "didn't want to go right out on a women's rights platform. She didn't want to be seen as another woman leading on woman's rights. My impression was that she wanted to gain her credentials across the board then push the gender thing" (Interview. Moore, 2007). Second, she also felt that staff needed to be inspired not coerced into taking on a gender agenda. For example, in response to calls from members of the Gender Leadership Team in 2003 to address what they considered a "lack of consistent and accountable leadership" (Internal report. OGB, 2003e: 3), she wrote,

Gender mainstreaming is not something you can instruct people to do. I believe we must generate a sense that this is expected of them, that people can be helped to take some steps in their areas of responsibility and that there is accompaniment to help people. Above all, we want people to do this because they are enthusiastic and committed, *not because they have been told to do so.* (Internal communications. Stocking, 2003a: My emphasis)

However, Stocking became increasingly frustrated by repeated reports that OGB was wanting in its gender work and in interviews colleagues suggested this led her to change her approach¹⁰⁷. One impetus was the Gender Review, cited previously, and another was OGB's internal Annual Impact Review (AIR) for 2004, which was taken up by the

¹⁰⁷ For example the Director was described as "quite stressed at the slow progress" (Interview. Blair, 2007).

organisation's most senior management committee, the Corporate Management Team (Interview. Hogan, 2005). Based on an internal assessment of 41 OGB projects from around the world, the AIR report concluded that "despite the encouraging results that we see in individual projects and programmes, we know that a step-change in approach is needed by us and others if gender inequalities are to be addressed in a fundamental way" (Internal report. OGB, 2005b: 11)¹⁰⁸. That the 2004 AIR had such a message is not surprising. First, it followed closely after the 2002 Gender Review, which was the AIR for that year¹⁰⁹. Senior managers had already shown their determination and leadership to address shortcomings raised in 2002 but, again, the report came back its gender work was wanting. Secondly, the internal reporting process in the AIRs uses information generated by staff themselves. So that the 2004 AIR conveyed, again, the same message as in 2002 could not be dismissed as easily as external assessments such as the OI reviews. This bottom-up identification of OGB's inadequacies is similar to the calls that established GADU in the 1990s, as described in Chapter 4.

Following the 2004 AIR report, at a 2004 Corporate Management Team meeting, Stocking voiced dissatisfaction with progress on gender mainstreaming. According to Margaret Hogan, member of the gender team, she felt that, while a non-directive approach was producing "some good work", something more direct was needed (Interview. Hogan, 2005). One particular incident, which apparently made the Director "hopping" mad (Interview. Blair, 2007), was catalytic. While on a programme visit to Darfur, Pilkington discovered that women in camps were not being provided with sanitary towels. As she wrote in her November 2004 Letter from Barbara (Internal communication. Stocking, 2004),

I have been really disappointed to find that in Chad, in Darfur and in Bangladesh (and these are just the ones I have heard about) we were not distributing sanitary towels/clothes/pants (whatever the women say they need) in our hygiene kits. I know that our best gender work will be when we ask women properly what they

¹⁰⁸ The Annual Impact Review consisted of country programming staff analysing a particular focus of their work, based on criteria established by Oxford. Country reports went to their respective regional management centres, where an aggregate regional report was produced aggregating. These, in turn, were used to produce an organisation-wide report the Oxford monitoring and evaluation staff.

¹⁰⁹ The difference between these two AIRs is that the 2002 focused on gender issues whereas the 2004 exercise included gender concerns as part of an overall review of OGB's programmes.

want and need and that this is a wider issue than sanitary towels. But I am still sad that we are not thinking that a really humiliating issue for women must be that they can't keep themselves clean and able to move about during menstruation.

This is only one of a few examples in her monthly letters to staff where Stocking expressed particular disappointment with the organisation's performance. She then initiated the "gender non-negotiables" in 2005 (Internal communication. Stocking, 2005s), a set of minimum standards for staff¹¹⁰ – a measure she had previously rejected as being too directive (Internal document. OGB, 2003e)¹¹¹. These were part of her acknowledgement that more needed to be done for "gender issues [to be] built in everywhere in the analysis and [for the] delivery of programmes that are appropriate to men's and women's different needs and that seek to shift the power balance between them" (Internal communication. Stocking, 2005b: 2)¹¹².

Around that time, Stocking called for a "step-change" in OGB's gender work (Internal communication. Moore, 2005). In a November 2005 briefing meeting with Ainsley Moore, an OGB gender advisor, to clarify what "being more ambitious" would mean, the Director again communicated that gender mainstreaming was "not going to help women achieve their rights and [...] a step-change" was needed (Internal communication. Moore, 2005). She emphasised women's rights and leadership, particularly political leadership, to contribute to poverty alleviation and to generate internal support for the step-change.

¹¹⁰ The "gender non-negotiables" included:

- a) As a requirement of recruitment, candidates will need to demonstrate a willingness to treat men and women with equality in all aspects of life and, where relevant, to address inequalities between men and women within their area of work.
- b) Performance Management: [staff] will include within their performance objectives (and, as appropriate, their Personal Development plan) practical action in support of Oxfam's policy on gender equality. (Internal communication. Stocking, 2005a)

¹¹¹ At a 2003 meeting of Oxfam gender advocates, participants recommended that the organisation "make gender mainstreaming a non-negotiable function of management" (Internal Report. OGB, 2003e: 6).

¹¹² Stocking's initial caution was borne out. As one senior manager recalls, "we were tasked to take the non-negotiables forward but were not very keen about them. They weren't going to go anywhere. Still we finalised them and sent them down the line mainly because we were asked to do so."

This represented a more directive approach in two ways. First, Stocking had previously not been so involved in shaping OGB's gender work. Her briefing meeting with the advisor was a new phenomenon: before she had not initiated such meetings nor made such direct recommendations (Interview. Moore, 2007). Second was the specification of women-specific activities. Beforehand, the Director had emphasised the improvement of women's position only through and as a result of OGB's ongoing development and humanitarian work.

Around this time, Stocking was also influenced by Oxfam International's 2005 Consultative Forum organised by Oxfam Novib to contribute to the development of Oxfam International's 2008-2010 Strategic Plan. As a member of the Gender Reference Group noted, "Barbara came back from the women's forum asking why everybody [was] talking about women's rights when OGB was going gender mainstreaming" (field notes). According to the conference proceedings, participants called for "more significant campaigning on gender equality" on issues such as violence against women, women's leadership, women's work and women's rights because gender mainstreaming was insufficient (Internal communication. Oxfam International, 2005: 5).

Stocking's call for a step-change seems to have been driven partly by the reports of lacklustre progress and, in parallel, by her "can do" attitude and resolve as well as her commitment to showing leadership. Frustrated by repeated signals that the organisation's gender approach was wanting, first by the Gender Review and later by the Oxfam International gender assessments, and then by being personally affronted by the sanitary napkin incident, Stocking was caught between two parallel dilemmas thrown up by changing a bureaucracy from within, as discussed in Chapter 2. The first concerns how change happens within organisations. On the one hand, OGB is a hierarchical organisation where, formally, policies and decisions are executed "through the line" (see Chapter 4). On the other, staff at different levels operate with discretion. As one senior manager comments, "compared to other organisations Barbara and I have worked with, the ability to decree anything [in OGB] is quite limited" (Interview. Blair, 2007). As discussed later, the reluctance to dictate change, even a "step change", was gendered: it was also informed by perceptions of senior managers of how resistance to

gender initiatives in OGB existed in the first place was related to how gender was promoted.

The second and related dilemma is specific to gender mainstreaming (Tiessen, 2007): OGB, as with other organisations, pursued the strategy as an all-encompassing organisation wide process where gender was everybody's responsibility. Of course this process of change is slow and bound to be iterative, particularly given senior managers' reluctance and limited capacity to decree change. Yet the need to change was urgent: personally, and as the leader of OGB, which was facing external pressures from Oxfam International to take a stronger position to address women, discussed in Chapter 5, Stocking wanted and needed to see progress towards improving the position of women. "Step-change" was a particular initiative that was pursued in these directions.

It would be a mistake, however, to attribute the initiatives taken by OGB after 2001 solely to Barbara Stocking and her influence. After FROSI and the introduction of the Aims, OGB established Aim leads and teams (see Chapter 4). The then Marketing Director was appointed in 2000 as the first Aim lead on Aim 5, on gender and diversity, but was seen as not very effective. As an OGB gender advisor at the time recalls, he was "given the role a gender lead because he was a man who needed to know about gender. We spent a lot of time inducting him on what it's all about. [He] had absolutely no idea about gender at all" (Interview. Moore, 2007 and 2011). Subsequently, from 2002 to 2003, two women senior managers were appointed as co-leads for gender.

Jane Cotton, Director of Human Resources, was appointed by the Director in 2002 with a particular agenda: "to get some cut-through here, to get some things happening, to make things happen, and to make things happen *differently from the past*", according to one senior manager (Interview. Blair, 2007). In particular, this meant making gender accessible. For example, in response to the Oxfam International mid-term review, previously discussed in Chapter 5, Stocking reported to staff that "There are also areas where we need to improve, for example, on all staff [...] understanding of gender and diversity issues. Jane Cotton, our HR Director, will be leading some work to make that possible, simply for example having some material on OI in all affiliates' induction processes" (Internal communication. Stocking, 2004). Cotton was the lead of OGB's

gender work from 2002 to 2003, and on a number of occasions followed Stocking's initiative. For example, following the 2003 meeting of the Gender Leadership Team, the Director informed the organisation in her monthly letter that "Jane Cotton, who leads this work, and I will be going through these recommendations this week to see how we will take them forward" (Internal communication. Stocking, 2003b: n.r.). Before Cotton joined OGB in 1999, she held various personnel roles with the British civil service for a period of 20 years.

For OGB, the increasing prominence of women in senior management positions as well as within the gender infrastructure concerned getting women into decision-making roles, particularly decision making fora. The role of the global gender leads was to keep gender on the agenda. More than this, though, the privileging of senior managers as global gender leads was related to increasing the managerialism of gender leadership. As a senior manager states, gender "needs to be much more open and driven by *management*" (Interview, Pilkington, 2009. My emphasis).

By 2003, OGB had three women in senior positions, which was significant in a number of ways. After years of male dominance of leadership and senior management positions, OGB, for the first time, had women occupying the positions of Director, Director of Human Resources and International Director. This also changed the balance on the Corporate Management Team, which now comprised 30% women, the highest representation of women ever. These changes meant that there were "women senior leaders in the organisation who were really committed to moving the organisation on this issue [of gender]. Not necessarily the way everyone wanted them to, but it was no longer lip-service", recalls Sarah Wright (Interview. 2008), who had worked in the Policy Department for a number of years.

Certainly the increase of the number of women in both senior management and gender leadership positions represents an achievement for OGB's gender mainstreaming aims. Still, the rise of women managers in gender leadership positions came with particular understandings of gender equality that reflected liberal feminism. One was the faith in women's leadership as an expression of individual choice and initiative (Interview. Blair, 2008). This was manifested not only with Pilkington and the global gender leads,

as women, but also in their promotion of women. Second, and related, was Stocking's emphasis on an equal number of women and men in decision making positions. Third was a reformist agenda. Senior managers were attempting to affect change from within using their authority. Still, they also understood that using their positions to decree that gender be promoted was bound to fail; that was exactly the problem they saw with previous efforts: change was being forced. Rather staff needed to be inspired in part by addressing gender inequity as a way of alleviating poverty¹¹³. Also, gender needed to be made accessible by making it simple and practical, which is the focus on the next section.

MAKING GENDER ACCESSIBLE

I have discussed how the Director and global gender leads assumed a more prominent role in promoting gender equality. Along with this shift, I describe in this section an agenda pursued by senior managers to make gender accessible and explain the thinking and rationale behind this imperative. Overall, it meant using simple and clear language and breaking down gender so staff would understand what it meant and know what to do. "De-mystifying" gender would motivate staff by demonstrating its relevance to OGB and its "do-ability". Staff could then be assisted, through practical support and encouragement, to know what to do and gain confidence. Making it accessible would mean that staff would be "able to apply it and [know] why it's relevant to their jobs", explains a senior manager (Interview. Barlow, 2006). As Stocking says, "I had a strong feeling that we needed to take very practical approaches. And articulate it in a way that the majority will get it" (Internal communication. Stocking, 2005a).

The final version of the 2003 update of the Gender Policy, described the Chapter 5, is an example of this understanding of making gender more accessible. The main rationale for the "radical edits" was the need to make the policy easily understood, practical and do-able. As I explain below, however, and as the case of the update demonstrates, making gender accessible also entailed a shift in understanding of gender mainstreaming compared not only to understandings of gender and development from

¹¹³ This of course throws up the question of why the Director introduced the "non-negotiables" which are a form of decree. This decision is partially explained by the frustration reached at that point with Oxfam GB's continued impasse (Pialek, 2008). It also is representative of the different options to power persons with organisational authority have. The indirect approach was concerned with latent power (Lukes, 2005) whereas the deployment of the non-negotiables was about episodic power (Clegg, 1989)

the GADU days, but also from the FROSI period and understanding of gender mainstreaming, such as that proposed by Terry (Internal document., 2000), described in Chapter 5.

For senior managers, perceptions of the complexity of gender had led to resistance. As the Director wrote in one of her monthly letters to staff, “My feeling is that there is little resistance to gender issues in OGB but people, especially men, are rather frightened of it and don’t know what they can do about it” (Internal communication. Stocking, 2002a). It is not that managers denied that gender mainstreaming was complicated. One Programme Manager recalls being told by a senior manager of the RMC for East Asia “that [...] gender mainstreaming is so difficult, and [she doesn’t] think anyone has the answer what to do” (Interview. Smith, 2006). As Blair says, “We are not saying poverty is not complicated, gender isn’t complicated. But writing intellectual treatises and telling them it’s complicated is not exactly any way to make progress” (Interview. Blair, 2007).

Part of making gender accessible was, as one senior manager claims, to demonstrate that gender work was “a normal thing to do, not you-have-to-be-a-specialist thing to do, [such as] working on things like the ‘Pick Up and Go’ [training] on gender. So we were sort of saying you can learn how to do this and it’s not that hugely complicated”, (Interview. Pilkington, 2009). The idea that nearly anyone with some previous experience could be a gender trainer epitomised the notion of gender being accessible. For example, the criteria for delivering OGB’s introductory and gender mainstreaming training modules were that trainers should have training and facilitation experience as well as “experience of mainstreaming gender in development, humanitarian or advocacy programmes, or in Oxfam” (Internal document. OGB, 2004a: 3).

As an example, Pilkington, s senior manager, cited on different occasions the experience of delivering the ‘Pick Up and Go’ on gender mainstreaming to staff. “I was going to Liberia and sort of modelling that you can do this [as] a normal part of what senior managers needed to be taking on” (Interview. Pilkington, 2009). For the manager, it was surprising how easy it was to deliver. “I read it in 30 minutes, did the half day as a workshop. I did it very well. I was amazed by African staff, they really got

it” (field notes). That the training seemed so easy to conduct only served to reinforce the perception about promoting gender.

I remember [...] doing that very basic thing of getting them to describe to each other how men and women experience being in the camps in different ways [...] Actually beginning to start understanding it, which is the first basic part of it [that] can be done by talking, and insight, and thinking really. I think they [gender advisors] made it too complicated too soon and being very judgmental about it in some cases. (Interview. Pilkington, 2009)

This account of “successful” delivery of gender training reinforces a number of notions about doing gender work that prevailed among senior managers. First is that specific knowledge, skills or experience is not required. Without any previous gender training experience and, with only 30 minutes preparation, the manager was able to deliver the training¹¹⁴ (Macdonald, 1994: 38). This populist notion of gender knowledge, described in Chapter 2, contrasts with the idea that gender work, such as gender training, requires specialised knowledge (Goetz and Sandler, 2007: 167) and “expertise” (Miller and Razavi, 1998b: 7)¹¹⁵.

The idea that senior managers take more leadership and become more actively involved in promoting gender issues is not being challenged here. Rather it is the wholehearted adoption of a populist notion of gender knowledge. Another example is Barlow, a senior manager who had a gender remit. She did not have a formal professional or educational background in gender and much of her experience was primarily in management in the corporate and non-profit sectors and several years in development, many of which were with OGB in senior management positions. She came to her gender role with a “practical” approach:

¹¹⁴ Ahikire (2007: 24) comments on the belief by development agencies that gender training requires only “general knowledge” and not “much preparation”.

¹¹⁵ As discussed in Chapter 1, Beveridge et al. (2000: 390) characterise this dichotomy as differences between the “expert-bureaucratic model” and the “participatory-democratic model”, where the former involves those with specialised training and the latter is the “prerogative of administrators [who are] unlikely to possess a highly developed understanding of gender relations”.

I don't come to this with a gender background. When people ask me, when people talk about WID [women in development], feminist ideology, I am awful, my conceptual underpinning is very weak. So, I come at it from a very practical [perspective] I strongly feel we need to take very practical approaches and articulate it in a way that the majority of Oxfam can get. Whether or not what we say about men and women having equal access, having equal power, having equal rights, how that's different from previous analysis, I struggle to know. (Interview. Barlow, 2006)

Barlow's conceptualisation is illustrated by the establishment of the title of the Strategic Framework. Initially, "Putting Women at the Heart of All Our Work" was included in the communiqué from the meeting where the title was discussed (Internal document. OGB, 2006a)¹¹⁶. During the drafting of the framework, the global gender advisors in Oxford suggested that the phrase be revised to "Putting Women's *Rights* at the Heart of All Our Work", as they saw that this better represented the framework's focus. For the gender advisors, the one word made all the difference between the Strategic Framework being universal and empowering and it being potentially condescending and disempowering (field notes). In contrast, Barlow saw the change as inconsequential: 'To be honest, it's become an issue because one or two gender advisors felt wedded to the issue of rights. They wanted women's rights in there [...] I'd prefer we use the vision statement, which is about women gaining power [...] I think there has been unnecessary excitement about the need to change wording.' (Interview. Barlow, 2006)

Second, and related, is that "doing gender" is a matter of how it is done: talking to staff, having insights and thinking as well as not making it "too complicated", as Pilkington's account of her gender training experience suggests. The implication is that those with specialised knowledge are not engaging with staff, do not have insight and are not thinking. The above assessment by the OGB manager suggests that gender advisors are unable to have similar engagements because they have made gender too complicated and are judgemental. That the Pick Up and Go "training" was engaging is not being challenged here; rather, I am highlighting the conflation of an experience of facilitating

¹¹⁶ This is another common Oxfam practice following any significant meeting: to develop a communiqué for Oxfam staff and volunteers which usually includes a very brief description of the meeting and decisions taken.

a session with other practices undertaken by gender advisors that do require specialised knowledge and skills, such as being able to frame gender equality outcomes as rights. Moreover, the example of gender training concerns how a different language about gender was employed, discussed next.

The language of gender

Making gender accessible in OGB concerned mutually reinforcing acceptable and unacceptable ways to discuss and “do” gender. Talking about gender in upbeat terms was encouraged and embraced; only those ideas that inspired and mobilised staff were acknowledged and rewarded. Moreover, talking in ambitious terms was privileged. It is almost as if there was a direct correlation between level of ambition and acceptability: the more aspirational the gender goals, the greater their ability to mobilise support and be condoned. Such aspiration is created by and in turn generates energy. A major factor is the absence of what is perceived as “negative energy” which, in the context of Oxfam House, was associated with negative ways of engaging. The concern was not so much to prevent criticisms being raised but rather to put limits on how they were raised: being upbeat was seen as part of being ‘balanced’.

A case in point is the Director’s monthly staff letters, which she claimed were inspiring for staff. She tries “to write about things that the organisation expects from people [...] not in that heavy-handed way but by trying to both describe what we were trying to drive on as an organisation and provide examples” (Internal communication. Stocking, 2002a). For example, in six letters between 2002 and 2004, the Director made a case that the organisation needed to be doing better on promoting gender equality, always prefaced with an acknowledgement of what progress had been made. She used different general descriptors such as “a long way to go”, “more to do”, the need to cover all their work and not being as good as the organisation thought. For example, she wrote:

Oxfam GB has had a reputation for being in the lead on gender issues. This still remains, but I think all of us are concerned that we are not doing all that we should. We are therefore reviewing our gender work, to see how best we can maintain it, and to see how staff in Oxford can best be used to support staff as

well as developing our knowledge. (Internal communication. Stocking, 2002a: n.r.)

Although judgmental, the future oriented framing of Stocking's assessment avoided a direct assessment. For example, she did not describe OGB's work as "patchy", as have a number of other assessments of OGB's gender work (Internal report. Mohideen, 2002), but rather said "we are not doing all that we should". Both statements give the sense of mixed practice, but the Director's framing acknowledged that efforts were being made and it was a matter of doing more. In this sense, the framing of the issue is future-oriented, providing a sense of progression and movement while avoiding a categorical description of the state of affairs.

The Director's letters often discussed gender issues within the context of future intentions or plans. For example, for the 2003 Strategic Plan, she stated that the organisation needed to ensure "that gender issues are central in all the work we do" (Internal communication. Stocking, 2002b: n.r.). For the 2007-2010 Oxfam International Strategic Plan, which informed the OGB plan, she wrote how Oxfam members were discussing "the need for a step change in our gender work" (Internal communication. Stocking, 2005b: n.r.).

A reading of the Director's letters shows that her "balanced approach" was not reserved for gender issues: she typically employed similar language when addressing other issues. She acknowledged what the organisation was doing, as an assessment from the perspective of the future, and provided indications of future plans. For example, "in a study of Sustainability we scored highly on accountability. But we must not be complacent, we must always try to be more accountable" (Internal communication. Stocking, 2003a). Being "balanced", in the framing of problems and solutions (Gasper and Apthorpe, 1996), was a reasonable strategy in the context of OGB, where it is difficult to make pronouncements to motivate staff action.

Still, such "management speak" had particular implications in the context of speaking of "gender" in OGB. Stocking's balanced approach is concerned with modeling the antithesis to what senior managers felt was lacking with the approach of those who

always pointed out that “you haven't got it right because you haven't gone all the way on it”, as one senior manager says (Interview. Pilkington, 2009). This latter approach apparently discouraged and intimidated staff, whereas a balanced view presents the particular issue in a more accessible manner by privileging the positive: acknowledging what the organisation is doing and emphasising the future by focusing on what more needs to be done and future plans. The emphasis on the future is a mobilising trope as it serves as encouragement: something can be done and is being done. Moreover, it is an effective strategy to deflect any possible criticisms: how can one be criticised if promises to take action have been made?

Talking in future-oriented terms is one way to refer to gender; another is with enthusiasm. In this, those who emulate a balanced approach are given legitimacy. For example, as a senior manager states about the difference in gender advisors' approach, “Two [advisors] were in the ‘isn't-it-dreadful-why-don't-they-do-it-better’ sort of mode. But even they weren't as extreme as before. They were much more constructive [...] there was more energy around the whole thing. The old method not only wasn't effective, it made the people unhappy” (Interview. Blair, 2007).

Referring to gender issues in positive terms serves another purpose. It mobilises support in spite of the ambitiousness of any policy, the potentially confrontational nature of an initiative and the resistance from staff to being instructed. It feeds into dominant development narratives by conveying the prospect of success unfettered by any association with negative energy. As Sarah Wright, long-time OGB advisor and counsel to senior managers, states of OGB's violence against women campaign in South Asia, “We Can”:

People in Oxfam won't do things if you tell them to. You have to find other ways to get people to do things. From meaning, excitement, from being part of success [...] I do think the ‘We Can’ campaign started to get at that because the campaign offered a positive engagement across the organisation [...] people could say yes this is what we are about. It is a radical proposition, got right to the core of the issue. It was kind of a perfect way, if you look at it, nobody accused them of being

‘gender police’, but they were working on quite profound issues. (Interview. Wright, 2008)

The corollary to all this was clear: there were “unacceptable” ways to discuss gender, namely, being too critical or judgmental and thereby lacking positive energy, and not being balanced by not acknowledging good work being done. The 2002 Gender Review and the Oxfam International evaluation are two examples of inputs that were seen as too critical and unhelpful, as discussed in Chapter 5: they were seen as exceedingly negative, as not acknowledging progress that had been made and as discouraging staff. Unacceptable ways of talking about gender were also to be found among gender advisors themselves. For example, Armstrong emphasises how not to talk about gender. For her, gender advisors who pointed out only what was wrong only served to reinforce the perception that gender advisors were always complaining and had nothing constructive to offer. This only “[made] my job more difficult next week” because, when she had to engage with staff, she faced ‘downbeat’ perception, of the kind she had worked hard to get rid of (Interview. Armstrong, 2009).

The distinction between using “upbeat, motivating language” and being “too critical and judgmental”, thereby “lacking positive energy” is illustrated by a discussion during a 2006 meeting of 25 “experienced OGB staff from across the organisation, including advisors, managers, and others” representing Oxfam House and five regions (Internal document. Pialek, 2006: 20). The meeting was convened “to deepen understanding of OGB’s global work on gender equality as well as to develop a shared vision for programme work for 2007/2010” (ibid: 13). During the meeting, participants struggled over the finalisation of the wording of the vision statement that was to be used in the framework. On the one hand, members of the programme department gender team wanted the focus initially to be on what changes were required internally, and then to proceed to what external changes may be desired (ibid). For them, taking into consideration the organisation’s past experiences and challenges was critical. In particular, meeting participants agreed that there was a lack of management accountability, support and, as some participants started to ask, commitment. On the other hand, some participants felt that the draft vision, developed in advance to be considered at the meeting, was too internally focused and needed to be more externally

oriented. For them, OGB identifies external changes and then sees what needs to be done internally: “this is the way we do it in Oxfam”, according to one senior manager (ibid: 9). This concerned having “people say in the [organisation] ‘I want to be a part of it’ [...] it is about getting people passionate about gender” (ibid). It was also about making gender accessible by having “a clear strap line, such as women gaining power, so that the business incorporates this and makes all staff responsible for something clear and achievable”, as suggested by Barlow, a senior manager (ibid: 10). Also, more than instilling excitement, it was about needing to make a break from the past by shifting “energy from trying to get ‘nay’ sayers on board and focus on what we do well” (ibid).

Moreover, the proponents of an externally derived vision were frustrated with the eternal debates and discussions on how the organisation itself needed to change¹¹⁷ (Internal document. Pialek, 2006: 20). For example, Sandra Blackwell, a long-time gender advisor, stated that OGB needed “more frank language [that gender mainstreaming] is a tool, not a way of making a project more palatable for staff [...] that’s a] disconnect between feminism and gender” (ibid: 9), Norris, a long-time senior manager, stated that they “needed to stop thinking about ourselves, it is pathetic [...] we need to look at what we can change in the world” (ibid: 9). For her and the proponents of an externally derived vision, dwelling on the past was not going to move the organisation forward, particularly when it concerned what the organisation was not doing. As Blackwell recalls of the meeting, Norris “didn’t want to think about the past, particularly when it concerned analysing how we strayed as an organisation. This was negative for some, and they were fed up with constantly hearing this. They wanted to look forward, as if the past didn’t exist” (field notes).

These relative starting points, whether internal or external, represented two different perspectives on change, both of which are related to the past. The inward approach acknowledged the limits of the organisation and proposed that visions be set accordingly. Part of this perspective was a recognition that perennial challenges, such as resistance by managers and resource constraints, were very real obstacles for the organisation in achieving its gender equality aims. The outward perspective was about creating change by making gender accessible and inspiring staff. Focusing externally

¹¹⁷ Pialek (2008: 223), who was present at the meeting, notes that “Oxfam’s management were upset that the vision of what a gender mainstreamed organisation would look like was too inward looking.”

would allow staff to become excited about gender and, as Norris' rebuke suggests, this entailed breaking from the past, and related associations such as "feminism", because it was too negative. Ironically, this perspective was related to the past but represented a different way of dealing with it. Looking forward and being inspiring meant nothing less than an ambitious agenda. The draft framework considered at the meeting, as the meeting facilitator wrote, was "criticised for being 'modest' – only hugely ambitious, outward-looking targets, transforming millions of women's lives, are deemed acceptable within the organisation" (Internal communication. Kirkwood, 2006). Focusing outward was also concerned with focusing on the future as a way to break from the past, which was associated with the constant bad news of the organisation's failings on gender.

This is where the contradiction of the agenda to make gender accessible lies. The argument is that "gender" needs to be simplified in order to be accessible and do-able. Past efforts created negative energy around gender because it was apparently made too difficult to apply due to its abstractness¹¹⁸. In contrast, ambitious targets, which arguably are just as difficult to realize, are embraced. It would seem that the issue about inward or outward perspectives is not just about their relative do-ability, but their perspectives on the past. As described in Chapter 4, OGB has a long, well-known and significant history in gender and development. For some, this is an illustrious past; for others, it is one to be disconnected from. The latter and the agenda to make gender more accessible had direct implications for how gender advisors were seen, which are discussed next.

The shifting of gender advisory support

There was a sense that we wanted [advisors] who would accompany in a supportive way, give people practical help in what they should do. Not go and shake a finger at them and tell them what they were doing wrong. That was very much the sort of theme we were looking for from people in that [gender] team.

(Interview. Blair, 2007)

¹¹⁸ van Eerdewij (2009) makes a similar point from her research of Dutch DNGOs.

The period after 2001 saw two shifts in gender advisory support. The first was quantitative. In 2000, with the dissolution of GALT, Oxfam House had four full-time gender advisors. In 2002, this was increased to five, but there were only three by 2006. Second was a qualitative shift: the gender team¹¹⁹ in 2006 comprised a different ilk of gender advisors. As I argue in the following, it is reasonable to perceive this change as having been achieved by shifting the terms of how gender was to be promoted by advisors, in part as a response to perceived shortcomings of how they worked in the past.

These gender team changes were part of a wider change in how advisory services were structured in Oxfam House during the early 2000s, as described in Chapter 4. There was a perceived general need to move advisors out of Oxfam House to the Regional Management Centres, coinciding with the establishment of regional-level advisor positions. But there were also particular arguments for gender advisors: gender advisors sitting in Oxford were seen as unable to support staff from afar and poorly connected to programme realities. So the shifting of gender advisors away from Oxfam House was related to a broadening of gender mainstreaming efforts. “In fact we had a gender unit at the time I arrived and that got pruned down quite significantly with the view it’s a gender mainstreaming thing if you like, it’s that we actually have to get this embedded in our programmes” (Interview. Pilkington, 2009).

This vision for the qualitative shift is consistent with those of the senior managers who saw a need to renew the gender advisors as well as the need for gender to be more accessible.

[We] needed [advisors] who knew it wasn’t simple but could simplify it for people they had to work with, particularly people who could be encouraging, supportive, in a very accompanying kind of way [...] You still needed expertise. It was the style, the way of working that needed to be different. Not that they didn’t have to just have expertise. (Interview. Blair, 2007)

¹¹⁹ I use this term to describe of overall gender infrastructure of gender advisors in Oxfam as opposed to the Policy Department gender team comprised of Global Gender Advisors

The changes represented “a big cultural shift”, says one senior manager (Interview. Blair, 2007) as compared early days, which were “dire actually, in terms of attitudes and the way gender experts behaved”, says another senior manager (Interview. Pilkington, 2009). For managers, the shift also concerned the inclusion of men, not only as gender advisors but also, more generally, through OGB staff getting involved with gender issues. Pilkington recalls that, when she first joined OGB, “The thing I found more difficult was the idea that you could work on gender and exclude men” (Interview. Pilkington, 2009). She and other managers therefore welcomed the involvement of men in OGB’s gender work. “Some people stayed and realised that the old method didn’t work and they were thinking about it differently. The sense that this is something we do together and evolve together [...] And the nice thing is that some are men” (Interview. Blair, 2007). The welcoming and embracing of men’s involvement in gender issues echoes the 2006 Gender Policy’s undifferentiated treatment of women and men, as discussed in Chapter 5. The de-privileging of a focus on women and their specific needs, as compared to the 1993 policy, seems to be an additional example of how and why the policy was to be made more accessible. Employing an equality discourse that features women *and* men seems to have been a direct response to previous efforts that were perceived as “excluding men”.

The regionalisation of Oxford-based advisors and the downscaling of the gender team also provided an opportunity to move gender advisors who were seen as inimical to the new agenda. As Blair states,

It was an active decision but probably not a very transparent decision. A combination of [new managers coming in and other managers] saying it ain’t working, [that we] decided to cut numbers. That was the transparent thing we did [...] We were determined quite frankly to get rid of them. And there were people frankly ready to move on. (Interview. Blair, 2007)

Although this could be seen as “weeding out”, others identified it as a shift in how OGB promoted gender, as explained in Chapter 4, from getting gender on the agenda to ensuring compliance and then to a focus on supporting. As Sarah Wright, a long time programme manager explains (Interview. Wright, 2008),

The kind of trajectory in my view is one where there was an internal battle to be fought from pre-GADU and GADU, [which] was the first history, getting a Gender Policy, and nursery and all that era was hugely important putting some foundations down. The more difficult stage came when how do we actually make this part of our organisational thinking and culture. And there have been various stages of how to do that. And one was this kind of expert way and more kind of regulatory compliance approach, which was felt by a lot of people as kind of policing. That approach that was being taken wasn't about weeding out. I think the shift was more about this was not working. What is it about advisors and gender that needs to be done with differently? What I don't like about the weeding out about the gender police because it sounds quite personally oriented."

While some advisors went, others who did change were retained: those who "stayed and realized that the old method didn't work and they were thinking about it differently" (Interview. Blair, 2007). As described previously, as in the case of Pilkington's gender training experience, part of the agenda of making gender accessible was promoting and modelling particular ways of doing gender. Those advisors who successfully demonstrated such approaches were the ones who stayed. One example is Ainsley Moore, "who figured out how to work with different people, especially managers. She comes across as constructive and not overly critical. She is able to get things done" (field notes). For senior managers, Moore epitomised the change they wanted to see and the types of people they wanted to work with. "But when I look [the current gender team], I think it's totally different from the past. And Moore, although both have been around a very long time, in particular, she may have changed her ways of working very significantly. And that sort of conflict, I just don't hear it anymore" (Interview. Blair, 2008).

The shifts of the gender team in Oxfam House were accompanied by the establishing of regional gender advisor positions. Ostensibly, this concerned getting advisory services closer to programmes, but what it meant in practice was a shift in the types of advisors hired. As mentioned above, RMCs were given latitude to staff their centres, apart from those in relation to mandatory management positions. Still, they were expected to hire

“practical” regional gender advisors, to fit the accessibility agenda. “We got increasingly regional gender advisors who got good at, I keep on using the word, practical or pragmatic [...] they cared about the issues but they also helped people translate it into meaningful things that could do in their programmes” (Interview. Blair, 2008).

In many respects, the cohort of gender advisors established by 2006 was very different to that which was associated with GADU¹²⁰. Early GADU member came to the unit from different professional trajectories, but for the most part were relatively new to working for development agencies. They had limited experience with working at the organisational level to integrate gender issues: the discourse of gender mainstreaming had yet to pervade the development sector. Many of those who worked with the unit until the late 1990s came from activist backgrounds, particularly in the developing world but also in the UK. As one of the longer-serving GADU members states, “We talked of activism and I would argue that involvement in activism here (in Europe), no matter how local e.g. campaigning against a motorway proposal, demonstrating against the Iraq war, enables us to understand something about working for change from the inside” [*sic*] (personal correspondence).

Post-FROSI advisors had less activist experience, like other OGB staff at this time. This was an era of “professionalisation”: staff were hired for experience working in mainstream development organisations, gained from working in OGB or other development organisations for a number of years, and with other qualifications such as relevant education. In particular, the regional advisors were products of the “professionalization of gender and development” (Standing, 2007: 110), related in part to the rise of “postgraduate and other training programmes in gender and development” (ibid: 103). This is not to say that staff during this time lacked any political agenda or felt dispassionate about social injustice. Similarly, post-FROSI gender advisors in Oxfam House and in the regions had more experience working in mainstream development organisations, gained from working in OGB or other development organisations for a number of years.

¹²⁰ This section is based on an analysis of interviews and of biographical data of select GADU members as members of the gender team during the post-FROSI period.

This difference was striking to those involved in GADU, An early GADU member describes the difference between current OGB gender staff and GADU:

If you come from somewhere else, you come with a certain [...] sense of what it's about. But it's a bit different [...] if it's a professional job for you. You don't share the same values, you don't want the same things and you probably come with a different sense of urgency. (Interview. West, 2011)

The shifting of gender advisors and how advisory support was done in the post-FROSI period was as much about the types of advisors who were preferred as much as the type of knowledge that was desired. The shift seems to be about moving from grounded feminist knowledge to formal gender knowledge gained from taking formal gender-related courses and work experience in development. This shift also represents a change in the idea of what constitutes gender expertise, an issue highlighted in Chapter 2 and which here can be seen as a shift from an activist notion to one more that is more developmentalist.

The myth of the gender police

I know when I started [...] I had never heard of the expression Gender Police. But within months, almost every new hire (male) person I inducted as they were going out into the field either mentioned it directly or alluded to it as the type of gender people within Oxfam. Where did they get it from except thru meeting with other Oxfam [...] staff before they reached me?

(Walker, 1996: 7)

As previously mentioned, the 2002 Gender Review noted that “GADU was unfinished business” (see Chapter 4). Murison (Internal report. 2002: 11) observed that the unit had taken on the “mythical status of an ‘urban legend’” and associated with it was the image of the “gender police”. The report’s author does not explore this notion but observed that it would “continue to have a devastating effect on action for gender equality in OGB, and for social and organisational change more broadly defined” (ibid). During my

research, the term “gender police” was commonly used by a number of informants to characterise particular OGB staff, mostly gender advisors but also others who have gender as part of their remit. But the term had different interpretations. Sometimes it was used for advisors who were seen as always complaining about OGB’s gender equality efforts and challenges and making little effort to support understanding. In other cases, it referred to surveillance and people looking out for mistakes. In other situations, the term was about “busting people”¹²¹ if they made mistakes even before they were fairly judged. In this section, I attempt to trace the term and its various associated meanings. I propose that the notion of “gender police” is a myth in the sense that, more than just a characterisation, it was deployed both to prevent particular ways of promoting gender equality and to encourage others.

As suggested, the term’s origin in OGB is associated with GADU, whose members were referred to as the “feminist thought police” (Interview. Wright, 2008). According to West, a long time OGB manager, “people used to talk about the old gender unit as the gender police” (Interview. West, 2011). Another early GADU member recalls how, after she joined the unit, having previously worked in another section, her former colleagues would jokingly say “Oh, so you are now with the gender thought police”¹²² (Interview. Kilpatrick, 2008). Liz Picker, another early GADU member, recalls that “The police idea probably came from us going back and saying ‘You can’t support this project. You need to ask these questions.’ People hadn’t been pushed before and suddenly were having their assumptions challenged. And their opinions challenged and so on” (Interview. Picker, 2009).

Years after GADU had been dismantled, the term if not the notion of “being policed” was still in use. Kilpatrick recalls coming across the term for the first time when she joined OGB in 2001, never having heard it previously. For example, after introducing herself, colleagues would reply “Oh, you’re the gender police” (Interview. Kilpatrick, 2008). Also, my experiences as a researcher of gender in Oxfam House in 2005 helped

¹²¹ This phrase extends the “police” metaphor and refers to people being “busted” or arrested for an offence.

¹²² Early members of GADU reject the notion that they undertook a policing function, if anything because they didn’t have the power. As one recalls, “there was no way we could be police because we had no power and indeed often felt that we had to lay our souls out for people to show them how nice and experienced we were so they would engage” (Personal communication. Stamstead, 2011).

me to understand not only the suspicion gender advisors faced, but the intimidation they experienced from attempts to keep them in line. For example, at one of the very few meetings of the Corporate Management Team I attended, members made reference to me only as someone who was checking up on them. For example, Bloomer asked me if I was going to count the number of times they mentioned gender. Peters asked me if I was going to “push the gender button” if they said something wrong. Shaw inquired if I was going to “test them about gender in reports”. While these comments were made in jest, there was certainly a common theme of me surveying them. Later, when talking casually with Shaw after the meeting, I asked him about his comments. He replied “it seemed that’s what gender folk do, they check up on people” (field notes). That there was an intimidating environment was a sentiment shared by other OGB senior managers. As Pilkington remembers from when she first joined in 2000, there were “certainly people, the [Corporate Management Team] back then, men who felt they you’d be taken apart if you said slightly the wrong things, somehow. If you didn’t buy into the agenda, debated it in anyway, it wasn’t sort of ok” (Interview. Pilkington, 2009).

For the most part, the gender police were associated with gender advisors and specifically, the term was associated with the specific ways advisors were perceived to be working and the effect they had on the organisation. They were seen to consider themselves experts and to make people feel inadequate. Blair, a senior manager, recalls

Certainly when I first started to get involved in gender work in Oxfam in 2001-2002, that was very much the view. There was a bunch of people regarded themselves as immense experts on gender, probably were in most cases. I’m not criticising that they were, but [they] then made everyone feel inadequate... (Interview. Blair, 2008)

Moreover, the ‘gender police’ referred to advisors who were perceived as not helping people to do better on gender. As Smuthers explains, “when the gender police bust you, they don’t tell you what could be different, there are reasons for this reasons for that” (Interview. Smuthers, 2006). Related to this perception was that such advisors had little

practical experience, as “a northern bunch of people who knew the theories but actually did not have much practical experience” (Interview. Blair, 2007).

For some staff, the way gender advisors worked was related to the political nature of gender work, which meant facing resistance, having to push and constantly being frustrated. Kay Saunders, who has worked with gender issues in OGB for many years but not as a gender advisor, reflects that, while advisors may not sometimes act in the most constructive manner, this is understandable given the context in which they work and the nature of the role:

It probably goes with the territory that if you're in that kind of job. Unless you're a saint, then your patience can run out [...] I think its absolute poisoned chalice being a gender advisor. It is a terrible fate [...] the thing is you don't get your job satisfaction from the conventional quarters [...] your manager is not particularly likely to appreciate you or reward you, you know colleagues aren't particularly likely to appreciate you or reward you. And you have to draw on endless inner reserve of strength and somehow live without getting external observation.
(Interview. Saunders, 2008)

Whether gender advisors identified themselves with feminism or not did not dispel despairing associations and characterisation of the gender police as implicitly linked to feminism, as Pilkington's comment suggests. “This is not new. I experienced this previously. The negative part of feminism if you like. Women must fight this all together [...] I felt it was a right-on feminist perspective which I found very uncomfortable. It wasn't encouraging to [think] about men, either” (Interview. Pilkington, 2009). For Blair, it was a particular perception of feminism. The “[gender police] came from a white, northern British, feminist perspective, which itself is not wrong, but the way that played out, the way they presented it” (Interview. Blair, 2007).

For some advisors, the association of the “gender police” with feminism had detrimental effects. Walker recalls the perception managers had of her and her reasons for leaving: “You try to introduce some intellectual rigour into gender but it was seen as feminism, and feminism was seen as polarising, uncomfortable analysis that no one wanted to

associate with. And that's where it got stuck. I got stuck in that ally" (Interview. Spence, 2008). Added to this was the suspicion of a "feminist conspiracy" that the 'gender police' were solely concerned with women's issues and not poverty or gender-related poverty. For example, following staff input into Oxfam's Strategic Framework, senior managers and members of the International Directorate Senior Management Team agreed there was a need for a "clearer and unanimous understanding of how gender and poverty/injustice are linked; there is a feeling that there is a separate feminist agenda unrelated to poverty and injustice" (field notes).

Most gender advisor informants could not recall behaving in ways that would have justified such a characterisation, particularly as they lacked the power to enforce policy (Interview. Stamstead, 2011). Ironically, the image of the gender police included the idea that that they did have such power:

The gender police are able to [bust you as a] result of the institutional corporate power behind them. They don't have to justify, they don't have to argue their case, all they have to say is 'gender' and you are busted. Like the police, stop or I'll shoot. It's pretty definitive with gender. (Interview. Smuthers, 2006).

Others who spoke of the 'gender police' had not actually experienced them but knew of them. For example, Pilkington had not personally experienced the "wrath" of the police although she had a clear picture of to what the term referred. Similarly, staff who were new to OGB already knew of them, as Kilpatrick claimed. But still the image was perpetuated, even by people who had not experienced the police themselves. Why did this perception of gender advisors continue? For what purpose?

The "gender police" serves as a metaphor for the past and the "bad old days", when gender advisors "really left a bad taste in the organisation", as Spence recalls (Interview, 2008). It also acts as a constraint on what gender work can be done. When concerns are raised in relation to women's subordination, a common rhetorical device to discredit the claim is to imply, by referring to previous similar instances, that such complaints are "whingey", evoking the image of the gender police. I observed on a number of occasions how such evocations would be used to shut advisors down. For

example, during a 2005 planning meeting for the Strategic Framework to consider OGB's basic social services strategy, a long-time gender advisor, Sandra Blackwell, raised concerns that gender issues were being left out of the discussion. In response, a senior manager said that she, Blackwell, was "always complaining" and asked that they move on (field notes). For Blackwell, this put her in a Catch-22 situation that discredited her and her opinions and effectively silenced her. If she pursued the concern that gender was being ignored, she would be seen as argumentative and difficult, thereby proving the senior manager's point. Seen as "whingeey", her point of gender-unaware practice would be discredited. If she ceased giving feedback, the issue would not be raised. As a long-time advisor observed, "whether they [gender advisors] are ["whingeey" and unconstructive] or not, coming across that way is just a reminder of the gender police" (Interview. Armstrong, 2009). This leaves little room for gender issues to be further pursued. As Murison writes, the image of the gender police, and by extension associations with GADU, "directly undermines diversity of opinion [... and] has a powerful agency" (Internal report. 2002: 11).

What these examples show is that references to the "always-complaining gender advisor" are attempts to shut down perceived dissent by placing the onus for appearing constructive on those raising the concerns – which often limits the extent to which issues can be pursued. While such rhetorical devices are common strategies, they have particular significance when it comes to gender issues in OGB. As Wright observes

Other advisors don't get that sense that they are being labelled as police, like gender advisors. So what is that about? There are some issues about gender work that make it more challenging to people so they identify them as police because it's actually uncomfortable to deal with these issues, more so than dealing with labour or agriculture or whatever. (Interview. Wright, 2008)¹²³

In part, the notion of gender advisors as police is a function of the gender mainstreaming structure established by OGB as well as many other development agencies. Advisors are positioned late in organisational processes – whether this

¹²³ Blackwell makes a similar point, that the term applied to gender so easily, given the history of gender in Oxfam. It wouldn't be applied to other areas (such as the monitoring and evaluation police) (Interview. Blackwell, 2008).

concerns the development of a policy or of a project, they are one of the last to be involved ¹²⁴. As a result, they are always playing catch-up and have to work to “integrate” issues that have already been formulated and developed. Their role then becomes one of filling gaps and making it known that such gaps exist. As shown by Picker above, and as observed by other informants, this does not go down well. Saunders sums up this predicament as being in a position of “being asked to look for violations [...] They’re looking for transgressions and violations and holding people to account, in a police-like way. Because you know, police come after [...] a crime has been committed don’t they?” (Interview. Saunders, 2008)¹²⁵.

This portrayal of gender advisors as police is not unique to OGB, however. For example, Crewe and Harrison (1998: 65-66) note how some men “felt daunted by particular gender ‘experts’ who were seen as aggressive” and how this contributed to “feelings of being misunderstood, excluded, or alienated”. Similarly, Standing (2004: 82 and 83) recalls how donor representatives “scold[ed] some of the bureaucrats for their ‘misunderstanding’ of gender, particularly in talking about women’s health, rather than gender relations. The effect is to confuse and silence the very people who are expected to operationalize the strategy.”

Still, what is unique for OGB is how the notion of the gender police became a myth. As indicated above, Murison termed the gender police concept an urban legend, an “interesting and powerful social [phenomenon], part of whose effect is to ‘punish’ those who step out of line” (Internal report. 2002: 11). I prefer to see the concept as a myth, in the sense of both Sorel and Barthes. In using this term, I draw on Cornwall et al.’s (2007a: 5) reference to Sorel that the point of “myths” is not whether they are true or false but rather what they do. The authors see their value in how they “work for development by encoding ‘truths’ in narratives that nourish and sustain convictions. And development’s myths gain their purchase because they speak about the world in ways that lend political convictions the sense of direction that is needed to inspire action.”

¹²⁴ Oxfam regional and country advisors Donna Winslet (field notes) Sokha Cheat (Interview. 2006) also observed this. Jahan (1995: 61) makes a similar point about gender work in CIDA.

¹²⁵ van Eerdewij (2009: 2) makes a similar point about the “tools” gender advisors have to work with, such as targets, non-negotiables: “The quantitative character and the annual monitoring of the targets create an atmosphere of ‘being policed’ and as such create negative energies around gender.”

I also draw on Barthes, who “reversed Sorel’s categories. Myth prevented rather than stimulated action” (Tager, 1986: 632). Drawing on the notion of doxa, or what is accepted as “normal”, myths have the “capacity to convert historically determined outcomes into natural phenomena” (ibid). While constraining, myth works by “not deny[ing] things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact” (Barthes, 1991: 143).

I refer to the gender police as a myth for a number of reasons. As a characterisation, informants rarely questioned it: it was accepted as fact. Managers and advisors alike spoke of the gender police as real people, but few could be specific as to who the police actually were; some had inherited the myth as it was passed from one person to another. Moreover, the term meant different things to different people who used it – although it remained a term used to condone or condemn particular ways of working. In addition, I suggest that the continual reference to gender advisors as the gender police was a trope that was used to evoke an image from the past as part of the reproduction of the simplifying gender discourse. Characterising particular gender advisors in this manner maintained a metaphor of “the bad old days”, and objectified and turned them into villains so as to delimit them – privileging certain types of advisors and how they worked while demonising others. The trope reinforced the binary between acceptable and unacceptable ways to promote gender and reproduced the framing of the “problem” as one that concerned how the promotion of gender was structured and who was seen as responsible for doing the promoting – the gender advisors. It was also a multivalent trope used in different contexts to refer to negative experiences from institutional attempts to draw attention to gender issues, as a way to tie and tidy “up the messiness” of past events by inventing persons “onto which to pass the buck for original responsibility” (Jiménez, 2007: xx).

As a long-time member of the OGB gender team states,

You know the sort of stereotyping. A lot of feminist witches who are all part of the problem. And actually [...] everybody was terribly well meaning and thought [gender] was naturally something that we would be good at in Oxfam; if we could just get rid of these people who are sort of perverting by their [...] evil ways [...] then you know, then it could flourish. (Interview. Saunders, 2008)

CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the further embedding of gender mainstreaming in Oxfam House with the assumption of organisational leadership for gender being largely taken over by senior managers. During the post-FROSI era, OGB managers pursued an agenda to make gender accessible: under the auspices of gender mainstreaming, gender was seen as the responsibility of everybody, and demonstrating that it was do-able by all staff was paramount. The agenda was pursued as a way of breaking what Pialek (2008) has termed a “policy impasse” to describe the perennial challenges faced by OGB to institutionalise gender concerns.

This increased preponderance of senior managers in gender leadership roles was also accompanied by a shifting of how advisory support was being done. The numbers of gender advisors in Oxfam House was decreased, and approaches that were deemed unconstructive discouraged, partly through the reproduction of the myth of the “gender police” while new approaches were encouraged, partly through a modelling of supposed inspiring and constructive approaches. This was similar to what happened during the UN Decade for Women:

In most organisations, solutions to the structural problems of the machineries were sought in individual personalities: individuals holding WID/GAD positions were either acclaimed or blamed for their personal traits rather than their professional qualities. In the early years of the Decade, agencies recruited feminists from outside to fill WID positions, but later the agencies turned to ‘managers’, as it was believed that feminists were confrontational and pushed their male colleagues too hard! (Jahan, 1995: n.r. cited by Williams, 1999: 186).

The purpose of focusing on the agenda of making gender accessible is not to criticize the overall sentiment. Making gender ideas and concepts intelligible is a laudable goal. Rather, what this analysis demonstrates is how particular interpretations of the past and understanding of it is needed to break an “impasse” and drive change. In particular, what this and the previous chapter demonstrate is how gender mainstreaming orthodoxy, in this case that organisational leaders take more responsibility for promoting gender issues, allowed for such interpretations of the past to become

authoritative where senior managers with structural power were able to impose particular meanings (Wright, 1994). The previous examples demonstrate exercises of three-dimensional power (Lukes, 2005) : the coopting editorial processes and shifting of gender advisors; propagating notions of acceptable to discuss gender; and perpetuating the myth of “gender police”. This allowed for the de-politicization of gender mainstreaming through structuration of agenda of making gender accessible and the confirming of such structuration.

These political processes to assert definitive interpretations are revealed through an analysis of critical interfaces of policy making, such as the updating of the 1993 gender policy, and operationalizing its intent of making gender accessible, that allowed for policy taking on meaning (Long, 1989). But more than a perception of the past, the agenda of making gender accessible is also representative of how senior managers viewed gender policy. They understood that decreeing that gender be mainstreamed was unlikely to produce the desired effect. A less direct approach, of making gender accessible, was pursued in an attempt to inspire staff. The 2003 Gender Policy is an example of this. While offering an alternative to previous efforts, senior managers still held the belief in the power of organisation policy to affect practice: if the policy was right, practice would more or less follow. At the basis of their efforts was an assumption not only of a linear and positivist relation between policy and practice, but also and overall implicit notion of a homogeneous organisation. The next chapters explore these understandings by following the commitment and “putative relationships” (Marcus, 1995: 98) from the perspective of the practice of gender mainstreaming and the focus on a single OGB project.

Chapter 7

Community-based Disaster Management in Cambodia: a model gender mainstreamed project

INTRODUCTION

Chapters 5 and 6 discussed the shifts in how OGB promoted gender equality which were in part related to structural organisational changes overall as well as changes in OGB's policy and gender infrastructure, including a shift in its gender leadership. These changes represent an entrenchment of gender mainstreaming informed by competing institutional post-FROSI imperatives, individual agendas and perceptions of past gender work in and by OGB.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 explore gender mainstreaming in OGB at the level of programme implementation. I suggest that while the taking up of gender mainstreaming was furthered by post FROSI structural changes, with regional and country strategies also adopting the approach, the practice of gender mainstreaming was informed by different contingencies. I explore how the local site of implementation plays a more critical role in the practice of promoting of gender equality than does organisational policy, both of which, however, were informed by post-FROSI organisational changes. I also look at what differences OGB makes to women's lives and their integration into the organisation's work.

These chapters focus on OGB's Community-based Disaster Management project in Cambodia, which the organisation considered as a "model" of disaster management and an example of gender mainstreaming. As a case study, it stands in contrast to gender assessments of Oxfam, described in Chapter 5, that reiterated that its gender work was wanting, particularly the integration of gender concerns in programme analysis, design and implementation. This case concerns different representations and understandings of gender and how these relate to the practice of gender mainstreaming.

Chapter 7 provides the context for the project and outlines its main features. I present OGB's claims of having established a model in community based disaster management that also addressed women's concerns by mainstreaming gender. I explore what constitutes a successful gender mainstreamed project in OGB in Cambodia's eyes.

However, claims of it being a model were contested, mainly by OGB advisors. I explore what, despite these contestations, assertions of having a model achieve.

The chapter is comprised of three main sections. The first provides the regional OGB context for the project. The second is largely descriptive to provide an overall understanding of the case study. I present the stated aims and activities of the project and how it is represented by OGB as a “gender-mainstreamed” project addressing the needs of women as well as improving their position. The third describes OGB’s claims about the project and the dominant interpretation of the project, as well as contestations of this interpretation.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN OXFAM GB EAST ASIA

As discussed Chapters 4 , the establishment of Regional Management Centres (RMCs) by OGB in early 2000 was a result of post-FROSI efforts to relocate staff positions from Oxfam House closer to countries so as to be better able to support them. In addition to management roles, this change in organisational structure also affected advisors based in Oxford: OGB decreased their numbers based in Oxfam House while enabling RMCs to structure advisory services and employ regional advisors as they deemed fit. For the RMC in East Asia, as described in Chapter 4, this entailed a Regional Gender Lead, who worked with regional management team to establish and follow up on regional gender strategies, as well as a full time Regional Gender Advisor¹²⁶, who provided support to country based staff and reported to the regional lead. Both these regional positions were intermediary roles between Oxfam House and the country programmes. They were to provide regional leadership for and support to country programmes to advance organisational OGB policy while, at the same time, represented country and regional interests at the level of the organisation overall, such as providing inputs on the 2003 Gender Policy, while also performing an upward reporting function to Oxfam House.

While needing to work within the overall policy framework of OGB, regional staff had the leeway to establish their own strategies for the region. As noted in Chapter 4, while Oxfam House senior management expressed an expectation that regions would hire

¹²⁶ As reminder, I was the Regional Gender Advisor from 2002 to 2004 then again from 2007 to 2008.

gender advisors who “were more grounded” than Oxford-based advisors (Interview. Blair, 2007), regional managers were free to hire who they wanted. Still, their preferences coincided. As David Heller, a regional senior manager at the time, states, “we wanted an advisor who had practical experience and who could help and support people not with theories, but with real practical advice” (Interview. Heller, 2006). The privileging of the regions and regional-based staff is not to say that gender advisors in Oxford were completely displaced: they still supported country-based staff but their relationship was more ad hoc and sporadic than national staff had with regional staff, the latter of which often mediated and coordinated relationships between globally-based and nationally-based OGB staff.

The latitude of regional-based gender staff is demonstrated by two examples of the relationship between overall OGB policy emanating from Oxford and regional strategies and initiatives. One is the role the 2003 Gender Policy had in OGB in East Asia and its country programmes. As one regional manager at the time, Sharon Davies, states “It had very little effect” (Interview. Davies, 2011). This was mainly for two reasons. First, while it was distributed as OGB policy, it was not widely popular among regional staff for its perceived weakness compared to the original 1993 policy. As Davies, a regional senior manager, writes after reviewing the 2006 Gender Policy “My personal opinion [...] is that it would make sense to maintain the 1993 policy until such time that the organisation can review the 2 new papers properly” (Personal communication. Davies, 2003). Second, described in Chapter 4, the OGB East Asia regional programme had its own gender mainstreaming strategy established in 2003 (Internal document. OGB, 2003a). The 2003 Gender Policy was distributed to staff in the region but, in light of the criticisms, was not strongly highlighted (Interview. Davies, 2011). The East Asia gender mainstreaming strategy was the preferred policy document, not least because staff in the region participated in its development, mainly through the regional gender working group, referred to in Chapter 4.

The second example is that of the gender “minimum standards”¹²⁷. They originate as a series of “non-negotiables” for OGB’s humanitarian work in East Asia, which were

¹²⁷ These standards pre-date OGB’s gender non-negotiables introduced by the Director in 2005 for the entire organisation, described in Chapter 5. The East Asia guidelines were cited as an example of the use

developed at a workshop I attended in 2002 in Hanoi. Staff were struggling with understanding what gender meant for them and their work, which was a similar observation made by senior managers in Oxfam House. After two days of reviewing gender concepts, understanding the relevance of gender issues to humanitarian work, sharing of experiences and reviewing Oxfam's 1993 gender policy, participants, most of whom were OGB staff working in humanitarian programmes in the region, requested clarification of what was minimally expected of them. The result was a set of "Gender and Humanitarian Interventions – Non Negotiables" that was developed by a senior regional manager drawing largely on existing humanitarian standards produced by the humanitarian team in Oxford. Accepted by the participants (Internal report. Demontis, 2002), they include reference to the 1993 gender policy and require staff to mainstream gender "in all stages of disaster management" (ibid: 19), particularly the need for gender analysis. They also state that "Staff are expected to draw upon [OGB] gender resource people at early stage of the humanitarian intervention" (ibid: 20).

This meeting was also the first time I met country-based staff, as I had just joined OGB, and when I was introduced to the Community-based Disaster Management Project as a successful initiative in community mobilisation, as OGB Cambodian staff also attended the workshop. The confluence of an OGB project success and the introduction of regional gender mainstreaming initiatives and resources serve as the basis for an analysis of the former.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

*Background to Oxfam GB in Cambodia*¹²⁸

OGB has a long history in Cambodia and a strong reputation. This is mostly because it led a handful of international NGOs that defied international pressure not to provide relief to Cambodia¹²⁹ so as to isolate the Vietnamese-backed government in Phnom Penh that routed the Khmer Rouge in 1979. As two prominent scholars on Cambodia write, "More than 25 years later Cambodians still fondly remember Oxfam's

of a gender standard when Oxfam House approved the ones for OGB more widely (Interview. Blair, 2008).

¹²⁸ The Kingdom of Cambodia has had different names since its independence in 1953. For ease of reference and consistency, I use the name Cambodia.

¹²⁹ See Whitaker (1983) and Black (1992) for detailed accounts of Oxfam's efforts to deliver assistance to Cambodia.

commitment and determination” (Fawthrop and Jarvis, 2004: 20). The organisation also has a reputation for its gender work in Cambodia and has been recognised for initiatives to address gender concerns (discussed below). This has not always been the case, however. During its early years, according to Mehta (1993a: 40), OGB staff working in Cambodia had no or little gender awareness. The provision of relief did not differentiate between women and men, and the latter were assumed heads of the household and the primary recipients of agricultural tools (Mehta, 1993a, Mehta, 1993b). This is despite the fact that women comprised an estimated 60-65% of the population, and 30-35% of households were headed by women (Sonnois, 1990: 1)¹³⁰.

The signing of the Paris Peace Accords in 1991 ushered in a new era. The UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, deployed in 1992, was instrumental in facilitating the holding of Cambodia’s first elections in 1993. This period also saw an influx of international NGOs as well as the rapid growth of Cambodian NGOs (CNSN, 1997), including women’s organisations. Mehta (1993b: 25) observed during this period that women, particularly female heads of households, became recognised as a priority, especially for economic development, and “as a highly vulnerable group in need of special support [...] Programmes specifically targeting these women were developed”¹³¹. The first initiatives developed by international agencies assumed a “Women in Development” (WID) approach that “aimed to integrate women in the mainstream of development” (Mehta, 1993b: 25). Missing was an understanding of women, particularly meanings of “widowed”, “divorced” or “single”, in the context of Cambodian society. This, along with an exclusive focus on material development, left unaddressed “the issue of women’s role and position in the larger community and dynamics within the community which serve to create and maintain women’s vulnerable position” (ibid: 46).

OGB was one of the few development agencies in Cambodia to have “specifically attempted to break out of the [WID] model and develop a more gender focused

¹³⁰ Sonnois (1990: 27) notes the lack of reliable statistics; these figures were confirmed by village surveys conducted by different agencies.

¹³¹ Internationally, being a female-headed household was also being conflated with the status of being particularly vulnerable (Baden and Goetz, 1998). Vlaar and Ahlers (1998) challenged this assumption for Cambodia; still the assumption that female-headed households are the most vulnerable continued in OGB Cambodia throughout the research period. See Chapter 7.

approach” (Mehta, 1993b: 46)¹³². It made efforts to introduce a gender perspective into the organisation and its programmes and to raise the gender awareness of staff. In 1993, it conducted a series of gender workshops¹³³, and in 1996, it hosted OGB’s annual gender workshop for staff from the Asian region (Mehta, 1993a)¹³⁴. In addition, the recently approved Oxfam Gender Policy was translated into Khmer and provided along with staff job descriptions, and job adverts and interviews included gender references (Padmanabhan, 1999). Additionally, according to OGB staff in Cambodia reviewing their work in 1993, gender issues were integrated into programmes, gender impact assessments were being undertaken and gender was “fully integrated into the strategic planning process and [would] continue to be of significance in the future” (Mehta, 1993a: 42).

This shift from a WID approach to a gender perspective seems due to a number of inter-related factors. While Oxfam House gender advisors were not directly involved with the Cambodia programme, GADU had an over-riding influence. It facilitated the initial OGB-sponsored research (Mehta, 1993b) which aimed to assist the OGB Cambodian programme to “better able to integrate gender issues into its problem analysis and programme planning” (ibid: 1). The training that followed the research (Mehta, 1993a) was undertaken by Mehta and Julia Cleever Moose, the latter of whom contributed to OGB’s seminal book on gender and development, *Changing Perceptions: Writings on Gender and Development* (Wallace and March, 1991) and went on to write *Half the World, Half a Chance. An Introduction to Gender and Development* (Mosse, 1993). In addition, the GADU initiative in the run up to Beijing, the Women’s Linking Project, was also influential as a South-South networking, mobilising and advocacy effort among Southern feminists and gender advocates (referred to in Chapter 4). For the OGB

¹³² While OGB was one of the first NGOs, by 1995 gender and development discourse had become popularised. A 1995 survey of 63 international and 18 Cambodian NGOs found that 23 organisations claimed to have personnel specialising in GAD or WID, and the majority were conducting gender training for their staff (Lott and Sarann Phanny, 1995). Given the latter results, the authors rightly point to the need to ask how agencies define gender training and question the quality of such training. Ironically, Lott and Sarann Phanny’s suggestion of greater reflection could have benefited them as well. Santry (2005) suggests that their guidance on establishing a gender policy spoke to Cambodian NGOs seeking funds as having such a policy was a condition for receiving financial support if not registering as an NGO (Personal communication. Santry, 2010).

¹³³ These were conducted as part of the Oxfam House-initiated “Women’s Linking Project”, referred to in Chapter 4.

¹³⁴ The workshops, called “Action for Gender Relations-Asia”, continued into the research period e.g., the workshop where the gender humanitarian “non-negotiables” were developed and approved was part of this series.

country representative at the time, “these links helped boost gender issues in the programmes and at the office level” which helped the OGB programme in Cambodia to lay “the foundations for a central gender perspective” (Padmanabhan, 1999: 123).

Padmanabhan’s account of the Cambodian programme’s achievements were, however, different from my experience with the Cambodian programme (2002-2004) when I worked for OGB. During this period, a number of what she cites as accomplishments had to be re-done: the 1993 policy had to be re-translated into Khmer, gender criteria needed to be re-included in hiring and job descriptions, and gender analysis needed to be re-introduced. It is also during this time that I became more familiar with the context of the CBDM project which is described next. In other words, results of gender mainstreaming efforts from the 1990s had all but disappeared but then re-appear in the post-FROSI period.

Project context

Annually, the Mekong River floodplain in Cambodia is inundated with water, which can rise up to 15 metres, bringing both prosperity and misery. On the one hand, floodwaters support two large sectors of the economy and people’s livelihoods: fishing and rice cultivation. Inundated lands become vast fishing grounds while the floodwaters provide critical irrigation and nutrients for rice cultivation, the main agricultural activity for 97% of households in Takeo province, where I undertook research (data for 2004 from WFP, 2010). On the other hand, the floods also bring misery. Accompanied by wind and rain, the flooding season, which lasts from about July to December, wreaks havoc on people’s lives. Houses are flooded or blown away, people’s livelihoods are disrupted, and they can be stranded for weeks unless they have a boat allowing them limited access to the surrounding area. Daily routines are risky ventures, and animals, often among the few assets families have, are sometimes lost. Incomes – normally derived from farming, mice catching¹³⁵ or casual labour – disappear. Food becomes scarce, and health declines as a result of poor nutritional intake and water-borne diseases. These effects also cause family debts to increase.

¹³⁵ This activity entailed catching wild mice that were sold in Vietnam (field notes).

It is not uncommon for a few people, mainly women and children, to drown. In 2000, the floods were particularly severe: some 3.4 million Cambodians were affected and 350 died (Kazama et al., 2002). The floods of 2001 and 2002 were not as serious but still caused widespread damage. They were followed by two years of “lower than normal” flooding, with the 2005 floods considered “normal” (MRC, 2005).

OGB’s Community-based Disaster Management (CBDM) project took place in Takeo province, which borders Vietnam in south-eastern Cambodia. It is the fifth-largest of the 24 provinces in Cambodia, with about 880,000 people in 2004, which represented 8% of Cambodia’s 13 million people (NIS, 2004). A total of 95% of Takeo’s population lives in rural areas, much of which is difficult to access owing to weak infrastructure. It is a poor province and was ranked in the top five in terms of child morbidity and mortality during 1996-2000 (WFP, 2010). Government assistance to the province is weak and support from NGOs and other development agencies is limited. In 2006, they together disbursed about \$7.3 million to Takeo, representing 1.3% of all development assistance provided to Cambodia. NGOs were the second-largest provider, after the European Union, contributing 26.4% (CDC, 2007). In the villages included in this research, the OGB project was the only “development” initiative being undertaken by non-governmental sources, although this is not to say that communities were isolated, even if they were difficult to access. People had access to media, namely, radio and television, as well as markets in neighbouring Vietnam (field notes).

Objectives, scope and approach of a gender mainstreamed project

The extent to which Cambodians are adversely affected by floods is related not only to the severity of the flood but also to their “vulnerability” to disaster. It is in this regard that OGB in Cambodia established the CBDM project in 2003, as the main initiative of the Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Programme¹³⁶. The initial aim of the three-year pilot project was

to develop a pilot DM [disaster management] programme in Takeo province that will demonstrate to key stakeholders the importance of a comprehensive

¹³⁶ The overall goal of the wider programme was that “Fewer people die, fall sick, and suffer deprivation as a result of armed conflict or natural disasters” (Internal document. Oxfams Humanitarian Programme Office, 2002: 3). The programme was led by OGB with financial support from other affiliates: Oxfam America, Novib (from the Netherlands) and Oxfam Hong Kong.

approach to DM that includes community based initiative and the sustained involvement of government and civil society partners and which can be replicated in other flood prone provinces and form the basis of a national DM operational policy (Internal document. Oxfams Humanitarian Programme Office, 2002).¹³⁷

The project purportedly directly benefited some 340 households and 1,750 people (approximately 50% female)¹³⁸. A number of other people were supposed to benefit indirectly from the pilot project as a result of exposure to it. For example, by 2005 OGB had provided training on disaster management-related issues to some 500 people from government and NGOs (Internal report. OGB, 2006d). With a budget of about £145,000 per year, the project was managed and implemented by OGB in Cambodia's Disaster Management staff: the OGB Humanitarian Programme Coordinator for Cambodia and two Programme Officers, Lay Sokroeun and Phoung Tola¹³⁹. As mentioned previously, Oxfam worked with a Cambodian NGO, Takeo Development, using a "semi-operational" approach, where OGB in Cambodia staff were directly involved in implementing the project.

The overall approach of the project was to decrease communities' vulnerabilities to flooding and strengthen their capacities to survive and recover. This characterises OGB's and other international organisations' understanding and ways of dealing with humanitarian emergencies: they result from the combination of disasters, whether natural or human-made, and "vulnerability" (Internal report. Demontis, 2002). By reducing the latter, mainly by working with communities, the impact of the disaster, hence extent of humanitarian emergency, are supposed to be lessened. In this respect, the CBDM project was an integration of OGB's two mandates: alleviating poverty and suffering, through development *and* humanitarian assistance.

¹³⁷ The aim of the project changed on numerous occasions after its inception.

¹³⁸ This statistic differs from the previously cited figure of 60-65% of the population being comprised of women because this was a generalized figure for the whole country and is from the late 1980s/early 1990s whereas the CBDM figure concerns a small sample of project beneficiaries over 10 years later.

¹³⁹ These staff were authors of the various project documents cited in this research, unless otherwise stated. The relevance of this and the impetus for the integration of gender concerns are discussed in Chapter 8.

For Oxfam project staff, “gender” was an integral feature of the project and gender mainstreaming a key strategy, as Lay Sokroeun, a programme officer, states: “All the [village committees] have women because this is a gender-mainstreamed project and we want to empower women” (field notes). Dikorn Ieng, a senior manager of OGB in Cambodia, also claimed that “Gender is one of our strengths in terms of our gender analysis” in the project (field notes). OGB focused on women in the project given “deep rooted gender disparities” in the project area and an “understanding that women and children are the most vulnerable to disasters” (Internal document. OGB, 2006f: n.r.).

In particular, the provision of assets, such as water containers (referred to as “giant jars”¹⁴⁰), was considered by OGB “very helpful for the family especially women and girls to reduce the fear of kidnapping, raping, reducing the distance and time to collect the water” (Internal document. OGB, 2006f: n.r.). The relating of “fear” with vulnerability, the latter of which was part of the project’s dual strategy, described previously, was common: increasing communities’ confidence and capacity to respond to floods was about having less fear of floods and the damage they can cause. “Fear” was particularly associated with women, who, along with children, were considered the most vulnerable to floods (Internal document. OGB, 2006e). For example, the 2004 project proposal justified its provision of boats, life-saving equipment and vegetable platforms partly because they reduce a specific “whole range of flood-related fears” experienced by women and causing them “immense physical stress” (Internal document. OGB, 2004b: 7). These included women’s fear of boat transportation (more than men’s), thereby decreasing their mobility; of drowning, although OGB noted that men were not necessarily better swimmers; and of not being able to access medical facilities (ibid)¹⁴¹.

The project also aimed to “encourage women to express their own ideas, to participate in decision-making and to contribute their direct support to the community (Internal report. Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005: 11). It aspired to “support change in relations between women and men in terms of control over and access to resources at the level of community and family; in terms of participation in community decision making; and

¹⁴⁰ Large concrete water cisterns.

¹⁴¹ The report from which this information was taken (see the next chapter for an account of this) states that none of the research informants had seen a crocodile except on television and that “people are also affected by their own perceptions of risk” (Care International, 2002: 23).

reducing incidence of domestic violence” (Internal document. OGB, n.d.-c: 4). By undertaking particular activities for women (described below), OGB wanted to ensure that both men’s and women’s needs were not only identified but also met, by ensuring women’s and men’s access and control over project resources (Internal document. OGB, 2004b). Women’s needs, particularly those of female-headed households, included boats, fishing equipment, vegetable platform and private areas in common spaces where villages take refuge during floods (Internal document. Oxfams Humanitarian Programme Office, 2002).

The project was not only considered, by project staff and OGB in Cambodia managers, a model in community-based disaster management, but also a gender mainstreamed project in terms of its gender analysis and objectives of decreasing women’s vulnerability and addressing their needs such as participation in decision making and domestic violence. It was also seen as gender mainstreamed initiative from the types of activities it undertook and, more critically, what OGB in Cambodia had claimed to achieve for women, as described next.

Project activities

Overall, there were three groups of activities related to the project: mitigation of the effects of floods, community development and capacity development. A fourth group, advocacy, was part of OGB in Cambodia’s strategy to have a wider impact over and above the actual pilot project.

The main activity was the provision of assets to mitigate the effects of floods on households. Assets included building materials to strengthen houses against storms and to raise them above flood levels. Cash was provided to compensate for labour provided by villagers to undertake these activities. OGB distributed other assets to help villagers to sustain themselves and to earn an income during floods, such as fishing gear and boats. The project also included the provision of water filters and giant jars as well as vegetable seeds and vegetable platforms (raised gardens)¹⁴² to individual beneficiary households in order to provide a safe source of potable water and, in principle, a source of vegetables. Moreover, OGB introduced concrete latrines to a limited number of

¹⁴² “Gardens” is a misnomer as they are actually platforms about 2m² large enough for several pots of herbs.

homes as part of a pilot hygiene and sanitation initiative. Oxfam provided these assets to village beneficiaries free of charge but with certain understandings: they could not sell them and were supposed to take care of them. In the event of divorce or domestic violence, the assets were to belong to the wife. This condition was apparently included in contracts with recipient households and is explored further in Chapter 9.

Other activities were meant to help villagers in times of emergencies such as the building of hills or “safe areas” as evacuation centres for families and their animals when it was unsafe for them to remain in their homes or if they had lost their homes. Boats as well as a limited number of lifejackets and life buoys were available to help save people lost in floodwaters or to be borrowed if villagers had to venture out during floods. Finally, the project provided first aid kits and training to equip community members to address small medical emergencies.

The second major set of activities concerned the village committees for disaster management (VCDM); the main mechanism to involve community members in the project and the main feature of Oxfam’s community development approach to disaster management¹⁴³. For OGB in Cambodia, they were considered “embryonic civil society organisations” (Internal report. Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005: 7). In each village, Oxfam established a committee made up of five members, who were supposed to have been elected by village members¹⁴⁴. The chair and two additional places were reserved for women to promote their own ideas and their participation in decision making, as previously described, and to empower women by increasing their knowledge and confidence (Internal report. OGB, 2004a: 19). Also, having women on the committees was supposed to “help to address women’s practical needs and, more importantly in the longer-term, their strategic interests” (Internal document. Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Team, 2005: 15). For example, “more equal influence in family-decision

¹⁴³ The notion of a “village” in the Cambodian context needs to be clarified, although further discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis. There is some debate on the extent of intra-household links and kin networks in rural Cambodia, particularly in the post-Khmer Rouge period. For example, Ovesen et al. (1996: 86) assert that households are relatively autonomous. They are linked within the context of a village but this is a matter of culture and ideology rather than being social-organisational. On the other hand, others (Ledgerwood, 1998; Ledgerwood and Vijghen, 2002) describe strong reciprocal relations within villages that extend beyond kinship, some of which are characterised as relations of patronage. See Chapter 9 for further exploration.

¹⁴⁴ Field observations revealed some inconsistencies in the election process.

making” was one of the identified strategic needs of women (Internal document. OGB, 2004b: 9).

The VCDM’s role was to coordinate and monitor project activities. They were responsible for managing and caring for community-based project assets, such as the safe area, lifejackets and first aid kits. During the flooding season, members were also supposed to lend assistance to community members. Another main function of the VCDMs was to liaise between community members and CD and OGB in Cambodia. Members met regularly with CD and attended trainings by Oxfam, after which they would hold village meetings to convey what they had learned. Also, they notified community members of any project meetings in the village.

The third major set of activities of the project was developing the capacities of project participants – government officials, VCDMs and community members as well as CD and Oxfam staff – on different aspects of community-based disaster management and other development and management-related subjects. Every year, OGB in Cambodia delivered a host of training activities. For example, from May 2005 to April 2006, VCDMs and community members, including commune council members, attended 13 training workshops (some refreshers), covering subjects such as Community-based Disaster Preparedness, Village Leadership and Management, First Aid, Public Health and Gender. CD staff, including a seconded member of the government Provincial Community Disaster Management Committee, attended five courses and workshops covering a wide number of subjects, including General Management, English Language and Humanitarian Accountability. During the same period, OGB project staff attended some 10 workshops covering subjects such as Partner Relations, Restricted Financial Management, Good Governance and Accountability, Problem Analysis Training and the Logical Framework Approach (Internal report. OGB, 2006d). Based on reports from previous years, this number and scope of trainings was not atypical for the project.

In order to have a wider impact beyond the direct beneficiaries, the wider Joint Oxfam’s Disaster Management programme undertook a number of activities to raise awareness of floods and of its “successful” community-based disaster management approach (Internal report. OGB, 2006d: 10). Through its work with government and other NGOs, Oxfam

aimed to promote the replication of its model and encouraged others to partner with it. This was achieved mainly through the provision of training to government officials and NGOs in Cambodia and the region and hosting visits to the project, discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND A “MODEL” PROJECT IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Many people, Oxfam in Cambodia members, OGB advisors, etc., agreed and see the project as a pilot and now it become like a model.

(Internal communication. Dikorn Ieng, 2003a)

OGB believed that it had established a tested and revised model that was ready to be replicated in other flood- and drought-prone provinces in Cambodia (Internal documents. Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Team, 2005, OGB, 2006d, Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005). By 2006, the community-based disaster management approach was being used by OGB in Cambodia in four other provinces with the aim, in three years, of benefiting a million Cambodians. The organisation also claimed that “It is still quite conceivable that the expanded model will provide the basis for a future (national) operational policy for the government throughout the country” (Internal document. Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005: 36).

This section outlines OGB’s stated achievements that served as the basis for its claims of having established a model of community-based disaster management; namely, that the project had resulted in improved living standards, in increased confidence and capacities to respond to floods and in community mobilisation. Gender was integral to the model, according to a senior OGB staff member with the project (field notes). Additionally and in contrast to different reviews of OGB gender work (Chapters 4 and 5), OGB in Cambodia claimed that the project had substantially benefitted women, as described below: their needs were addressed and their workloads had decreased. The project had increased women’s participation in decision making and community work, enhanced their confidence and empowered them. Furthermore, domestic violence had reduced as a result of OGB in Cambodia’s efforts.

What this section conveys is the official interpretation of the project (Fish, 1980) by OGB in Cambodia. It is based on project documentation, such as proposals and reports written by OGB Cambodian project staff for the purposes of communicating what the project will do, in the case of the former, and what the project has done, in the case of the latter. Their primary audiences are project sponsors: OGB and Oxfam International affiliates that were funding the project. As Mosse (2005b: 165) observes, rhetorical devices such as reports help “to provide an enduring map of the territory, lending stability to knowledge about the project, affirming its models and creating the comforting illusion that the project implemented policy and was successful because it was well designed”.

Improved living standards

According to OGB in Cambodia, the injection of physical assets and funds had positively impacted livelihoods and household incomes. Annual reports from both 2005 and 2006 state that “community members’ living standard are generally better and the communities’ sense of well-being and security higher” [*sic*] (Internal reports. Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005: 6, OGB, 2006d: 3). The provision of cash, such as per diems to attend meetings and workshops and money provided to villagers to work on infrastructure activities, were noted inputs, especially the latter. Each household working on strengthening the foundations of their houses as well as building the safe area received 450,000 riel¹⁴⁵ or about \$106 (Internal reports. OGB, 2004a, Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005).

Fishing equipment apparently enabled the catching of fish and boats the collection of aquatic plants, both of which reportedly provided a source of food during floods and a source of income (Internal reports. OGB, 2004a, Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005, OGB, 2006d). Beneficiaries also were reportedly able to save from increased incomes as well as not incurring certain costs, for example by no longer having to rent boats. These savings were said to have helped villagers during periods of flood and to purchase other assets, such as animals and additional boats, to use to generate further income. Women in particular were highlighted as being able to generate more income. For example,

¹⁴⁵ \$1 was equivalent to about 4,225 riel in 2006.

boats were also said to help them to gather aquatic plants and to go to fields to collect mice to then sell. As a CD staff member stated, “before women didn’t know how to make money but with the project, [they] now have materials to make money” (Interview. Im Ching, 2006).

According to OGB project reports, beneficiaries’ nutrition and health status also improved. As a result of the provision of water filters and water storage facilities as well as training on nutrition, sanitation and hygiene practices, community beneficiaries apparently no longer drank unfiltered water and incidence of water-borne diseases decreased. For example, the 2006 report states that “Most of the villagers especially children, stop drinking un-boiled water and keep practicing clean drinking water from water filters [...] Project beneficiaries reported that since they have received water filters [...] it reduced diarrhea and typhoid” [*sic*] (Internal report. OGB, 2006d: 16). The project also potentially contributed to decreasing incidence of HIV and AIDS as “Cash for work can also help to reduce number of villagers, usually men, migrating to town. This in turn can help to reduce the risk of STDs such as HIV/AIDS” (Internal report. OGB, 2004a: 17).

In addition, raised vegetable “gardens” were said to have provided a source of nutrition, benefiting especially children and women, in particular pregnant women (Internal report. Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005). For example, more households were observed to be growing vegetables, when they did not before, and “Women, children especially pregnant women have improved their nutrition by having more vegetable to eat all year round” (Internal report. OGB, 2006d: 10). Also, a ready supply of vegetables meant women no longer had to venture out to collect aquatic plants (Internal reports. OGB, 2004a; Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Team, 2005)¹⁴⁶. This, and the presence of water cisterns and filters, which apparently decreased women’s and girls’ labour and time as they did not have to travel up to 6km to neighbouring Vietnam, supposedly reduced their fears for their safety (Internal reports. OGB, 2004a, Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005).

¹⁴⁶ This claim, however, was contradicted by the same reports that women experienced increased income from being able to collect such plants, as previously mentioned.

Increased confidence and capacities to respond to floods

OGB in Cambodia claims the project's flood mitigation measures resulted in a sense of security among beneficiaries. As a result, it states that the "project saves lives and helps to protect vulnerable communities from the ravages of flood, drought and poverty" (Internal report. OGB, 2006b: 7). Participants felt more protected, better prepared, more resilient and more able to take action (Internal reports. OGB, 2004a, Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005, OGB, 2006d). For example, an excerpt from the 2005 annual report represents a recurring theme in project documentation:

After their houses were repaired, the sixty beneficiaries had better and stronger homes and this security brought with it less fear and anxiety. With the capacity of villagers improving through training and the acquisition of hard assets their vulnerability was being mitigated. The worry of losing their children or their belongings has been markedly reduced. This new security has meant that the beneficiaries feel as safe as other more prosperous and less vulnerable villagers. (Internal report. Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005: 20)

In particular, the provision of assets allowed beneficiaries to better prepare for annual floods. For example, the 2006 annual report stated that they had the "capacity to cope with flood and improve their living conditions. The community members have prepared food, firewood, strengthened houses, family boat, plant more tree for this year floods" [*sic*] (OGB, 2006b: 10).

In particular, women, especially female-headed households, were cited as feeling safer and less threatened by the floods: "[the] elevation of homestead to be higher than the level of water reduces the fear or concern or worries of women and their family from the impact of strong wind during the flood and or when the level of water goes up to its highest peak" (Internal document. OGB, 2006f).

Community mobilisation

One of the main noted project achievements was the establishment and strengthening of the VCDMs and their engagement with community members. The committees and alleged increased community involvement not only enhanced communities' capacities

to respond to floods, but also were an attempt “to empower communities to speak out and demand their basic rights” (Internal document. Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Team, 2005: 16). OGB also stated that the VCDMs were effective mechanisms in preparing communities for the flooding season. They reminded community members to ready themselves by strengthening their houses and foundations as well as maintaining project assets, such as by keeping water cisterns and filters clean and filled with water.

They also were helpful during floods as they raised the alarm when there were problems. The first year’s report provided an example of the functioning VCDMs:

In mid May this year two houses in Sangkae Chur village were hit by storm. VCDMs reported to the village chief. The village chief also reported immediately to CD and Oxfam about the situation of the two family members and damages. CD and Oxfam staff went to the village to assess the situation and reported that two houses were destroyed but the two affected families managed to find a neighbour's house to stay in temporarily. (Internal report. OGB, 2004b: 20-21)

OGB also claimed that the project resulted in a number of changes in the community that were not part of the original aims. For example, OGB contended that the project contributed to decreasing illegal fishing as villagers used project fishing equipment and nets and discontinued their use of “illegal fishing equipment”¹⁴⁷ (Internal report. OGB, 2006b: 16). The other claim concerned the protection of Cambodian territory. The building of safe areas and decreased migration by beneficiaries who were now able to remain in their villages during floods apparently contributed to protecting “Cambodian territory along the border with Vietnam” (Internal report. Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005: 36)¹⁴⁸.

Moreover, it is the VCDMs that OGB cited as the main vehicles through which women’s participation in community activities and decision making increased (Internal documents. OGB, 2004a; Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Team, 2005; OGB, 2006b). Women’s participation was described in different ways: such as increased

¹⁴⁷ Illegal fishing equipment included particular styles and sizes of fishing nets and the use of dynamite for fishing.

¹⁴⁸ This is a reference to a long-standing and still current dispute over border demarcations between Cambodia and Vietnam.

number of participating women, women's leadership of VCDMs, increased level of activity in the community and more involvement in decision making. For example, women's numerical participation was seen as an indicator of their increased access to and control over project assets (Internal reports. OGB, 2004a; Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Team, 2005). As the 2004 report states,

Out of 396 people, there were 66 women who came to receive water filters at the distribution site. This is one more positive sign that women are having more and more access to and control over the water filters as well as several other family resources. It is one of those small step in promoting and building gender awareness and equality. [*sic*] (Internal reports. OGB, 2004a)

According to OGB, as a result of the project and their participation in the VCDMs, women gained confidence and were undertaking roles they previously had not. They had been empowered, particularly VCDM members, in terms of increased confidence to speak up. For example, the 2006 report claims "women are now more vocal than before and without any hesitation they raised their voice regarding various issues and problems they faced during implementation" (Internal document. OGB, 2006f: n.r.)¹⁴⁹. For OGB, women's participation in the VCDMs had led to "remarkable changes" in women's participation in decision making in the community (Internal report. OGB, 2006d: 28). In particular, the ability to speak up was seen as a success and, as discussed in Chapter 8, was integral to the engendering of the project as a "success".

Also, women were said to have greater gender awareness. For example, OGB observed that "Women just thought that the serious human rights violation [of domestic violence ...] committed by their husband was normal and it should not be punished. Women did not realized about their heavy workload that they have been carried so far and never give any value at all" [*sic*] (Internal report. OGB, 2006b: 28). This, according to OGB, contributed to decreasing incidence of domestic violence in the project communities. Decreased domestic violence was also attributed to the provision of inputs, such as fishing nets (Internal reports. OGB, 2006d, OGB, 2004b, OGB, 2004a). Less poverty and greater security during floods were reported to have resulted in life

¹⁴⁹ O'Leary and Meas (2001) note that, in the Cambodian context, "empowerment" is often associated with being able to speak out.

becoming less stressful. For instance, “The situation of Mr. Sim Sopheak’s family has significantly changed since his house repaired. He stopped drinking alcohol and his domestic violent is reduced. He has changed his behavior and attitude and does a lot of housework to help his wife” [*sic*]. (Internal report. OGB, 2004a: 15). Also, as mentioned previously, the project introduced a condition that assets would be confiscated in the event of domestic violence and be turned over to the wife (Internal report. OGB, 2006b: 16). The condition was apparently included in the contract with project recipients on receipt of assets.

Increased awareness about domestic violence from gender training provided by the project was also cited by OGB as a reason for decreased violence, as men and women realised that it was against the law¹⁵⁰ and should not be accepted. As one OGB annual report stated, gender trainees “said that if they can apply [learning from gender training] in their real life, their families and community member would live in harmony, free of violence with good environment and good health” (Internal report. OGB, 2006b: 45).

The decrease in domestic violence and other claims by OGB constituted official interpretations of the project, mainly as documented by project reports and echoed by OGB staff. These claims, however, are only part of the representation of the project.

Challenges to the CBDM project as a model

Over its life, the CBDM project was “the subject of intense debate” (Internal document. OGB, 2006f: n.r.)¹⁵¹, according to a senior manager of the OGB’s Cambodian Programme. Challenges came internally from OGB staff, particularly regional advisors, during critical interfaces to develop strategies for the humanitarian programme in Cambodia, of which the CBDM project was part, as well as annual proposals for the

¹⁵⁰ Cambodia passed the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims in 2005 “to prevent domestic violence, protect the victims and strengthen the culture of non-violence and the harmony within the households in society in the Kingdom of Cambodia” (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2005).

¹⁵¹ While the project has had a contentious history, this is not to say that all inputs and comments from Oxfam staff or outside observers have been challenges. Indeed, throughout the life of the project, different managers, coordinators and advisors have provided a plethora of comments. Some of these are positioned as challenges, considered in this section; others have been less confrontational and form “exchanges and suggestions”, analysed in the next chapter. Visitors from other organisations have also provided their feedback and project staff themselves have responded to challenges and suggestions. These are considered in Chapter 8 as part of a discussion on establishing and reproducing project “success”.

project itself. From 2002 to 2006, project staff and advisors engaged in developing two strategies (2003-2005 and 2005-2008) and three annual proposals for the CBDM project from 2003 to 2005. Email exchanges and, to a lesser extent, meetings concerning the drafting of these documents, as well as project reviews such as the Gender Impact Assessment, became interfaces for criticism.

A key point of contention was the project's status as a pilot *and* as a model. Throughout project documentation and in the ways OGB staff discussed the project, the terms "pilot" and "model" were used interchangeably. For example, at its start, the project was conceived of as a pilot to experiment in Cambodia with new approaches to disaster management that were community based. While this approach had been used in other parts of the world, such as by OGB in Bangladesh, which was the inspiration for the Cambodian project, OGB had yet to try working with communities and providing assets in Cambodia, according to project staff (Internal documents. OGB, 2003d, OGB, 2004b). In previous disaster management interventions, OGB had used different aspects of the model, but not a "whole package" that included community mobilisation through village committees, provision of assets and "capacity building" (Internal communication. Sao Si and Sokha, 2003). As a result, OGB considered its work experimental and an opportunity for learning, as described by one of the project staff.

What we call pilot project, because we want to learn [...] because it was a new project to us and Oxfam, to partner, CD, and probably other NGOs in the country [...] The new was the flood preparedness and mitigation, not normal development [...] the word pilot we use because we don't know how it will go [...] but we commit to learn. Anything fail, we learn. [*sic*] (Interview. Dikorn Ieng, 2006)

The project also aspired to be a model that was supposed to be developed over the project's life. As stated in the initial proposal, "By focusing on one province the model can be tested, revised and replicated for application in other disaster-prone (flood and drought) provinces and provide the basis for an operational policy for government throughout the country" [*sic*] (Internal document. Oxfams Humanitarian Programme

Office, 2002: n.r.)¹⁵². Thereafter, references to the project as a “model” became increasingly common in project reports and other documents, starting in the first year. For example, five months after being initiated, the project was stated as a model (Internal communication. Dikorn Ieng, 2003b). Also, by the first year, OGB was already reporting that the Cambodian government agency responsible for disaster management¹⁵³ (Internal document, OGB, 2003d) was “to use the model of the pilot project and [it] would implemented nationwide” (Internal report. OGB, 2004a: 24). By the end of the second year, OGB claimed it had established a model ready for replication (Internal document. Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Team, 2005).

The terms “model” and “pilot” were often used confusingly. While OGB claimed it was experimenting with different approaches, it also claimed it was modelling such approaches. For example, the 2002 strategic plan for OGB’s disaster management work in Cambodia stated that “The proposed activities are small scale and geographically focused in Takeo in order to model best practices and to advocate for specific government involvement and replication on a larger scale – and at a later date (Internal document. Oxfams Humanitarian Programme Office, 2002). Project staff seemed unclear as to whether they were implementing a pilot to establish a model or had a model in hand, and OGB documents commonly referred to the project as a “pilot/model”. In other cases, they used the terms “pilot” and “model” interchangeably. For example, “model” was used to convey the idea that the project was to have a wider impact beyond the 13 villages in Takeo (Internal document. Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Team, 2005). “Pilot” was used to justify the facts that further work on the model needed to be done and there were unanswered questions and further learning was required.

Confusing uses of the terms “pilot” and “model” led to questions as to what the project was really aiming “to achieve” (Internal report. Wood, 2004). As the Humanitarian Officer, based in Oxford with the Humanitarian Department, pointed out after reviewing the project, the project had a number of contradictory aims. On the one hand, it was experimental in nature, being the first time OGB in Cambodia had used “community-

¹⁵² Later project documents reiterated the same intent (Internal documents. Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Team, 2005; OGB, 2003d).

¹⁵³ National Committee for Disaster Management.

based” and “participatory” approaches to disaster “preparedness and mitigation”. On the other, it was meant to demonstrate to the National Committee for Disaster Management “the strengths and weaknesses of involving beneficiaries” (ibid).

As a “pilot”, the project was challenged by OGB advisors mainly on account of how knowledge and learning were to have been generated, which would be expected from an “experimental” project (Mattingly, 2008). One issue related to its design: it was not set up as an initiative to try and test innovations in community-based disaster management. For example, the regional programme advisor, in her report after visiting the project, stated it was

A pilot project would require that some innovation be undertaken [... The project] is not backed up by an intervention design that is a) clearly linked with the findings from the evaluations (of previous Oxfam interventions), b) linked to the gendered analysis, c) clearly demonstrating a novel approach from Oxfam’s previous work in Takeo. *[sic]* (Internal report. Nixon, 2003: n.r.)

A second issue concerned the initiative that was supposed to develop learning; the pilot was also challenged on what exactly was being learned. As the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator wrote in an assessment of the proposal for the second year of the project, “There is no substantive evidence of learning from the pilot project implemented during the last [year]” (Internal communication. Norseman, 2004).

Third, OGB regional staff and, to a lesser degree, humanitarian staff in Oxford were unclear what “the model” was. According to a regional advisor, who was asked to support the development of an advocacy plan in order to persuade development agencies and the Cambodian government of Cambodia to adopt the model, OGB staff “don’t have an idea of what works and what these ideas [of the model] are” (field notes).

CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the CBDM project as a “model” and “success” and one that was gender mainstreamed, as claimed by OGB. The features of this model, such as

community mobilisation through the establishment of village committees, also served as the vehicles for women's participation and their empowerment. Not only were communities claimed to be more prepared for floods, women, who were seen as particularly vulnerable, were seen as having benefited in particular from decreased workloads and exposure to disease. Improved preparation against floods increased communities' confidence in their ability to mitigate potential damage caused by floods and, in particular, women's sense of safety.

The project was, however, controversial. Efforts to claim and insist on a model having been established can be seen as strategies to mobilize support both outside and inside the project. Externally, as Mosse (2005b: 163) observes, "affirming the project as a replicable model enhanced its appeal in donor circles". This is understandable given the need to show success when "funding is often linked to their ability to produce narratives of progress" (Baviskar, 2007a: 307). Internally, the trope of having a replicable model can be seen as serving to build coherence among diverse actors that included not only project staff, but also OGB in Cambodia and regional senior managers and an array of advisors sitting in Cambodia and Bangkok as well as Oxford. The trope of a "model" rallied staff around the notion not only of success but a replicable success. As Mosse (2005: 164) observes "Senior staff and managers worked hard (through meetings, events, displays) to foster a project culture and identity around its approach so as to hold staff together, to encourage loyalty, counter staff turnover and contend with the de facto contingency of staff action". In addition, the positioning of the project as a "pilot" provided excitement from exploring something unknown and possibly stumbling across innovation, thus catalysing further cohesion.

But for some OGB advisors, the mere claim of having established a model was insufficient. Unlike mainly project staff whose "critical faculties" had been suspended (Baviskar, 2007a: 307), others remained sceptical. And it was these criticisms mainly from OGB advisors, which challenged the *raison d'être* of the project, that were resisted most fervently. Still, while OGB in Cambodia's claim remained contentious, the organisation could point to "achievements", particularly the project being 'gender mainstreamed' and regarding the participation of women. How did the project become gender mainstreamed? What is the relevance of these contestations about having a

model to the claim that the project was mainstreamed? These are the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 8

The Engendering of Proposals and Reproduction of “Success”

INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 7, the history of the CBDM project was contentious; OGB in Cambodia's claims of having established a model were challenged continuously. Still, according to OGB in Cambodia, the CBDM project is considered an example of gender mainstreaming. In proposals and reports, the organisation claimed to have integrated strategies and measures to empower women, to ensure more equitable decision-making and to promote women's strategic interests, such as enhancing their leadership and decreasing gender-based violence. Certainly compared to reviews of OGB's gender mainstreaming discussed in Chapter 5, the CBDM project can be seen as a successfully mainstreamed project. How did this come to be? In this chapter I describe the engendering of project proposals and compare how other advisors were less successful in influencing project staff. Why was this? How can one describe the relationships and interactions of project staff and gender advisors in the engendering of proposals?

Part of the appeal for OGB in Cambodia project staff of working with gender issues in the project was its main impetus, to reduce vulnerability of villagers to floods. I describe how the logic of the project itself led to how gender was integrated: women's vulnerability became not only part of the project discourse of its rationale and therefore its integration of gender issues, it also became part of the project discourse of a successful project in community based disaster management. How did this work? What other purposes are served in addition to the promotion of the position of women? How is the discourse of “success” engendered and reproduced?

This chapter focuses the claims of gender mainstreaming and how these came to the fore and comprises four sections. The first documents the process of engendering project proposals and the ways in which advice regarding gender was adopted. The second explores how gender became integrated into the project, seemingly as a result of the acquiescence to advice provided by gender advisors. In particular I look at the relationship between regional gender advisors and OGB staff in Cambodia. Section three expands this discussion and establishes how the notion that women are particularly

vulnerable pervaded the project and how this provided the context for addressing gender issues by the CBDM project. The last section analyses how the discourse of women being particularly vulnerable was propagated through activities such as gender training and how OGB advisors and visitors to the project were part of the reproduction of the idea of the project's success.

THE MAINSTREAMING OF GENDER IN PROJECT PROPOSALS

This section focuses on the integration of gender issues into proposals for the CBDM project. While the development of proposals represents a specific and perhaps limited instance of the life of the project, the act of writing of proposals is part of the way “development ideologies are produced and reproduced” (Crewe and Harrison, 1998: 191). A substantial amount of effort is dedicated to this activity¹⁵⁴, which is concerned with “power dynamics” between staff who have a role in writing them (Shutt, 2008: 232).

As mentioned in Chapter 7, the inspiration for the CBDM project came from both OGB in Cambodia's experience with working in flood-prone areas and OGB in Bangladesh's experience with community based disaster management. The Regional Humanitarian Coordinator¹⁵⁵ at the time, Justin Bailey, was familiar with the Bangladesh experience and suggested that OGB in Cambodia staff working with the humanitarian programme visit the South Asian project (field notes). The staff did visit the project and subsequently incorporated features from Bangladesh with activities already used by OGB in Cambodia to produce the design of the CBDM project. In this way, the CBDM project was a “pilot”, as discussed in the previous chapter: OGB in Cambodia was trying new activities, and in combination, which had not been done before (Interview. Dikorn Ieng, 2006).¹⁵⁶

OGB project staff in Cambodia were responsible for developing project proposals and seeking approval for them from the County Programme Manager or, if warranted, the

¹⁵⁴ For example, Shutt (2008: 232) found in her study of Cambodian NGOs that “Staff devoted large amounts of time to learning how to ‘professionalise’ and produce proposals and reports”.

¹⁵⁵ Regional Humanitarian Coordinators are regional positions who are overall responsible for humanitarian work in the region. They manage, along with Country Program Managers, Humanitarian Programme Coordinators who have responsibility for humanitarian work in a specific country.

¹⁵⁶ When referring to Cambodian names, I use the convention of their full name with the family name coming first.

Regional Programme Manager¹⁵⁷. In the case of the CBDM project, this involved Dikorn Ieng as well as Lay Sokroeun, Choueng Samkol and Phoung Tola, all Cambodian. The process included the drafting of the proposal, led by the Humanitarian Coordinator with inputs from the project officers, and its circulation for comments among various regional advisors as well as colleagues in the Humanitarian Department in Oxfam House. At some point, either before or after this step, depending on the urgency involved in getting the proposal approved, OGB in Cambodia's Senior Management Team, which included the Country Programme Manager and other programme coordinators, would also review if not discuss the proposal and offer comments. Based on the nature of the feedback provided, as described below, the proposal would be revised by the Humanitarian Coordinator based on his discretion. The final version would then reviewed by the Country Programme Manager, who would edit and make sure that the proposal was appropriate and understandable (field notes). Over the three year life of the project, three annual proposals were developed: 2003-2004, 2004-5 and 2005-2006.

The step of seeking comments from advisors was left for the most part to the discretion of project staff and the Country Programme Manager, with the exception of OGB gender advisors, whether global, regional or national. Gender advisors' involvement had been mandatory since the introduction of the Gender Humanitarian Non-Negotiables, established in 2002, as discussed in Chapter 7. Nevertheless, OGB programme staff in the region tended not to seek the inputs of OGB gender advisors. If inputs were sought, this was often last minute (Interviews. Winslet, 2006 and Sokha Cheat, 2006) and at the behest of the Regional Programme Manager, who made project approval conditional on a review by and the go-ahead of the Regional Gender Advisor (Interview. Fitzgerald, 2006)¹⁵⁸. Such practice positioned the advisor in an influential position, but not necessarily in a powerful one, as described later.

¹⁵⁷ This depended on the scale of the project budget.

¹⁵⁸ This was also a practice when I was working as a Regional Gender Advisor. There were numerable instances when approval of projects and programmes would be conditional upon their meeting Oxfam GB's gender humanitarian non-negotiables (Internal document. OGB, 2002).

The case of the CBDM project was an exception, however. OGB in Cambodia staff actively sought advice from the Regional Gender Advisors¹⁵⁹, and also from different advisors and coordinators from the Humanitarian Department in Oxford and the RMC in Bangkok. My participation in the project was at the suggestion of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, who wrote to his Cambodian counterpart: “I strongly recommend Franz or another person with strong gender focus (from Cambodia or the region) be asked to contribute” [*sic*] (Internal communication. Bailey, 2003). As I suggest in the last section of this chapter, “consulting” with a number of OGB staff was as much an effort to mobilise support for the project as it was one to solicit advice. I explain the exception of the CBDM project and how contributions from OGB “experts” were represented as endorsements of the project in a bid to represent “success”.

Still exchanges about the project between OGB advisors, whether based in Oxford or the region, and project staff were discordant, particularly when concerns were raised by the former disputing the project’s claims of being a pilot and having established a model. Responses tended not to respond to the substance of the challenge, but rather their critical nature. For example in 2003, the regional programme advisor’s challenge, cited in the previous chapter, to what was being piloted and the lack of innovation design, elicited strong reactions from project staff. In reaction to her report, Dikorn Ieng of the project team wrote

I am a bit disappointing after reading such a negative report by having no discussion before written but hope [the Country Programme Manager] will understand this because he also understand the project. It would be better if the report comes out in a more constructive and encouragement way with recommendations and suggestion to improve rather strongly pointing out only the negative things” [*sic*] (Internal communication. Dikorn Ieng, 2003a)

Similar to OGB House managers who were critical of how particular gender advisors provided advice, OGB staff in Cambodia were ostensibly reacting to how feedback was provided; that it was not balanced by acknowledging what has been achieved and providing “constructive” feedback. At the heart of the matter, however, was a defensive

¹⁵⁹ From 2002 to 2004, this was myself, and thereafter, Donna Winslet. I refer to us collectively as the Regional Gender Advisors or by name, as relevant.

reaction to what was seen as a challenge to the project's discourse of being a model and success. When the *raison d'être* of the project was not being challenged, exchanges between the Humanitarian Coordinator and advisors were generally mundane. These comments tended to focus on a number of other recurring themes, including clarification on how the project would advocate its adoption by the government, appropriateness of proposed activities, capacity strengthening of project partners and other implementation details.

Exchanges with advisors and project staff concerning gender issues were of a different nature than those that questioned the project's rationale. They were not an exchange as such but rather a request for and the provision of comments and suggestions. In none of the cases did advisors who provided inputs have a chance to review the subsequent version of proposals, nor was there "dialogue" *per se*. For example, for the 2003-2004 proposal, other advisors as well as myself raised a number of gender issues. A former manager of a previous OGB in Cambodia disaster management project, on which the CBDM project was based, enquired as to the results of the provision of boats to women. "I think you should also ask about the success of the boats and houses from the 2002 project [...] Also interesting to ask what the women have done with their boats [...] have they sold them? Had them stolen? This is a really important question for me, and one I would like to know the answer to" (Internal communication. Ballard, 2003). In response, one of the CBDM project staff commented

You are completely right [...] that we need to follow up on these [house and boat] [...] Using the previous experience and based on our discussion with partner I have proposed and put some budget for some boats again in the project and also allocate a lumpsum of money to be use after need assessment with community people. [sic] (Internal communication. Dikorn Ieng, 2003b).

Similarly, for the most part, our comments as regional gender advisors were accommodated - in some cases wholeheartedly¹⁶⁰. For example I suggested, in 2003 for the 2003-2004 proposal, that, the proposal include a gender analysis and strategy (Personal communication. Wong, 2003). This suggestion followed from the East Asia “non-negotiables”, mentioned in Chapter 7, which stated that

Staff are expected to mainstream gender concerns in all stages of our DM work. This must entail a comprehensive gender analysis, with disaggregated data, and include specific strategies to promote gender equality, with agreed indicators to assess progress. (Internal document. OGB, 2002b: 1)

Based on this, I listed what in hindsight was a litany of suggested areas that “such an analysis and strategy would include”, such as the identification of practical needs and strategic interests (Personal communication. Wong, 2003). The result was a new five-and-a-half-page section “Gender Analysis and Gender Strategy”, which was included in the final version of the proposal, written, as described later, by one of the project staff. The “analysis” essentially followed the structure of my initial comments, with each of my points used as a sub-section heading and centred on how floods increased women’s workloads as they spent more time undertaking their usual roles and, in some cases, new ones. Decision-making in the family apparently differs “marginally” during floods compared with in “normal times”. A special point was that security is a greater concern for women than for men¹⁶¹.

The gender analysis also outlined women’s and men’s respective “practical” and “strategic” gender needs. While they were said to have the same practical needs (clean water and sanitation, food and nutrition, fishing equipment, shelter materials, transportation, health care services, seeds) and some of the same strategic needs (warning systems, communication facilities and evacuation procedures, increased income-generating opportunities and capacities), they also had different strategic ones. Women’s strategic needs included

¹⁶⁰ In some cases, as detailed below, CBDM project staff confirmed the source of revisions, while in other cases it is an assumption on my part based on the exact reproduction of comments in subsequent revised proposals.

¹⁶¹ The following analysis is based on a comparison of the draft proposal sent for advisors’ comments and the final version, which I uncovered during my research.

changing pattern of cultivation, changes in gender relations as a result of new earning capacities in the family, increase literacy level for women and girls, promote more equal status for women and more equal influence in family-decision making and women to take on more leadership roles within the family and community and knowledge about gender. (Internal document. OGB, 2003d: 7)

In contrast, men's specific strategic needs were said to be "stockpiling of supplies for immediate mobilization, reconstruction of house, homestead raising, safe area development, public education and gender awareness raising and community organisation for disaster management" (ibid: 7-8).

While none of the project's main strategies or aims was revised to reflect the gender analysis, the "strategy" did include a number of intentions and activities "To address practical and strategic needs through the preparedness activities" (ibid: 8). Some of these activities were general to women and men, such as "Distribution of vegetable seed to 130 families" (ibid: 9); others were relabelled as specific to women or men. In other words, they were already included in the initial version of the proposal but were not specifically listed as activities to address gender needs, nor were they specific to men or women – but they appeared as gender specific in the revised proposal. For example, the original proposal included the provision of a boat for the community; the revised proposal added that this was "so that women going to sell fish, buy rice at market, seeking external medical care etc" [*sic*] (ibid: 8).

The above example, as well as others from the regional gender advisor who replaced me, illustrate how suggestions by gender advisors were largely adopted in a wholesale fashion. In none of these cases were advisors' comments queried or challenged. Some of the changes to the proposals were a direct result of our comments and a replication of what the advisor suggested. In other cases, as described in the next section, the changes to the proposal were a result of a process of interpretation of what the advisor was suggesting or asking. As I explore later, such changes were part of a mutual beneficial exchange of rhetoric.

As Dikorn Ieng, project staff, recalls, “We sent the proposals to all advisors for their comments. When we got yours, we realize that we didn’t follow the non-negotiables about gender analysis. So I asked [the programme officer] to do one and I included it in the proposal. We did it because gender is non-negotiable” (field notes). According to the programme officer, the analysis was completed because I “told them that they had to have some gender analysis for the project so that’s what I did [...] we were told we needed a section on gender” (field notes).

It would seem that part of the rationale for how and why the gender revisions were made in the manner they were was to oblige the gender advisors. As Imam (2005: 71-72) observes, “due to the immense presence of international donors, the ideologies they bring with them and the dearth of qualified Cambodians to fit the eligibility of ‘experts’ and ‘advisors’, the say of expatriates in matter of approach is enormous”. This, however, does not provide a satisfactory explanation but is further explored next.

Gender hegemony or the maintenance of project relations?

I have suggested that challenges to project’s status as a purported model raised by regional and Oxfam House advisors, as described previously, were met with defiance and resistance by project staff, whereas gender advice was adopted unquestionably. To what degree can the adoption of advisors’ gender comments be seen as “appeasement” and be attributed to what Standing (2004: 83) refers to as a “gender and development hegemony”?

It is tempting to view the “expert knowledge” propagated by gender advisors as imbued with modernist assumptions of the superiority of Western knowledge and the under-privileging of other forms of knowledge (Parpart, 1995: 236), as discussed in Chapter 2. For example, unproblematic use of terms by advisors (such as “gender needs and interests” by myself) came with epistemological assumptions that ignored the possibility of other ways of knowing. Also, acquiescence to advisors’ suggestions and the unchallenged adoption of gender and development language by project staff can be seen as evidence of a dominating discourse propagated by gender advisors in particular. And certainly, the efforts of OGB in East Asia to create a “gender infrastructure” – the

appointment of regional gender advisors, the non-negotiables – underscore Lazreg's (2002) contention that gender expertise has become part of the landscape of Aidland (Apthorpe, 2005).

Is this a sufficient explanation of the different reactions to gender issues being raised compared to others? In both cases issues, raised by advisors and project staff need to be seen from the perspective of hierarchies among OGB staff. There were differences in status between the gender advisors and project staff and even the Humanitarian Programme Coordinator, which is a relatively senior position within OGB in Cambodia, for a number of reasons. First, hierarchy is structurally embedded in OGB's system of job classification and commensurate salary brackets, two strong signifiers of status in Cambodian society. Regional advisors have a higher job grade and are remunerated better than national staff. As O'Leary and Meas write (2001: 23), "Power and wealth are seen as twin forces and are often regarded as indicative of merit." Also, hierarchy among OGB staff was also partially informed by status provided by position: advisors were hired for their supposed "specialist" knowledge gained from experience and educational qualifications. The critical question is how such knowledge is perceived. In the Cambodian context, knowledge is a commodity which is seen, within the context of development, to come from the outside, with advisors and workshops the main conduits for knowledge (O'Leary and Meas Nee, 2001).

Second, there was an inherent differentiation among expatriates and Cambodians, whereby the former "with their position of influence, automatically get relegated to a higher position in the hierarchy" in the context of development in Cambodia (Imam, 2005: 75). In this case, gender advisors were foreigners and project staff Cambodians.

Still, this does not explain the different reactions to concerns raised about the project. Personality certainly is a factor (Shutt, 2008), as is the nature of the "challenge". Strong responses by project staff were in reaction to questions about the very *raison d'être* of the project – the fact that it was a "model". But why did gender advisors' questions and criticisms not elicit the same reaction, particularly when gender was also part of the project's identity as a success? In contrast to challenges to the "model", the issues raised mostly by regional gender advisors were in the realm of the *status quo*; they were

integrationist in nature (Jahan, 1995). Gender advisors' suggestions and questions were not seen as challenging and could be addressed by the incorporation of gender discourse, such as gender analysis and gender needs, and with statements of increased intent with the aim of mutual enrolment.

As Mosse (2005: 38) observes of a project in India,

[...] contradictory points of view or arguments between consultants and their collaborators, or within the consultant or donor adviser teams were [...] resolved by being written into the design of the project [...] key sentences can be read as bargaining positions in ongoing disputes over strategy within the agency or project teams.

The difference between Mosse's example and the case of the CBDM project is that there was no observable conflict in the latter. Rather, it was latent (Lukes, 2005), and exchanges between gender advisors and project staff were manifestations of "disciplinary power" (ibid: 99) and following of the "rules of the game" concerning how projects become real through the ritual of proposal development. Latent conflict is managed through "predictable structuration and confirm-structuration practices" (Haugaard, 2003: 107), with OGB gender advisors and project personnel "inculcated with routinized behaviour", such as exchanges around the development of proposals where "appropriate actions and reactions become virtually reflex" (ibid, 108).

The resulting "engendered" proposals were about pleasing and persuading, in this case in relation to the fact that gender had been addressed, rather than informing or describing (Apthorpe, 1997, cited by Eyben, 2004: 74). Consequently, they are "so complete, so comprehensive, so enveloping" (Latour, 1996: 103, cited by Mosse, 2005b: 35) that they read like a litany of campaign-like promises, such as the resulting list of how gender needs were going to be addressed. This allowed for the maintenance of relations between gender advisors and project staff and their positions in the web of aid relations (Eyben, 2006). Mosse (2005: 130) states that projects are about not only implementing policy but also "sustaining a set of relationships that secure a person's

identity and status. [Because] stability in the world of action does not come from coherent policy, but from effective relationships.”

Project officers and advisors needed each other and were intertwined in a relationship of reciprocity and practices of structuration and confirm-structuration. On the one hand, project staff required the endorsement of advisors in order to increase the chances of their projects being approved. Also, appearing to address the ‘non-negotiables’ and cooperating with the regional gender advisor could be parlayed in “symbolic capital”, with which comes prestige and status, (Bourdieu 1977: 179, cited by Ebrahim, 2004: 13-14) to support claims of success. OGB in East Asia, through the establishment of the regional gender advisor position and the gender non-negotiables, had signalled to staff its privileging of the promotion of the organisation’s gender policy. At the same time, these regional initiatives raised the profile of gender mainstreaming in OGB’s programmes in the region and also increased its purchase. In other words, by integrating gender concerns into existing processes, such as project approval, and thereby further entrenching the mainstreaming of gender, the stakes to address gender issues were raised, as well as the potential to reap the benefits of increased status.

By engaging with gender issues and those associated with promoting gender equality, such as regional gender advisors, the project gained credibility – or rather, the credibility of the project was promoted by referring to the advice provided by gender advisors, which in this case was nominal. A constant refrain I heard was “[...] and the project has gender because so-and-so gender advisor was involved”; when addressing questions about women’s involvement, a common reply was “but [...] so-and-so gender advisor told us [...]” (field notes). An example of how the position of regional gender advisors was evoked to gain credibility was when the Gender Impact Assessment team was discussing initial observations from data collection for the CBDM project. When questions were raised by team members of the impact of the project, a project staff member evoked me as gender advisor for the project as a testimony of the project’s purported success: “We got input from Franz and that is how we got high impact” (field notes)¹⁶².

¹⁶² Lay Sokroeun made a similar comment at a different meeting (February 2006) of the GIA team mentioning a number of times how I had provided training to project staff and commented on the first proposal as an indication of the project’s good gender work (field notes)

Such references become part of the project discourse of success. For example, the 2005 evaluation of the project stated that

Planning is well organized with the strategic plan turned in to an annual operation plan (and distributed through the Oxfam GB network for technical advice and comments including perspectives on gender, health and nutrition, food security, humanitarian content and including an overall financial review). According to one team member, ‘there is a lot of external input into the annual plan’. (Internal report. Rowe and Menh Navy, 2005: 18)

On the other hand, the act of consulting with the regional gender advisor and being able to claim that what was asked was done, such as the inclusion of a gender analysis, also provided credibility and cachet for the gender advisor. As described previously, OGB advisors in general and gender advisors in particular occupied precarious positions (see Chapter 4). Their identity as “specialists” and “knowledge brokers” was only valid as long as their advice appeared to have been taken. In the case of the drafting of the CBDM proposals, this appearance was provided by project staff taking on advisors’ recommendations. Unlike the “knowledge encounter” described by Long (1992: 14), which concerned actors were convincing each other to “accept particular frames of meaning [and] winning them over to their points of view”, regional OGB initiatives to promote gender equality provided a framework that enabled reciprocity in aid relations between OGB project staff and gender advisors as well as “mutual enrolment and cooptation” (Mosse and Lewis, 2006: 14). The gender non-negotiables mandated consulting with gender advisors; when this did happen and advice appeared to have been taken on board, gender advisors attained symbolic capital for they could feel and claim that gender issues were integrated¹⁶³.

By suggesting mutual beneficial relations, the “strategic groups” (Bierschenk, 1988) implicated and their respective roles within the project are critical. It’s no coincidence that the analysis thus far of the CBDM project centres on project proposals and reports.

¹⁶³ Everjoice Win (2004: 61) makes a similar argument of how seeking out the “poor and powerless African woman”, thereby perpetuating this stereotype, legitimizes the gender programme officer who “has to always demonstrate that her work is always about the very poor marginalized woman”.

As mentioned previously, these devices are key signposts in the life and indeed maintenance of a project; they lend “stability to knowledge about the project” and affirm representations to project sponsors (Mosse, 2005b: 165). Project staff are the ones who maintain these representations through the writing of reports and, in the case of the CBDM project, annual proposals. So it is not surprising that these documents are highly derivative, repeating from document to document, from year to year, similar if not identical information. For example, the proposals for 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 included almost verbatim the same case study of how one participant’s income improved due to the project. For advisors as well, “revised” proposals are a sign that given advice was in fact taken on.

Is there more than relations of reciprocity, which Theobald (1983) claims pervades all social relations? Certainly, drawing on a now familiar patronage explanation would be tempting, particularly given the context of Cambodia. I argued above that differences in status existed among OGB staff involved in the project and Cambodian staff were prone to defer to expatriate advisors. I am not suggesting, however, that project staff obeyed gender advisors’ every wish and command, as suggested by prototype notions of patronage. Nor should advisors’ influence “be viewed as an absolute capacity conferred on individuals by their professional position” (Shutt, 2008: 52). Additionally, such a view ignores the complicit role of project staff and their agency.

In the end, despite power differentials, both gender advisors and project staff secured their place in Aidland. Rather than hegemonic gender knowledge in the sense that Parpart (1995) alludes to, relations between gender advisors and project staff were relations of difference and consent, where both prevailed over other without threats of coercion by implicitly accepting the “rules of the game” of reciprocity in Aidland (Haugaard, 2002: 306). As Lazreg (2002: 133) writes, gender knowledge, as “part and parcel of international order of things” is sustaining of this order rather than upsetting.

Coherence in this case comes from the seeming convergence of interests among project staff, managers and advisors, whose jobs and livelihoods are contingent on carrying forward their respective policy remits, whether this concerns humanitarian programming or gender equality. Project approval is not necessarily based on how

respective interests are actually addressed, but on the fact that they somehow *appear* addressed. Project staff and advisors, in particular, become embroiled in obligatory mutual exchanges of rhetoric, and the “resulting” project design is concerned with accommodating and enrolling different strategic groups, as long as the *status quo*, such as the notion of the project as a model, is not disrupted. This echoes Wright’s (1994) suggestion of how anthropological concepts of culture in organisational ethnography shy away from dichotomous understandings of dominance. Still, contrary to her assertion that a “consensual notion (of culture) is unhelpful” (ibid: 27), the case of gender advisors and project staff inter-locked in by consenting to the “rules of the game” which helped them make meaning in similar and different ways.

In interviews with other regional advisors, a constant refrain was the lack of influence they had on OGB country level managers and staff. If “addressing” organisational policy provided cachet, why didn’t other OGB staff in Cambodia or the region also seek the advice of advisors as did the CBDM project staff? This study did not include a comparison making an exploration of this question difficult. The difference may be that not all staff in the region appreciated the opportunity that “compliance” with gender non-negotiables provided. Also, other areas in which advisors worked were not as “mainstreamed” as gender was, with the establishment of strategies, infrastructure and compliance requirements. An explanation may also stem from the rationale for OGB in Cambodia’s gender efforts in the project - the notion that women are vulnerable to floods - that served as a unifying trope, as explored in the next section.

“WOMEN ARE VULNERABLE TO FLOODS”

This section examines the dominant justification for integrating gender into the project – that women are more vulnerable to floods than men – and how this idea was reproduced and elided with gender inequity, women’s subordination and gender stereotypes. As an example of the reproduction of this discourse, I focus on the case of the development of the gender analysis for the project which took place at the behest of myself acting as a gender advisor. I show how dominant understandings of women as vulnerable were reflected in the selective use of secondary literature that was used in the analysis. This was not the case of a project staff person privileging this discourse; it permeated

throughout the project and OGB in Cambodia among various “strategic groups”, as explained next.

As described in Chapter 7, the project’s overall approach concerned increasing communities’ confidence and capacity to respond to floods while reducing their vulnerability, with the former also about having less fear of floods. Fear and vulnerability were particularly interrelated and were associated with women who, along with children, were considered the most vulnerable to floods, according to project documentation written by project staff (For example, see Internal document. OGB, 2006e). This understanding was conflated with the promotion of gender equality where the focus on women owed to “deep rooted gender disparities” (ibid: n.r.) in the project area. “As the result of the learning and experiences in the past years and understanding that women and children are the most vulnerable to disasters, OGB together with partners, is committed to promote gender equity and equality and mainstream gender” (ibid: n.r.).

OGB in Cambodia’s Gender Mainstreaming Strategy also includes this notion and links women’s vulnerability to subordination:

Women tend to be further marginalised [...] by a traditional system of values that place women in a position of subservience to men. Hence women remain more vulnerable during emergencies and continue to have limited opportunities to participate in the development process and local governance mechanisms. The historically high proportion of death and disability within the male population, as a result of war, has left a substantial number of female headed households who remain vulnerable if not provided with opportunities to gain access to information, technologies and livelihood assets, nor provided with a voice within decision making forums. (Internal document. OGB, 2006c: 1)

The notion that women are more vulnerable than men, whether to disasters, poverty or abuses of power, was echoed by a number of OGB in Cambodia staff. For example, Tep Viphou, a Programme Coordinator, stated that OGB involves women “because we think that women is the more vulnerable of poverty in terms of beneficiaries. If we're talking

about men and women in any level, women always below already [...] women is the most vulnerability in the community family or community” [*sic*] (Interview. Tep Viphou, 2006).

When this view is intertwined with OGB in Cambodia’s approach to disaster management, it takes on particular relevance, as a project staff member explains:

Women benefit more than men [from the project], I can say, because more or less we focus on that. For example, I can give you from DM programme, when we distribute something to people [...] we start from the level of vulnerability, we know women are physically weak in general. We know they are the most vulnerable group. Our target is the most vulnerable group that we would like to help.” (Interview. Dikorn Ieng, 2006)

The notion that women are vulnerable was also embedded in OGB in Cambodia’s gender discourse and was propagated by the organisation: “OGB provided the idea that we should work with women, children who are the most vulnerable”, a member of TD states (Interview. Pha Lina, 2006). Similarly, a number of Gender Impact Assessment informants claimed that they learned of women’s vulnerability from gender training provided by the project. For example, a VCDM member from Anchang stated at about training “We analysed sex, don’t hide things, discuss with each other. For example, women has disease, if you hide it will get worse. Women are vulnerable to disease” (FGD). Also related to women’s physiology, one woman said she learned that “Women and men biologically different, he won’t get disease if he stays in water, women get sick” (VCDM member FGD. Bantey Sleik). Women’s vulnerability was also related to a dependence on men. A female committee member said that he learned that “during flooding season, women sometimes alone, men away. So if she’s sick or pregnant, she’s vulnerable” (FGD. Anchang).

The “gender analysis and strategy” in the proposal for the first year (2003-2004), which was included at my suggestion, is a significant case as it set the stage for formalising the project’s gender equality goals and approach, which were reiterated in subsequent proposals, particularly for the second year of the project (2004-2005) and, to a lesser

extent, the third (2005-2006). The case also shows how the understanding that women are vulnerable became reproduced as part of OGB in Cambodia's analysis.

Much of the "analysis" was copied, mostly verbatim, from a 2002 CARE International study on the effects of floods on women and girls conducted in a province close to Takeo: Prey Veng¹⁶⁴. Given the time constraints expressed by Lay Sokroeun and OGB staff in Cambodia, as described in Chapter 4, the use of secondary information was a reasonable strategy. Prey Veng is close to Takeo and, while there are some differences between the two provinces¹⁶⁵, they are similar demographically, economically and socially. They are also both prone to floods, as they are located in the flood plains of the Mekong and Bassac Rivers, respectively. Information from the CARE study certainly provided more understanding on how women and men experience floods¹⁶⁶.

Still, how the data were used is significant. The OGB "version" included a number of omissions. For example, CARE's references to women's capacity and agency were all excluded. A main CARE research finding of women overriding "strong culturally gendered constraints on mobility" (CARE International, 2002: 13) was also excluded. While the OGB proposals acknowledged women's role in negotiating loans, they did not mention the lengths women went to and the risks women took to address household finances, but instead emphasised their immobility. For example, the 2004 proposal stated that, during floods, "*women especially* have reduced mobility due to fear of boat transportation" (Internal document. OGB, 2004b: 9. My emphasis).

References in the CARE report that contextualise women's fears were not included. For example, OGB's proposals excluded the report's findings that "it was surprising that no women or girls interviewed expressed increased concerns about privacy or sanitation" (CARE International, 2002: 26) and that women felt safer against sexual violence during floods. Rather, the proposals emphasised women's fears. For example, "Women

¹⁶⁴ Nowhere in the proposals did Oxfam GB in Cambodia cite the source, but it claimed that the proposals were based on "assessments, reviews and evaluations", as indicated in the respective proposals (for example, see the 2004 proposal, OGB, 2004)

¹⁶⁵ Prey Veng is about 15% more populated than Takeo, 1 million people compared to 880,000 respectively (National Institute of Statistics, 2004), though slightly less dense (212 vs. 250 persons/sq km (WFP, 2010). It also has a higher infant mortality rate than Takeo (WFP, 2010).

¹⁶⁶ It should be noted that the research was undertaken by a women's organisation in Cambodia, Womyn's Agenda for Change, mentioned previously in the example of organising commercial sex workers, that is well known for its feminist analysis and advocacy (Interview. Singa, 2006).

highlighted more risks, and expressed deeper concern, about those risks than the men. Women and girls were much more worried about animals that are perceived to be dangerous – snakes, crocodiles, leaches and centipedes” [*sic*] (Internal document. OGB, 2003d: 3). While acknowledging these fears, the CARE report contextualises them:

It is also necessary to add that people are also affected by their own perceptions of risk [...] women and girls were much more worried than men about animals [...] – snakes, crocodiles, leaches and centipedes [...] This is despite nobody interviewed being aware of anyone, or of any livestock, that had ever been bitten by a snake in the flood time, nor could anyone even claim to have seen a crocodile, at anytime, except on television. (CARE International, 2002: 29).

The purpose of highlighting this last reference from the CARE report and its omission in OGB’s documents is not to refute women’s fears: these are real inasmuch as they were stated by women. Rather, the difference is in how they were treated. In recognising they concern “perceptions of risk”, the CARE report recommends a number of strategies to change these perceptions, with the acknowledgement that women have the capacity to feel secure. In contrast, OGB proposals accepted that women were more fearful, which, as described previously, is linked to their vulnerability.

This reinforced women as the weaker sex requiring male presence and protection. The CARE recommendation of ensuring “women and girls *without adult male presence* do not have shelters on periphery of the evacuation site” (ibid: 42. My emphasis) was replaced with “*To ensure women and adult male presence* and try to group these vulnerable women and girl together” (Internal document. OGB, 2003d: 9. My emphasis) as one of the preparedness strategies to address men and women’s strategic and practical needs.

It is difficult, however, to analyse the interpretive process involved in the use of the report. In discussing the development of the gender analysis, Lay Sokroeun confirmed its source but could not recall that she changed the text nor how this happened. “I got the report from CARE and included what I thought was needed in the gender analysis that you had required us to do” (field notes).

This point of this comparative analysis is not that OGB staff copied reports for their own purpose¹⁶⁷. As van Maanen (1979: 544) suggests, it is the recognition of the falseness of the proposal that is of value to organisational ethnography, for “people lie about the things that matter to them the most”. The challenge is to be able to analytically interpret what matters and why. Accordingly, the previous analysis of the two documents is also not to refute that women are more physiologically susceptible to water-borne disease or suffer more from floods due their social position. Rather it concerns different notions of women’s vulnerability and how these are conflated and reproduced. The idea that women are more vulnerable to floods was implicitly extended and interpreted as being socially vulnerable and elided with gender inequity. The overall rationale and logic of the project, to make people less vulnerable to inevitable floods, provide a lens through which gender was interpreted and understood. Moreover, the dominant understanding of women as vulnerable is similar to Crewe and Harrison’s (1998: 67) observation that “existing gender power relations rely on women being defined and redefined as vulnerable [...]” and needing protection and “assertiveness” training. Organisationally, the narrative worked well, as it is “one in which the development agency plays the part of hero” (Cornwall and Edwards, 2010: 4): it provided a context in which OGB in Cambodia could rationalise its gender work and claim that it had empowered women which contributed to the overall “success” of the project.

THE REPRODUCTION OF ENGENDERED SUCCESS

This section analyses how the engendered discourse of success was reproduced. I look at how gender training reinforced the notion of vulnerable women and, paradoxically, was also concerned with the representation of project “success”, with its focus on increasing the confidence of female project beneficiaries to communicate with visitors. Part of the reproduction included visits to the CBDM project by OGB staff as well as those from other organisations, presented as “learning” events by OGB in Cambodia. Analysis of project documentation and field data also suggests that these were part of a

¹⁶⁷ This was not the only instance where I found Oxfam GB in Cambodia staff duplicated reports. For example, the GIA report was copied verbatim for another gender impact assessment of a different project that was supported by Oxfam GB by one of the GIA team members. The scope of my research did not allow me to explore the contexts in which this occurs or epistemological assumptions.

cyclical process of reproducing the discourse of success that incorporated claims of the project being gender mainstreamed.

Gender training was the main capacity-building strategy to promote gender equality, from the beginning of the project. OGB in Cambodia's Gender Officer provided gender training to CD, and together they delivered training to the VCDMs, community members, village authorities and government counterparts. By 2006, all VCDM members had received gender training at least once, and training had been provided to all 13 villages on an annual basis. For example, from 15 February to 10 March 2006, gender training was provided to community members in all villages for 488 participants – 274 women and 214 men (Internal report. Flood Preparedness and Mitigation Team, 2006)¹⁶⁸. This was such a key strategy that community members were not considered to have any knowledge of gender issues unless they attended training, as the CD Disaster Management Coordinator stated (Interview. Pha Lina, 2006).

For the most part, gender training was provided as part of the project's three-day disaster management course. With its emphasis on "the impact of floods of women villagers" (Internal document. Oxfams Humanitarian Programme Office, 2002), the typically three-hour session included presentations and discussions on the difference between sex and gender, the importance of gender to CBDM and men's and women's roles and different vulnerabilities during floods (Internal document. OGB, 2003f). In discussing the purpose of the training, Lay Sokroeun noted that they wanted participants to understand that both women and men are vulnerable to floods but in different ways: "We wanted them to know that women are more vulnerable. They get sick more. They have no power. So we need to focus on them more" (field notes).

For OGB, gender training raised awareness of gender issues among community members and resulted in changed relations between women and men. In a discussion about gender training conducted in 2005-2006, OGB states that

The community members were very impressed about the gender training [...]
Some women were excited and cried because before they participated in the

¹⁶⁸ The claim that both women and men attended gender training contradicts a number of GIA informants who said that it was mostly women who attended gender training.

training they did not know how to analyze their own situation. Women just thought that the serious human rights violation, which committed by their husband was normal and it should not be punished. Women did not realized about their heavy workload that they have been carried so far and never give any value at all. There were remarkable changes within the community such as women played important role in decision-making and earning income for their family. Domestic violence cases and pressure within the family also decreased. [*sic*] (Internal report. Flood Preparedness and Mitigation Team, 2006: 26)

Gender Impact Assessment informants concurred that they had learned from the gender training, but some of their accounts differed from OGB in Cambodia's account. As previously described, a number said they learned of women's vulnerability from project-sponsored training. Also, Nget stated that he had learned

[...] about violence in the house, educating children about gambling, [what] women should do in family: provide food, that is her responsibility. Men to go on women behalf if they can't access [...] we will go because she is not as strong as men. We know some from parents but not as clear as after training (male community member, FGD. Bantey Slek).

The CBDM project also trained women in 'leadership skills' to enable them to gain confidence, as evidenced by their ability to speak to foreign visitors. For example, in a discussion of the "Community-Based Disaster Preparedness and Gender Training", delivered in November 2004, OGB notes that "Participants practiced communication and presentation skills each evening so that they would feel confident in communicating with others and could present their project activities to visitors and donors" (Internal report. Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005: 15)¹⁶⁹. As an impact of such trainings, OGB claimed that VCDM members "were confident in answering and presenting the project activities to visitors" (Internal report. OGB, 2006b: 25).

Comments from GIA informants confirmed women community members' increased confidence to speak out (see Chapter 7) as well as to speak to visitors. For example,

¹⁶⁹ A similar claim is made in the previous year's report for 2003-2004.

Siem said that “Now I speak to visitors. Before wouldn’t even serve water” (Interview, Bantey Slek). Similarly, the mid-term evaluation of the CBDM project noted that “Villagers are learning how to answer the questions of frequent visitors in a polished manner” (Internal report. Rowe and Menh Navy, 2005: 15).

That project beneficiaries were also trained to communicate with visitors underscores the positioning of community members as part of the engendered discourse of success. Gender training delivered by OGB in Cambodia had two complementary aims: to convey that women were more vulnerable to floods and increase their confidence as both served the reproduction of the notion of the project as a success.

With OGB in Cambodia declaring gender as a non-negotiable, the issue became part of the discourse of project success and its reproduction. For example, as mentioned previously, during the GIA, one male VCDM member was keen for us to visit his house. When we did, we saw him in an apron cooking some food. He said this was his new role as a result of gender training. When we asked his daughter, she said this was the first time he had ever cooked (field notes). I also observed when conducting the assessment that beneficiaries’ “polished” responses were enhanced by project staff. During the assessment, Lay Sokroeun coached women VCDM members on interview questions the evening before the actual interviews were to occur. Using our interview schedule as a guide, she prompted members to speak of their empowerment and leadership (field notes) ¹⁷⁰.

The notion that beneficiaries adapt behaviour and responses is not a new observation (Crewe and Harrison, 1998). What is different is how this was part of the reproduction of the project discourse of success which implicated OGB’s gender efforts. The training of beneficiaries to speak confidently with visitors and represent the project was part of a recycling of project information perpetuating the appearance of success. Under the auspices of sharing its model approach, OGB in Cambodia invited visitors to the project, who were shown a model supported by testimonials from well-rehearsed, particularly female, beneficiaries. The visitors then mirrored the model in their

¹⁷⁰ I also observed such coaching on gender issues occurring with another Oxfam GB partner as part of the gender impact assessment.

comments about the project, which were then used as evidence of a model in reports and for the next visitors.

The project had numerous visitors every year: a total of 93 came from 10 organisations over the life of the project. In 2004-2005, 14 people from four different regional and international organisations, as well as OGB, visited the project in five visits. The annual report for the same year states that “The high quality of the work of the Disaster Management Programme has been frequently praised by the many visitors and other agency representatives who visited the pilot project’s village sites” (Internal report. Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005: 6).

One such visitor was the Emergencies Coordinator from Oxfam Australia, who wrote after his visit in 2004 (the first year of the project), “It was very interesting to visit your pilot project of Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation. I was especially impressed by the efforts of two VCDMs that we visited. Fantastic to see illiterate women *empowered* to work with their communities and enthusiastic to learn and share their learning” (Internal communication. My emphasis).¹⁷¹

Such comments were collected and used as testimonials of the project’s success. For example, the above excerpts were from letters I found in the project files. When I asked why they were being kept, Dikorn Ieng replied that they were evidence that the project had established a model. The testimonials from visitors were thus indicators of “success”. The status of the witness, and their assumed gravitas, was also a gauge. For example, when I was visiting the safe area and asked about the project’s achievements, Lay Sokroeun responded “The Minister for Disaster Management attended the opening ceremony of the safe area” (field notes). But also important was what they represented: most were working also in disaster management, such as those cited above, and brought with them “the skills in interpretation necessary to frame and sustain” the project’s claims of success (Mosse, 2005b: 162). Often it was the more senior of the project staff who would accompany visitors. As Baviskar (2007b: 303) writes about the use of visits to promote a watershed project in India, “Implicit is the notion that an outside visitor

¹⁷¹ This was a year of less than normal floods and the flood preparation and mitigation measures had not been “tested”. As the Oxfam GB Country Programme Manager stated in 2004, after the second flooding season during the project, “we still don’t know how effective the project interventions will be in coping with flooding, because there was no serious flooding last year” (Internal communication. Smith, 2004)

expects/should be given a certain representation of the mission which is best supplied by a high-ranking state official [...] Most visitors come away enthused.”

OGB project staff likewise used the involvement of OGB management and advisors in the project to validate the project’s design and achievements. As in previously provided examples of how my involvement in the project was used as a testament to the gender mainstreaming of the project, the following reference to such pre-eminent people in the 2005-2008 strategic plan was commonly found in other project reports and proposals: “The programme is built from the 3 years strategic planning exercise [...] where all stakeholders were consulted. Advice and consultation had been made with RMC¹⁷² Regional Director, RPM¹⁷³, Regional Programme Quality Manager, Regional Humanitarian Programme Coordinator, Regional Gender Adviser, CPM¹⁷⁴ and other OGB programmes staff (in Cambodia)” (Internal document. OGB, 2006f).

Colleagues’ observations were sometimes included in reports but were limited to praise for the project: reports excluded any criticism. For example, the 2004-2005 report cites a visit by OGB’s Regional Humanitarian Coordinator and states that he was impressed by the project (Internal report. Joint Oxfams DM Team, 2005). In his trip report, however, the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator also raised a number of questions and concerns, particularly about the cost of the project and therefore its replicability as well as the lack of baseline data (Internal report. Smuthers, 2004). These comments are excluded from the report.

Baviskar (2007a: 303) writes “the creation of a record of a particular kind is crucial, a record that is legible to outside audience”. Testimonials by OGB staff and visitors, based on accounts from field visits with rehearsed and groomed project beneficiaries, served as this record, such as reports, which include “information [...] selected to substantiate the claim that the mission is working as planned” (ibid), but also for future visitors to read and be inspired.

¹⁷² Regional Management Centre

¹⁷³ Regional Programme Manager

¹⁷⁴ Country Programme Manager

I have suggested that gender training, visits to the project and project documentation were inter-related to sustain claims that the project was a success. To conclude a neat system of deceit and cause-and-effect linkages, however, is too convenient. Also, the point is not to question the value of increasing women's ability to speak out, even if in the context of visitors, which should be considered extraordinary given the remoteness of the project sites. Speaking "with" and speaking "out" are, however, different. As described in Chapter 9, what and how women were able to speak about was constrained.

Rather, the inter-relationship between gender training, visits and project documentation should also be seen as being interconnected in support the reproduction of the discourse of success, which was not, however, gender specific,. Rather, gender was part of the landscape of Aidland or, similarly as Lazreg (2002:133) contends about gender expertise, cited previously, it has become "part and parcel of an international order of things, the arrangement of which it sustains rather than upsets". In this case, gender was mainstreamed into the production of the notion that OGB in Cambodia had established a CBDM model, thereby creating an illusion of coherence and stability supporting an authoritative interpretation of the project (Mosse, 2005b) as a success, which contrasted to criticisms of the initiative, discussed in the previous chapter.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have recounted interactions between OGB regional gender advisors and project staff responsible for developing project proposals and ask how adoption of the former's advice by the latter can be understood within the context of relations of Aidland (Apthorpe, 2005). Such exchanges were reciprocal in nature where the integration of gender equality was concerned with the maintenance of relations between project staff and advisors as well as their positions. They were unique compared to others, and I suggest the efforts to mainstream gender by OGB, particularly at the regional level, allowed for the compliance of gender standards a certain purchase, for both project staff and advisors alike.

The “engendered” nature of the CBDM project - its rationale for promoting gender equality and its focus on women – was in part due to the dominant understanding that women were particularly vulnerable to floods. The engendering of the project reproduced this trope, through its “gender analysis” and project-sponsored gender training. Such a notion also became conflated with being socially vulnerable reinforcing the understanding of the dependence of women on men. Portraying women as vulnerable also contributed to OGB in Cambodia's claims to have empowered women: they are vulnerable yet showed leadership and confidence, which when demonstrated served to reproduce the project as a success. Gender training, visits to the project and project documentation supported this reproduction as a self-perpetuating re-cycling of information.

So far I have discussed the involvement of women as passive project participants seemingly caught up in the reproduction of the discourses of vulnerability and “success”. This contradicts OGB in Cambodia's contention that women were actively participating and empowered in the process. What was their involvement? This is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 9

The Integration of Women in the Name of Success

INTRODUCTION

Previously I highlighted how, from the mid-1990s, NGOs in Cambodia, including OGB, aimed to assume a gender and development approach. As elsewhere, the adoption of GAD language in Cambodia did not necessarily entail a change in thinking and practice: many NGOs still saw the improvement of women in terms of enhancing their condition and ensuring they benefited from “development” without disrupting the *status quo* social relations of gender¹⁷⁵. OGB in Cambodia claimed to have transitioned from a WID to a GAD approach during the 1990s when gender issues became a central issue (Padmanabhan, 1999); this shift seems to have been more in rhetoric than in practice. Similarly, the CBDM project adopted language associated with GAD, such as addressing women’s strategic needs and empowering them.

I have shown that the CBDM project is a contested “success” and demonstrated in the last chapter how the production of the discourse of “success” involved the notion of women as vulnerable that was reproduced through project activities where women participated, such as gender training and visits to the project. Also part of the projection of the project as being gender mainstreamed included claims that women benefited not only in terms of their practical gender needs being addressed but also their strategic interests, such as through greater decision making and reduced domestic violence, as described in Chapter 7.

These contentions – that women were actively involved and benefited from the project, and that they were part of the project discourse – are not necessarily contradictory, but they do not tell us much about the actual roles of women in the project nor what their integration means in terms of their involvement. My aim in this chapter is not to evaluate the project’s impact on women but rather to understand, if there were outcomes for women as OGB in Cambodia claims, under what circumstances did these happen?

¹⁷⁵ This contrasts the common assertion that gender mainstreaming has meant getting rid of a focus on women as the CBDM project prioritised the integration of women. Still, as with experiences of the loss of focus on women, “prevailing and unequal power relations [are left] intact” (Mukhopdhyay, 2007b: 144).

How can these claims be understood within the wider discourse of project success and a gender mainstreamed project?

This chapter is comprised of two sections and draws on my findings concerning the project from the Gender Impact Assessment, which, as described in Chapter 3, I supported as a volunteer. The first section examines OGB's claims that the project increased women's participation, decision making and reduced domestic violence. The second situates this analysis within the context of the primary vehicle through which women participated in the project, the Village Committees for Disaster Management.

INTEGRATION IN THE PROJECT

Findings from the assessment suggest that OGB's claims of increased women's participation and decision making need to be understood within the context of the gender division of labour. For example, mainly male interviewees confirmed an increase in women's participation. They not only attended meetings and training more than men, but also were more active in such meetings. For example, Menh, a male VCDM member from Sang Ke Chaur village, stated that "More women are participating in the project, before only men" (FGD). Krel, a VCDM chair, said that "Before women were quiet in the meeting, now they speak a lot [...] Women are brave to speak, that is never seen before" (interview).

Women's ability to attend meetings, however, was dependent on a number of gender-related factors: if the meetings were held in the community, the nature of the meeting and if the husband was busy. For example, men tended to attend project events if they were outside the village. "Women never attended training because far away. So now can attend meeting if in village" said Horn, a male community member from Bantey Sleik (FGD). This seemed related to who had access to project resources; beneficiaries received cash per diems when they travelled outside their village for meetings or other project-sponsored events. Moreover, if the meeting was about "gender", women would attend. "If know they will talk about gender, will let wife go because it's for women" said Vannsin (FGD, Bantey Sleik). Lastly, women participated when their husbands were already occupied. A comment by VCDM member, Hy, that "Women mostly come

to meetings because men busy with rice cultivation” (FGD, Sang Ke Chaur) was echoed by a number of others.

Attending meetings is one issue; the level and quality of participation in such meetings is another¹⁷⁶. Comments from different sources suggest that community members in general, and women in particular, were not participating to a great extent¹⁷⁷. A CD staff involved with the project stated that, while women were attending meetings more than they used to and the level of their participation in committee meetings had increased, they still participated to a lesser degree compared with men:

Before we had meetings, women were very quiet. Mostly men answered. Now it's changing. Before only men joined. Now it's almost equal number of participants. [interviewer: do they participate willingly?] Yes. In some areas women mostly participate, some areas mostly men. But can say overall women not in leadership, they just have some strength [...] Even though women participate more in the meeting but men also still dominate. (interview)

So while women were participating in the project, their involvement was gendered. Still, OGB claimed women's participation led to increases in their decision making. To some degree, the Gender Impact Assessment supported this. For example, Siem, from Bantey Sleik, stated that “before I could not made any decision because my living condition is terrible. Now I become VCDM, I am considering deeper before I do something and can make decision” (FGD), which was a sentiment echoed by a number of others. A number of male VCDM members also spoke of changes in decision making with their lives, mainly in reference to consulting women more. For example, Samkol from the Bantey Sleik VCDM stated that, “Before doing some things, I did not discuss with my wife, now discuss” (FGD).

A number of male and female VCDM members claimed that decisions were made jointly (for similar claims, see Harrison, 1997: 73) and after discussion. What is clear is that discussing decisions, making joint decisions and decision-making control were

¹⁷⁶ O'Leary and Meas (2001: 42) found that, among Cambodian development practitioners, “The common perception is that participation is necessary to make the project successful but often what is considered is the number and presence of people rather than their active involvement in making decisions”.

¹⁷⁷ O'Leary and Meas (2001) found a similar situation when observing participation in village meetings.

often confused. For example, Sav stated that “all discussion are discussed within the family” but went on to say “I explain to my wife so she understands, and I also give space to my wife to be fully involved in decision making” (FGD, Sang Ke Chaur). Menh, from the same committee, was clearer: “Every small or big decisions are discussed together, before no. Large purchase we discuss together, but men make final decisions” (FGD). This was reiterated by others: increases in women’s decision making was largely confined to “small decisions” and even when decisions concerned the household, the domain of women with in the gender division of labour, this was still the purview of men. “All decisions are made by me and husband together. Because my husband who earns money, I decide only the thing related to the household, big thing must ask permission from my husband”, says one VCDM member (FGD, Bantey Slek).

OGB’s claims of increased women’s participation through the VCDMs were substantiated by community members and women themselves; their involvement in the public sphere should not be underestimated. According to CD staff member, “now women can participate in big ceremonies such as inaugurating the safe area. They were very happy to attend because wouldn’t attend before” (Interview. Im Ching, 2006). Yet, beyond their formal designated positions on the VCDM, female members’ descriptions of their activities generally followed defined gender roles. For example, a number of community members observed that women generally invited people to come to meetings while men “write down notes, people’s requests” as Sik said (interview, Bantey Slek). Also, female members’ activities were closer to the village while male members purchased trees, for example, and were the ones involved in rescuing community members (Chu’un, FGD, Sang Ke Chaur).

That changes were mediated by dominant gender divisions of labour and social relations is not so surprising. Attending meetings in public spaces, even if representing token participation, can be seen as initial confidence building steps to “empowerment”. Still the transformation of gender roles is a long and complex process, perhaps requiring other strategies more attentive to social transformation than the project introduced (Clarke and Oswald, 2010; Cornwall and Edwards, 2010). What is more interesting is what compelled project proponents to make such claims and cloak them in the GAD discourse. I have already described the link between project-sponsored gender training,

aims to increase women's confidence and the reproduction of project success (Chapter 8). This suggests women's involvement in the project served another purpose, other than addressing their needs and interests.

A related explanation possibly lies in the so-called "shift" between WID and GAD, discussed in Chapters 2 and 7. While OGB in Cambodia claimed to have adopted a gender perspective and mainstreamed gender, the analysis of women's participation suggests that this was mediated by the gender division of labour and the status quo left intact, signalling an integrationist understanding of gender mainstreaming (Jahan, 1995). Why does the notion of "integration" stubbornly remain whilst ideas of social transformation remain as rhetoric? One reason is the relative level of difficulty. As discussed in Chapter 2, integrating women in already existing development processes is a relatively easier proposition than integrating "gender" in such processes or even transforming them. So was this just a matter of poor transition from one conceptual framework to another or does the integration of women in dominant development paradigms with the concurrent adoption of language serve another purpose? I explore these questions by looking at what the outcomes for women were.

OGB in Cambodia's claims concerning increased confidence among women were reiterated during the Gender Impact Assessment, as suggested in Chapter 8. It stated that the project empowered women, particularly in terms of increased female VCDM members' confidence, especially to speak¹⁷⁸. Findings from the assessment confirmed this. Female VCDM members, especially the chairs, uniformly stated that they had experienced increased confidence, gained knowledge and been able to take action, such as helping fellow community members and solving conflicts. What was most common was a stated sense of being braver to speak in public and of having earned greater respect and recognition from community members. Siem's comments were typical among female VCDM members: "The first time as VCDM chair I sweat, couldn't speak out but I tried and now I am brave and can work for the community" (FGD, Bantey

¹⁷⁸ O'Leary and Meas (2001: 37) state that, while their research on Cambodian development workers showed a lack of clarity on what empowerment means, "most commonly, empowerment was described in terms of people 'daring to speak, but there was little clarity regarding strategies to promote empowerment or what exactly people are being empowered to do – or speak about [...] There is strong assumption by practitioners that the physical presence of people in the activity means that they are empowered. Generally empowerment is perceived to be restricted to project management of the NGOs activities'".

Slek). This ability is a valid indicator of newfound voice, particular when considering the limited exposure rural Cambodians have to people from outside the village (Tarr, 1994). It can also be seen as providing women with an increased profile and respect. Chruy, a female VCDM co-member, observation of “husband of VCDM leader [who now] appreciated her that she can now speak out in front of the community” (FGD) was noted by others.

Still, these assertions need to be understood within the broader context of the project. First, women’s participation and increased self-confidence came at the price of an increased workload. Interviews with VCDM members revealed that their participation increased their overall workload by adding to their work in the household, as one woman VCDM member, in Sang Ke Chaur, of a number stated (FGD):

[My tasks have] increased 10 times, before did only family [work]. Now we give water, visit house-to-house, clean toilet, take care of giant jar. Not much rest time because do community and my family works [...] I’m so busy, wake up, boil water, prepare food, pack lunch, go to field, bathe, cook, prepare bed. Children [are] grown.

None of the women who experienced an increased workload expressed regret, however. For some, it was accompanied by improved living conditions, such as having more to eat or less debt. For others, their labour was in service of the community, even if this meant having to shoulder much of the responsibility¹⁷⁹. One example was Ravy, an elderly committee chair in Anchang village. She could not convince other committee members to accompany her to the district centre, a three-hour boat trip away, which meant staying overnight, to obtain building materials for the project. It was harvesting season and other members, particularly men, were busy. However, the materials had to be delivered in time for construction to begin before the rainy season. Sokha Cheat, a

¹⁷⁹ The enrolment of women’s labour in service of the community is not unique to the CBDM project. For example, during the 1980s and donor-imposed Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), community committees run by women “volunteers” provided social services, such as day care and supplementary feeding programmes, in the absence of government programmes that were eliminated as part of SAPs (Moser, 1993). The difference is that women’s labour was enrolled by the CBDM project under the guise of increasing their participation and empowering them, whereas SAPs made no such presumptions but rather aimed to make development more efficient by tapping into previously underutilised resources offered by women (ibid).

GIA team member, was upset that the chair not only had to make this arduous trip herself but also by the way CD staff treated her. She was made to wait all day in their offices until the materials were ready (field notes).

Increases in women's participation also need to be understood in relation to changes in productive roles and who has access to the benefits of increased income. There was a financial incentive for VCDM members and their families, the value of which should not be underestimated, given the impoverished context in which the project was taking place¹⁸⁰. A CD staff member commented that "husbands help at home, otherwise impossible for her to come. Spouses support each other. She makes money from per diems, so husband sees her generating income [and supports her participation in the project]" (Interview. 2006). Interviews with men confirmed an appreciation for increased women's income generation capacities. The following comments by Py and Sokha, who attended gender training and subsequently become gender focal points¹⁸¹ for the community, are illustrative.

Women see their work equal to men's. They didn't value their work before, now they do. They have access to training, knowledge of hygiene. Now she can work, she has the same rights [...] Men say that women can do anything so men just stay at home" (Py, FGD, Sang Ke Chaur).

Still, while such support represents an appreciation for women to take on productive work and financially contribute to the family, it was also seen as reducing men's workload and increasing their leisure time, which stands in contrast to women's workload increasing and less leisure time. This observation of increased workload for women from engaging in income generation activities is not unique to the CBDM project and one that has been made since the WID era (Mayoux, 1995, Moser, 1993). What it does reinforce is the idea that while women had access to particular resources

¹⁸⁰ These per diems were different than previously mentioned: these concerned VCDM travel outside the village for project-related activities such as annual retreats and training which often were held in resort towns in distant provinces. The per diems mentioned previously were for community beneficiaries to attend meetings outside their village but within the province.

¹⁸¹ Gender focal points are community members who have attended gender training and are then appointed to share what they learned with others.

project resources, they did not always have a say in controlling them or the benefits from increased access.

According to some female VCDM members, increased community roles were accompanied, in some cases, by more support from husbands. Sman stated that “Now my husband helps, picks vegetables [...] Now we are helping each other, we’re used to it.” (FGD, Sang Ke Chaur). Male VCDM members also said they had experienced changes in their household roles. Some helped more at home: “After [the project] training I help my wife. If we help each other we eat quickly [...] Before men and women divided their tasks, now when I return from the rice field or community work, I help my wife with cooking, carry water and look after children,” said Hy of the Sang Ke Chaur committee (FGD and interview). Still, similar to increased decision making, the change in the division of labour was selective and sometimes left to men’s discretion, which they could exercise. Some husbands were said to be taking a greater share of such duties, but mainly when their wives were busy with community work. As Sim of the Ke Chaur VCDM stated, her husband “agreed with me to work as VCDM members, he shares with me to take care of children when I go to work in community” (FGD). When men were busy harvesting, Ravy, mentioned previously, was left to arrange the transportation of supplies on her own. In other cases, claims by male beneficiaries seemed to be for the benefit for the assessment (for a similar observation, see Harrison, 1996), as illustrated with the previous example of the VCDM member claiming he cooked and cleaned when his wife attended meetings.

Moreover, women VCDM members were facing a number of constraints, including increased dependency owing to illiteracy, both in terms of how they perceived themselves and how they were perceived by others about being illiterate, particularly illiterate women. In rural Cambodia, not only was literacy low (71%), but also there was a wide gender gap: 83% for men and 62% for women (NIS, 2004). In the case of the project, all female committee members were illiterate, whereas most of the men were not. For OGB, that female committee members were illiterate only underscored the project’s claims of success in promoting women: even illiterate women could serve on committees and lead them (Internal documents. OGB, 2006a; Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Team, 2005; OGB, 2006b).

In interviews, VCDM members consistently cited illiteracy as a limitation to performing their duties as members and influencing how they felt about themselves. Tola's comment, "I'm like blind" (FGD, Sang Ke Chaur) conveyed the sentiment shared by others about not being able to read or write. In particular, it affected their ability to access resources and benefits offered by the project. As the chair of the same committee said, Sman could remember only 20% of her training because she was illiterate and that she would feel more confident if she was literate (field notes). While illiterate men also said they lacked self-esteem, women who were illiterate were more marginalised in the community and seen negatively, even if they had achieved a certain level of status due to the project. A male VCDM member, Chu'un, commented that

Women had less work in early 90s. Only did washing, cooking, collecting vegetables. Since development she can go to training, work and [get] food ready when husband comes back. Women join the committee. They educate us on good hygiene. They mobilise us to do agriculture. *But she's not in society because she is illiterate* (FGD, Sang Ke Chaur, my emphasis).

Similarly, some male community members in Sang Ke Chaur felt that, while the VCDM chair (Sman) was a good leader, she was ultimately constrained by her illiteracy because she was limited in what she could remember and therefore convey. According the gender focal point, the VCDM chair attended training but couldn't remember anything from it (field notes), despite her saying above that she recalled 20%. Conversely, those who could write – male deputies or clerks – were recognised for being literate and accorded more status. Samarl stated that the "clerk has more burden because he reads and writes, so he does everything" (FGD, Bantey Slek). Horn, from the same community, concurred.

The combination of being illiterate and being in a position of responsibility ironically can create more dependency. OGB project staff and community members were keen to share the fact that husbands of VCDM leaders as well as male clerks were willing to support illiterate leaders by reading, taking notes and writing letters. While certainly admirable and possibly an indication of shifting social relations of gender, this also

meant women were again dependent on men. Sary of the Anchang committee stated that “Yes it’s difficult that I am illiterate [...] I will go to village chief, commune chair, clerk or deputy to write a letter” (FGD): all these positions are usually occupied by men. The leader of the Bantey Slek committee, Siem, had to be more cautious. She asked her children to verify what her husband had read on her behalf, “especially when he does not read aloud” (FGD). Those who were not numerate asked male committee clerks to report on financial aspects (Interview. Hem).

Community members and VCDM members as well as village authorities and CD staff consistently reported a reduction in domestic violence in all three communities, in terms of both the severity of the offences – for example no more physical violence but still verbal – and the frequency. All communities reported that domestic violence remained, though. Chu’un said domestic violence had reduced by 70% (FGD, Sang Ke Chaur); Kheng in a different village coincidentally said that 30% remained. When asked how they knew, most claimed that it was easy to tell if there was still violence in a family. Houses are located close to each other so neighbours can hear if there is violence¹⁸².

Different reasons were provided for the decrease in domestic violence, and these echoed OGB’s explanations. A common one was better living conditions as a result of improved physical security, livelihoods and food security, as reported by Kheng (FGD, Anchang) “Domestic violence is not much. Problem is poverty. Men get angry when they come home and there’s no rice to eat. We are so poor, we try”. Beneficiaries also reported “being educated” and having more “knowledge” of domestic violence as another reason for its reduction. It was difficult to determine what specific knowledge had been attained, except that domestic violence is against the law and women have human rights. Much of this knowledge came from project training as well as the VCDMs, although some community members said that radio and TV as well as government initiatives were also sources of information. Improved living conditions and increased knowledge were also linked to decreases in drinking among men which was said to be another reason for decreases in violence:

¹⁸² The Gender Impact Assessment did not employ any specific methods to measure the incidence of domestic violence understanding that this is an extremely difficult process (Pickup, 2001) and Oxfam GB in Cambodia did not have any baseline data.

Changing a lot because have security. People feel secure when house is secure. I'm not so terrible. Used to drink but not anymore because disease therefore can't drink. Friend used to come invite to have drink. I used to do violence after drinking. But after *Ankar*¹⁸³ came and educate me, I stopped. I don't fight even if she does violence against me. I let her win. (Khim, FGD, Anchang)

Another main change was the way men and women behaved towards each other. While greater respect was noted by some as one change, a common behaviour change mentioned by a number of interviewees was how men and women treated each other: "Before my husband and I had violence, now we respect each other" (Ses, FGD, Sang Ke Chaur). For men, the shame that domestic violence brings to the family was a motivating factor, as Bopha (FGD, Anchang) says "Before, my husband beat me, now he has stopped because the children are growing up and he is old and shamed now", which was echoed by a few others.

For the most part, however, reductions in domestic violence were attributed to wives being less angry and behaving more nicely to husbands. Sman (Interview, Sang Ke Chaur) states that "The relationship between men and women has changed, and violence was reduced because VCDM members help and educated women to know how to advise their husband, to use sweet word". That the VCDMs and the CBDM project were credited with inspiring men and women to change their ways was echoed by a number of project participants who mainly cited their counselling and education work conducted with villagers about domestic violence and human rights. Siem, VCDM chief from Sang Ke Chaur, described how she counselled couples and the messages she gave to men and women, which was characteristic of the overall approach to domestic violence by VCDMs: to avoid violence men should show their love and women should respect their husbands, not antagonize them and do not fight¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸³ *Ankar* is the Khmer word for "organisation" and is commonly used to refer to NGOs. Unfortunately, it is also the name that was used to refer to the Khmer Rouge, including by the regime itself.

¹⁸⁴ Other researchers have come across similar approaches being used by those who mediate incidents of domestic violence in Cambodia. See Giles (2004), Lim (2009), Luco (2002) and Surtees (2003).

People run to me about domestic violence. I counsel them. Tell them not to be rough. With wife, [I tell them to] speak softly [...] In domestic violence, [I] tell men that women and men have equal right, you should support each other, love your wife and children. If you continue, means you don't love your them [...] for women I tell them] don't speak loud to men, don't fight back [...] Use sweet word, use bad word is not good women when he comes back from work. If he does something wrong, just educate him. Not question of good or bad word. (FGD)

Such messages were intertwined with those relating to power over the beneficiaries invested in VCDM members by the project. Siem, who was the only VCDM member to articulate her motivation in this way, stated that “We tell that if they do violence we'll take everything back. No contract. We have agreement” (FGD). Her motivation was concerned with woman's rights but also her fulfilling her obligations to the project and Oxfam, the only real sources of social welfare in the project villages. She stated that the violence “condition” was “[...] never enacted because no violence. What will I do if domestic violence? *Ankar* will blame me that I am not managing well, how will I respond to *Ankar*?” (FGD).

Although the condition had never been enacted, it carried weight, at least among those few beneficiaries who could recall it. Sokha, quoted previously as saying that domestic violence had decreased since his wife had attended gender training, recalled the “agreement” said “Don't do violence or will lose boat. Was told by my daughter [...] I asked if they were serious about domestic violence. They said yes but don't believe them, think just a warning” (FGD, Sang Ke Chaur). Vannsin, however, suggests some beneficiaries did take the condition seriously and seemingly understood the gravity of the clause and its implications as project beneficiaries: “Domestic violence is reduced. There was domestic violence, now don't see much. Only verbal violence. Question of serious or not serious [...] because the law, those against law will be punished. If you know law and commit violence [...] you'll lose property” (FGD, Bantey Sleik).

While the Gender Impact Assessment validated many of the purported achievements of the project, these need to be understood within the social context of the communities in

question. Women's increased participation relied "heavily on the elasticity of women's labour in both their reproductive and community managing roles" (Moser, 1993: 73). Increased decision making and empowerment were limited by men's discretionary power as well as the very real constraints faced by women that OGB in Cambodia, at least in the case of illiteracy, did not address because it fell outside their remit. When asked if OGB had considered offering literacy classes, Lay Sokroeun, OGB project staff, said they had previously held such classes in neighbouring villages but did not any more because OGB no longer worked in education (field notes)¹⁸⁵. This was despite Lay Sokroeun identifying women's literacy as a strategic need for women in the proposal for the first year of the project (Internal document. OGB, 2003).

The point of the examples of illiteracy and how domestic violence was addressed is to highlight the need to understand projects within the wider context relations of aid and Aidland, which is the focus on the next section.

VCDM MEMBERS AS BROKERS AND TRANSLATORS

As previously stated, OGB in Cambodia viewed the VCDMs as key mechanisms for enabling community participation in the project. Moreover, they were envisioned as future community structures to promote villagers' rights. While NGO fieldworkers are usually the ones at the interface between development projects and those who are supposed to benefit (Harrison, 1997), in the case of the CBDM project they were not present in communities on a permanent basis. OGB required interlocutors (Soontornwong, 1996): *brokers*, who mediate between development funders and recipients, and *translators*, who work to enrol diverse interests (Long, 1992). According to de Sardan (2005: 173), "brokers represent the local social bearers of a project, those situated at the interface between the target population and the development institution, those who are supposed to represent the local population (or to express their 'needs'), the interlocutors of support and financial aid structures".

¹⁸⁵ Until 2006, Oxfam was actively engaged in educational projects in Cambodia, but it withdrew from this area in an effort to focus its country programme. The organisation decided that it no longer offered a comparative advantage as there were many other organisations with more expertise in education. Im's comments echoed O'Leary and Meas' (2001) finding on Cambodian NGO staff being "project oriented" and unable to consider options outside the confines of project documents.

I suggest that, within the CBDM project, VCDM members acted as “brokers” – as management boards in service of the project – not as “incipient CBOs” as claimed by project evaluators (Internal report. Rowe and Menh Navy, 2005: 33)¹⁸⁶. For example, one of their main roles was to disseminate information members gained from project training. As Sarom, a male VCDM member from Anchang, suggests, their role was limited to when the project needed their help. “We only initiate [meetings] if there is information to share. Have to inform [village] chief. If not, can’t have meeting” (FGD). In relation to this, another VCDM role was reporting when there is a need. For example, the role of the chair was “is to visit people and report and, during flooding season, plead for help” (Interview. Kheng, a male beneficiary, Anchang). The other reporting function related to when there were transgressions. Sarom states “If someone sells boat, don’t know what we’ll do but will inform *Ankar*. Can’t stop people” (FGD, Anchang).

These comments also suggest that the VCDMs operated in the lower echelons of the project’s web of relations (Eyben, 2006), dependent on both CD and OGB, as their reporting role suggests. Sarom had to seek permission from the village chief to hold meetings, and the reporting function was upwards to CD. In another example, during the 2005 flooding season, as included in an OGB report, committee members reported “immediately to CD and Oxfam about the damages” who, in turn, undertook a damage assessment and reported to the commune council, which resulted in the release of emergency food support from provincial military officers (Internal report. OGB, 2006d: 27). It was not the VCDM that undertook the assessment or liaised with local authorities, but rather the project sponsors¹⁸⁷.

Still, as brokers, VCDMs became the new “patrons” (Soontornwong, 1996, Vijghen and Ly Sareoun, 1996b, Vijghen and Ly Sareoun, 1996a) within the context of village-level power dynamics. At the interface between beneficiaries and OGB, beneficiaries were

¹⁸⁶ This is not a unique observation in the Cambodian context. For example, Conway (1999) found village development committees (VDCs) to be functioning primarily, at the behest of aid organisations, as a vehicle for organising villagers for meetings, communicating with outsiders and reporting to the NGO. Unlike my research findings, however, Conway found the VDCs he researched to be generally inactive, lacking initiative and incentive. See also O’Leary and Meas Nee (2001: 17) for the advantages of village committees for NGOs in expediting project implementation.

¹⁸⁷ This is an example of how “Role reversals, as advocated in PRA [participatory rural appraisal] for example, are typical of many rituals and can act to confirm rather than challenge the status quo. Thus ideologies expressed in the ritual of projects legitimize the power of aid-givers without posing a real threat to the existing social order” (Crew and Harrison, 1998: 192).

dependent on them. Although positioned differently and relatively subordinate to OGB and CD, they did have some authority¹⁸⁸. For example, they had discretionary decision-making powers in relation to who received project assets – which included themselves. For instance, while the majority of project beneficiaries participating in the Gender Impact Assessment expressed gratitude for the VCDMs' efforts and admiration for their hard work, four community members from Bantey Sleik were particularly critical. They suggested that those who fit the criteria and should have received project assets didn't: "People who should get, didn't. For example, old and infirm don't have" (FGD, Bantey Sleik). Also: "I didn't get anything even though I have 7 kids" (FGD, Bantey Sleik). They also accused committee members of benefiting more than others and not following their own criteria, particularly in terms of who received project inputs and how they needed to be used. One commented that " "VCDM doesn't use giant jar. Family of three don't use jar or latrine. Five committee members got everything. Not jealous, they worked hard, went to training [...] No one asked us how we feel. No one comes to people's houses" (Vassin. FGD, Bantey Sleik).

This authority was also manifested in the VCDMs' policing role, which facilitated their functions as translators. Ses, a beneficiary who said the VCDM operated well, also confirmed the influence that they yielded: "committee comes to remind us to fill water filter. If don't, causes us trouble [...] If we don't do what they say, they'll blame us in public" (Interview, Sang Ke Chaur). Through public shaming, VCDM members were able to enrol beneficiaries to toe the line. Similarly, their role in mediating in cases of domestic violence was partially concerned with ensuring beneficiaries fell into line and followed project dictates. In other words, VCDMs became an extension of "the line", a term as I explained in Chapter 4 that described staff relations within OGB.

Meanwhile, members of the VCDMs were not just pawns of development but also social actors and one strategic group in the web of relations of aid. They had varied motivations for volunteering for the community. As stated previously, they dedicated considerable time and energy to the task and they also benefited directly. There were financial incentives, in the form of *per diems* to attend meetings outside the village.

¹⁸⁸ This is similar to Mosse's (2005: 114) observation of a project in India where *jankars* (village representatives) became the project's field-level staff, "mediating relationships with staff and filtering benefits within their own villages. They monitored and supervised physical works [...] with the power to assess work and sanction payment."

They attained “symbolic capital” through the increased status that their positions conferred and the opportunities the project provided, such as through travel outside of the village to seaside resorts in Cambodia for “annual project reviews”. In some cases, this status was enhanced by the fact that the VCDM chair was married to the village chief. For example, VCDM meetings were generally held at the chair’s house, which sometimes meant the village chief’s house, as the VCDM chair was, in at least one case, the spouse of the chief¹⁸⁹. This constrained community participation. As one community member commented, “Always to chief’s house. Meetings at chief’s house. Don’t dare speak at meetings because it’s chief’s house” (Nget, FGD, Bantey Slek).

VCDM members’ status as new patrons was ensured by maintaining relations with CD and thereby OGB in Cambodia, who represented their own patrons. And it was these relations with which they were primary concerned. For example, the chair of the Anchang VCDM states of her rationale to stop illegal fishing, “[I] won’t allow people to use boats for illegal fishing because fishing authorities will see it’s an NGO boat [...] *Ankar* will get in trouble. Will report to CD if people misuse boat” (interview)¹⁹⁰. Similar were concerns expressed by Siem if domestic violence occurred, mentioned above. These instances should be seen as part of the VCDM’s role as translators and enrolling beneficiaries in service of the project. The VCDM chair’s reference to OGB’s logo suggests preventing OGB, because its logo was on all project assets provided to the communities, from being associated with “illegal” activity. As O’Leary and Meas (2001: 94) observe, “the project committees [...] established to manage the project activities are almost always held accountable to the NGO who comes to monitor and check their activities, rather than to people intended to benefit from the project”. Their position as patrons was also secured through their role as translators: the functions of reporting, policing and mediation in cases of domestic violence were concerned with enrolling beneficiaries in service of the project.

¹⁸⁹ The Gender Impact Assessment findings raised some question as to how the VCDM members were elected, despite Oxfam’s contention of being freely elected committee members. For example the VCDM deputy in Anchar was appointed by the deputy village chief, her husband, after the first nominee declined the appointment.

¹⁹⁰ “Illegal” fishing is a complicated and contentious issue in Cambodia (see, for example, Sneddon, 2007), one which this thesis cannot do justice to. Suffice it to say, fishing is one of the largest industries in Cambodia, providing many people with a livelihood. However, commercial fishing enterprises are awarded fishing lot “concessions” that deprive subsistence and/or household-based fishers of their livelihoods (Ballard, 2007).

As brokers and translators, their role was critical to the project and was self-perpetuating. For example, undertaking the Gender Impact Assessment reinforced the status of the VCDM chair position. The chairs also benefited financially, as they were paid for our room and board. I recall feeling uncomfortable that we ate, slept, held team meetings and conducted many interviews at chairs' houses: the presence of visitors and a foreigner only served to enhance the status of VCDM chairs (field notes). But to do otherwise¹⁹¹ would have been a snub to the chairs, thereby undermining their authority and making both the project and the impact assessment difficult, as both OGB and the assessment team needed the support and cooperation of these actors. In other words, acquiescing to village-level power dynamics, thereby reinforcing them, was needed to undertake the project.

Jacobson (2008: 6-7) states that “power in the Cambodian context rests upon a complex network of social relationships [where] the conditions for political power are determined by other pre-existing power relations”. VCDM members were positioned as patrons of and brokers for project beneficiaries, as well as acting as “project management boards” in service of OGB, a position that was ensured as long as they assured compliance with project rules. As they performed their duties in this regard, what were the extant power relations and to what degree do these determine power within the development context? In what sense and to what degree did VCDM members draw on pre-existing ideas, namely, patronage¹⁹² (Mosse, 2005b), in their role as brokers and translators? What is to be made of their interpretations?

These are complicated questions to answer. Patronage is said to permeate all aspects of aid relations in Cambodia, reflecting a wider system of hierarchy and patronage in Khmer society¹⁹³. The lens of patronage relations has also been used to document how village development committees (VDCs) have become the new patrons (Soontornwong,

¹⁹¹ This would entail staying at another community member's house as commercial accommodation is unavailable in these villages.

¹⁹² I specifically use the term “patronage”, as opposed to “patron-client”, to emphasize a type of relation not a specific linear, fixed, clearly-defined relationship, as characterized in proto-type notions (Scott, 1972).

¹⁹³ Cambodian NGOs themselves are noted for internal hierarchical structures dominated by patron-client relations (Richardson, 2001, cited by O'Leary, 2006). Similarly, patronising perspectives are said to be held by Cambodian development workers, particularly in reference to rural communities. O'Leary (ibid: 103) indicates, but does not explore, how international NGOs are hierarchies, as are their relations with Cambodian NGOs.

1996), acting as brokers as a result of their monopoly over contacts with external sources of resources. Vijghen and Ly Sareoun (1996b) provide one of the only – and most detailed – accounts of how “traditional” patronage relations become imbued in relations between VDCs and communities, based on their research of 12 villages in Takeo province, the site of my research. Their account starts with an assumption that patronage relations existed before the introduction of the VDCs, particularly during the UNTAC period (see Chapter 7). At this time, previous to the introduction of development assistance, villager chiefs acted as patrons for villagers, given their links to government resources. When UNTAC withdrew in 1997, such resources were no longer available, and village chiefs lost the basis for such patronage positions. Around this time, international NGOs arrived in rural communities and started VDCs to coordinate the distribution of resources. By commandeering committees, either directly or through proxies, such as through relatives chairing or participating in committees, former patrons were able to regain their positions as brokers of development assistance. VDCs, as the new patrons, could also assume and share roles that were previously the domain of the village chief, one of which was resolving intra-household conflict. As Vijghen and Ly Sareoun (1996b: Annex 1: 14) note, “Traditionally conflicts were resolved by the village leadership within the village. In matters relating to development activities, the leadership is the VDC.” At an interpersonal level, it is usually the respective patrons of those involved in conflict who negotiate solutions (Rasmussen, 2001, cited by Santry, 2005: 35).¹⁹⁴

What is interesting about this literature on patronage in relations of aid in Cambodia is that it is speculative. There are few detailed studies except for Vijghen and Ly Sareoun (1996b) and, but to a lesser extent, Soontornwong (1996). Second, much of the literature emphasises what Cambodians gain from these relations and, relatedly, they view them primarily as disrupting development, particularly as a potential source of corruption (Biddulph, 1996, Soontornwong, 1996, Vijghen and Ly Sareoun, 1996b). There is little attention to how such relations interact with others, such as relations of aid. Third, and relatedly, while this literature does point to the importance of

¹⁹⁴ This section is not a comprehensive treatment of Cambodian society or specific aspects of hierarchy and patronage but provides an overview of the key socio-cultural dimensions that are the most relevant to my understanding of the making of ambitious gender claims through the CBDM project. For more detailed descriptions, see Ledgerwood (n.d.; 1990); Marston (1997); Vijghen and Sareoun (1996a and 1996b).

understanding Cambodian development practice in terms of hierarchal social relations where patronage is highlighted, to see these as determining is limited: this explanation's "psychology is too anemic and [its] sociology too muscular" (Geertz, 1973: 202). This is not to dismiss the import of such relations, but rather to acknowledge their existence within relations of aid and other mitigating factors.

In performing their duties as project management boards while ensuring the own positionality as brokers, VCDM members, as both patrons and clients within the aid web, seem to have drawn on pre-existing ideas, namely, the notions of patronage and village-level leaders as those who resolve conflict (Ledgerwood and Vijghen, 2002) in the case of domestic violence. This represents a mixing of ideas of those that existed before (patronage) and ones introduced by the project (VCDMs as proto civil society organisations) through a process of internalisation (Long, 1992). While this concept helps us to understand what happens to "external" ideas, it does not tell us how ideas become understood – it only describes what happens, that external factors are drawn on and mean different things to different people (Long and van der Ploeg, 1989).

Harrison's (1997: 73) notion of the "hybridization of externally induced values" is a more nuanced description, in that the focus is on the result of a partial process of internalisation – a synthesis or integration of ideas. Her use of "values" is particularly relevant in the context of development, as Aidland is implicitly and explicitly constituted by and concerned with values (Mowles, 2008, O'Leary, 2006). The inclusion of values gives more weight and significance to what gets introduced and privileged as well as what gets hybridised. Still, the notion also stays clear of normative judgments by placing emphasis on the external while implying "directionality" (Purvis and Hunt, 1993: 497): development values do have an influence. Using the term "induced" provides sufficient scope to acknowledge this influence without concluding too much attribution. Lastly, Harrison's description of the process of "hybridization" as a process of giving and making of meaning¹⁹⁵ is critical, as it acknowledges the interpretive nature of internalisation.

¹⁹⁵ Mosse (2005: 170) and Shutt (2006a) make similar assertions.

VCDM members acted within their interpretive horizons which, for the most part, were informed by their tacit knowledge (Haugaard, 2003). For this reason, it is difficult to speak of committee members' "real" motivations. In addition, given that much of what informed understandings and motivations was tacit knowledge within a web of aid relations permeated by power dynamics, motivations were likely fluid and shifting and cannot be reduced to material gain (Crewe and Harrison, 1998).

More importantly, the evidence from the Gender Impact Assessment suggests that patronage worked well in projecting the CBDM project as a model of success. VCDM members' roles as brokers were facilitated by norms of relations among differently positioned persons. Members had two sets of patronage relations – one with OGB and the other with beneficiaries – in which they undertook different roles. In prioritising their relations with OGB, for example in favouring the protection of OGB's reputation over illegal fishing, VCDM members secured their roles as clients in relation to the NGO (Soontornwong, 1996). This relationship also located them as project brokers, whereby they related to project beneficiaries through patronage relations. In order to maintain the former relationship, they took on the role of translators, enrolling beneficiaries using different strategies – one concerned policing; another related to benefiting particular families.

CONCLUSION

My aim in this chapter was to understand OGB in Cambodia's claims of women's participation in the project and, as a result, their empowerment. I have shown that these claims need to be understood within wider contexts, which are what drove the basis for such claims, as well as the claims themselves. One such context is that of social relations of gender and how outcomes for women, as a result of the project, were mediated by the gender division of labour, a main driver for how women were involved in the project and upon what basis. I suggest that women's labour was enrolled in the service of the project and the potential for accessing the benefits of the project was constrained by their social position that, in some cases, created more dependency on men. Women beneficiaries had access to project resources, but they were not in control of them nor of the benefits derived from them. While the project was couched in terms of gender and development, it operated within the realm of women in development. As

with the creation and reproduction of the CBDM model, of which gender mainstreaming was a part, this adoption of gender and development discourse served to mobilise support, particularly among women community members.

The second and related context is that of “development” and relations of aid. Under the auspices of enhancing women’s participation and their decision making, particular efforts were made to position women as senior members of the VCDMs. The infrastructure established by OGB in Cambodia served to co-opt women and their labour as part of the relations of aid, which also allowed for the making of claims of having established a model in community-based disaster management that was gender mainstreamed. In particular, the VCDMs were brokers and translators; they acted as mediators between project sponsors and beneficiaries in the communities, often performing reporting and policing functions at the critical interfaces of “accommodation, negotiation, selective appropriation” (Arce and Long, 2000: 3). Also in order to undertake their role, perceived or otherwise, brokers needed to enrol beneficiaries where they used the nominal authority vested in them by the project. In this case, the driver of women participating in the project was concerned with fulfilling and, to some extent, preserving their particular roles in Aidland. I suggest, however, that in doing so, VCDM members may have drawn in extant social relations of patronage. This “hybridization of externally induced values” needs, however, to be understood not only from the perspective of preserving VCDM’s position within relations of aid, but also as acting within their interpretive horizons. In this sense, contrary to literature on Cambodian development assistance and patronage, such acts did not disrupt development but rather facilitated the CBDM project and its projection as a gender mainstreamed success.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the question “What are the relationships between different conceptualisations and representations of the policy and practice of gender mainstreaming, in the case of Oxfam GB?”. Much of the literature on gender mainstreaming points to a failure of policy, particularly to guide practice, which is often described as gaps in implementation. I drew upon anthropology of development literature concerning the purpose of policy and the role of strategic groups to understand the micro-politics of gender mainstreaming policy and practice in OGB.

In this chapter I provide a summary of the policy and practice of gender mainstreaming in the different sites of OGB that I researched. Concluding that the understandings of gender and its promotion were driven by different contingencies in the respective sites, I explore why there were different drivers. I end this chapter with some reflection on gender mainstreaming in and by DNGOs.

THE POLICY AND PRACTICE OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN OXFAM GB

This thesis has concerned the relationships between different conceptualizations and representations of gender equality mainstreaming. I examined the case of OGB and focused on two sites of organisational policy and practice. Since the mid-1990s, OGB had increasingly adopted this strategy to promote gender equality, which by the period of study, 2001 to 2006, had become the dominant approach. Yet my research shows that how it evolved in the sites of policy and practice is different.

In Oxfam House, gender mainstreaming can be traced back to when OGB established its strategy to implement the recently approved Gender Policy in 1993. Thereafter, gender mainstreaming became increasingly adopted, culminating in it becoming a corporate priority in 2003. As I document in Chapters 5 and 6, senior managers not only took on the strategy but became much more involved in driving gender policy compared to previous OGB managers. With this came an agenda to make gender accessible through a discourse of simplification that promoted particular ways of speaking about and doing

gender while censoring others. It also involved a shifting of how gender advisory support was being provided.

I suggest that post-FROSI priorities facilitated the agenda to make gender accessible rather compelling and demonstrated how institutional history and politics were important drivers (Chapter 7). Senior managers in Oxfam House were keenly aware of the perennial challenges the organisation had been facing in making its gender policy effective. During the period of this research, the 2002 Gender Review was particularly influential in catalysing senior managers' increased involvement in leading gender efforts and their determination to make a difference. In this sense, the reaction to the gender review also represented a further entrenchment of gender mainstreaming; it was an attempt to address a common finding not only of OGB but other development agencies more generally: the lack of leadership and management commitment.

With increased involvement of senior managers, under the auspices of taking leadership, came particular understandings of gender equality and its promotion. I argued in Chapter 7, that this was informed not only by individual personal experiences but also perceptions of how gender was promoted in the past. Gender was said to have been made overly complicated by previous efforts of former gender advisors who tended to make staff feel inadequate. This resulted in resistance among staff who were intimidated. Accordingly, the agenda of making gender accessible included simplifying gender so that it was more understandable and do-able. As I showed using the example of the 2003 updating of the original 1993 policy, this agenda also involved a dilution of gender policy away from its more radical aims.

The account of gender mainstreaming in the CBDM project of OGB in Cambodia is also a story of organisational historical contingencies, particularly the effects of FROSI, and also represents an entrenchment of gender mainstreaming. However, how Oxfam House supported such efforts was different. Unlike previous times when GADU was directly and indirectly supporting country programmes (see Chapters 4 and 7), the influence of OGB's headquarters during the post-FROSI period was mediated by the Regional Management Centre for East Asia, established during this period, and the subsequent adoption of a gender mainstreaming strategy and infrastructure specifically

for the region, including increasing the authority of the gender advisor. The establishment of these, as well as enforcement mechanisms, such as the non-negotiables, can be seen as good gender mainstreaming practice. In addition, they also represent a deepening of gender mainstreaming in OGB more generally and, consequently, at the level of the Cambodian country programme. This is not to say, however, that in the case of the Cambodian programme that gender mainstreaming was only introduced during the post-FROSI era.

In Chapter 8, I demonstrated that CBDM staff took on requirements such as the need to include gender analysis and seek the advice of gender advisors. I suggest that there is more to the taking on of gender advisors' advice than either seeing such advice as valuable or acquiescing to OGB staff situated higher in the hierarchy of the organisation. I argue that there was a relationship of mutual benefit and reciprocity between regional gender advisors and project staff: each needed to work with the other to secure their place in Aidland.

On the face of it, claims by OGB that the CBDM project was a gender mainstreamed initiative can be substantiated. Still, as I showed in Chapters 8 and 9, gender mainstreaming efforts were tied into the notion of the project as a success and a model in community-based disaster management. In the face of continual questions about these claims, being a gender mainstreamed project was one trope that could be claimed to support the claim that OGB in Cambodia had established a model. Moreover, women and their empowerment, such as being able to speak up, were implicated in claims of success and became part of the reproduction of the discourse of project success. The integration of women, as discussed in Chapter 9, was however in service of the project. Unlike the drivers of policy in Oxfam House, the drivers of the practice of gender mainstreaming were the demands and uncertainties of Aidland and, in the light of these, the maintenance of project relations and reproduction of "success". They also concerned localised contingencies of social relations of gender and relations of aid. Outcomes for women claimed by OGB were constrained by the gender division of labour and related gendered differences in access and control of project resources and resulting benefits while women's participation in village project committees was mediated by the roles of the committees as brokers and translators.

DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONAL LOCATIONS-DIFFERENT DRIVERS

This thesis has demonstrated that policy and practice of gender mainstreaming are not necessarily linked; policy did not drive practice as conventional wisdom holds and Oxfam House senior managers tended to believe, although sometimes somewhat skeptically. I have suggested that different drivers are at play. Why are they different in the two contexts of Oxfam House, as a site of policy making, and the CBDM project, as a site of policy practice?

The first reason for different drivers concerns a seemingly rudimentary explanation: the two sites occupy different organisational locations that have their own functions. This is not just a matter of being physically located in separate parts of the organisation, but the diverse institutional politics inherent in these different organisational sites of policy and practice. As Gould (2004b: 7) states, these entail “quite different social contexts, perceptions and judgments”. Policy definition is future oriented (van Ufford, 1993). For senior managers, the need to mobilise support as part of policy definition came from a perceived need to address what were seen as past failures of gender policy in order to move forward into the future. This required the deployment of discursive strategies in order to bring coherence to contested issues and the mobilising of support through the reproduction of policy models and narratives, such as that of the “gender police”. For CBDM project staff, concerned with implementation, the present was uncertain as they faced challenges to their claims of having a model in community-based disaster management. These challenges potentially affected continued funding support. In the face of this uncertainty, diverse strategic groups needed to be enrolled and mobilized. This included the reproduction of the idea that the project was gender mainstreamed and a gender success. The engagement over the rhetorical devices of practice, such as proposals, is not so much concerned with informing implementation as with negotiating positions and mutually beneficial relations, as discussed in Chapter 7.

This of course had implications for how OGB gender advisors were seen and positioned. Given the unfinished sense of gender history in Oxfam House and perceptions of what went wrong, gender advisors were managed by senior managers to undertake their work in particular ways that conformed with the new agenda of making

gender accessible. This was partly achieved by the reproduction of the myth of the gender police and the discourse of “acceptable” and “unacceptable” ways of doing gender work. In contrast, the regional gender advisor position and the overall regional gender infrastructure were new. This combined with the absence of “baggage” about gender advisors in the Cambodian OGB programme, allowed for a fresh start and, in the case of the CBDM project, mutual enrolment.

The second explanation for different drivers is related to differences in policy space. In Oxfam House, authority was vested in relatively few people. I mentioned in Chapter 2 how development bureaucracies can be seen as oligarchies and the restricted involvement of key senior managers in the setting of gender policy was evident from the case of the 2003 gender policy update and efforts to “organisationally outflank” others (Clegg, 1989: 220). The space of policy making was relatively narrow compared to that of the CBDM project where policy space involved a more diverse array of strategic groups, each of which brought their own interpretations of development and gender discourse informed by their own ideologies and imperatives. It was much more diffused and informal.

Both sites were concerned with hierarchies imbedded in OGB’s formal structure, but there are differences concerning distance. Contrary to the observation that gender advocates are usually not close to the seats of power (Goetz, 1995), the assumption of leadership for gender mainstreaming by the Director and the appointment of senior managers as Gender Leads placed authority for gender mainstreaming in the highest echelons of power in OGB. With senior managers working directly with Oxfam House gender advisors and advocates, this put them in close proximity to each other, offering opportunities to closely engage and exert influence. In the case of CBDM project staff and regional gender advisors, while structurally and hierarchically linked, they operated two or three steps removed from each other with an array of intermediaries, such as the Country Programme Manager, who acted as intermediaries. Their ability to influence each other was different but not absolute, which helped establish a mutually reciprocal and beneficial relationship.

At the same time, there are differences in scale and influence related to these policy spaces, or as Eyben (2005: 2) writes, ‘regime’ and ‘reach’ in her reflections of multi-sited ethnographies. The former refers to “an embodied set of practices, rules and values that makes an impact on people’s freedom of movement through space. A regime ‘jumps scale’ when it is able to gain a wider reach.” While I have stated that the space for making policy is quite narrow and the purview of a few in Oxfam House, the regime with which senior managers were concerned with was quite wide: it was supposed to affect thousands of staff and hundreds of thousands of people benefiting from OGB. In such cases, a strategy of the lowest common denominator, such as making gender as simple as possible, is a reasonable decision to reach out to the regime¹⁹⁶. In contrast, the reach of the regime with which the CBDM staff were concerned was quite narrow in the sense that while having national ambitions, the practices, rules and values of OGB in Cambodia affected a limited number of people in a localised setting. A broad generalised strategy was not needed; rather one that was specific to the context and relevant to existing discourses, such as the conflation of being vulnerable to floods with the vulnerability of women, was a viable option.

A third explanation for the differences in drivers in these sites concerns their respective organisational histories, which I argued previously is critical in organisational ethnography to understand the present (Bate, 1994). The trajectories of efforts to promote gender in Oxfam House and OGB in Cambodia were influenced by different factors to varying degrees. These included organisational changes in OGB, historical and political contexts external to these sites as well as internal historical dynamics within the respective gender infrastructures. As described in Chapter 4, OGB has a long and contested history around the promotion of gender equality and much of this history centres around Oxfam House, not least because this is the headquarters of the organisation but also where GADU existed at one time and, later, from where gender mainstreaming efforts were centred. Past battles and GADU in particular are unfinished business as their legacies live on, for example as in the myth of the gender police (see also Internal report. Murison, 2002). OGB efforts to promote gender issues have also

¹⁹⁶ This is a different assertion and one that Eyben (2005: 3) questions. She asks “how do we know that one regime has a wider reach than another one? [...Is] there a risk of conflating the global head office [...] with the scale of the organisation as a whole and making assumptions that the practices/values/rules of a group of people running the head office of a ‘global organisation’ must necessarily have a wider reach than those sitting in Kathmandu?”

been externally influenced by wider events within Great Britain, feminist scholarship and, more recently and closer to OGB, Oxfam International.

While influenced by Oxfam House, namely GADU, as well as gender and development advocates during the early 1990s, the evolution of the taking on of gender issues in OGB's Cambodian programme was quite different. While both OGB and its Cambodian programme emerged out of a response to conflict, the latter however was much more enmeshed with the socio-cultural specificities of post-Khmer Rouge Cambodian society than was the Oxfam Committee was with Greece when it first started in 1942. Gender issues were popularized during the re-building of a nation in Cambodia where international influences, through the UN and OGB for example, were particularly strong. In other words, OGB influenced the external context that, in turn, created a conducive environment for the organisation to pursue gender issues. Perhaps this explains what appears to be a relatively less stressful and conflict ridden process of introducing gender and development to the OGB in Cambodia as compared to what GADU experienced 10 years previously, which also was a different socio-cultural context. There was no sense of "historical baggage" that was evident in Oxfam House. Rather than being driven by a perceived need to be rid of the past, work with the Cambodian office at times felt like working *tabula rasa* and little sense of the organisation's history with gender issues.

If acquiescence to gender advisors' suggestions was concerned with mutually beneficial relations in the case of the CBDM project, why, for example, were gender advisors in OGB House not accorded with the same acquiescence and instead faced opposition, as described in Chapter 4? Gender advisors in these two sites were given different levels of authority. In Oxfam House, gender advisors were vested with little decision making or influence over senior managers and decisions. As the case of the 2006 gender policy update demonstrated, control over decision making was exercised by senior managers through overt power manifested through an observable conflict between senior managers and gender advisors and advocates (Lukes, 2005). Historical contexts and perceptions of past efforts to address gender issues informed the relative conferring of

authority on gender advisors, which in turn, affected their participation in and ability to influence change¹⁹⁷.

Regional gender advisors, as discussed before, were vested with authority provided by the regional gender mainstreaming infrastructure introduced in the post-FROSI period. As described in Chapter 8, this did not confer overt power but rather latent power (Lukes, 2005). Regional advisors and CBDM project staff were involved in a conflict about how to engender project proposals but were unaware of this, none the least because there was no observable conflict, unlike the case of other regional advisors and staff who engaged with the project. Rather project staff conformed with the interests of the regional gender advisors because they felt it was in their interests to do so. As explained in Chapter 8, obliging the gender advisor provided cachet and furthered the projection of the project as a success.

Related to this explanation is the specific cultural context in which such exchanges were taking place. The relationships between gender advisors and project staff, as a manifestation of Aidland, are informed, though not determined (Jacobson, 2008: 10), by those “that have historically existed in society”. In a twist on Shutt’s take on conflict among Cambodians in development agencies, complementarity and reciprocity in relations of aid are not only concerned with organisational positions and identities, but also are part of the “inter-play between the power structures of Aidland *and* embedded power relations in Cambodia”, where power is “the product of inter-subjective power relations between particular individuals who react to the rules, procedures and cultures experienced in Aidland in varied ways” (Shutt, 2008: n.r. My emphasis).

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SITES

My suggestion of the sites of policy and practice not being linked is not the same as an absence of relationships between sites. This is similar to Gould’s (2004b:7) observation about the relationship between an agency’s headquarters and their projects in some “rural corner”; “there would seem to be nothing of substance linking the two localities [...] besides the nominal translocal presence of the private aid agency”. But I disagree that the presence of an aid agency, or rather a development bureaucracy, is nominal.

¹⁹⁷ This was ironic, as one previous advisor pointed out, for they were seen, and accused in the case of the image of gender police, for wielding inordinate amounts of power.

As discussed in Chapter 4, development bureaucracies are comprised of complex webs of relations among different strategic interest groups. In OGB jargon, they are related by the “line”. This is not to suggest a linear relationship of complete command and control. Where these sites are located along the line is significant because these relationships are influenced by groups’ relative positions within Aidland and the dominant aspects of a particular relationship. How these relationships play out has as much to do with structure as well as agency of strategic interest groups and how agency is exercised. For example, the Oxfam House-East Asia Management Centre-Cambodia programme relationship was dominated by flows of information concerned with organisational compliance that had a conforming influence but was also characterized by deployment of resistance strategies, such as “pushing against the beast”.

The research revealed a particular contradiction concerning senior managers engagement with the line at all levels, although to varying degrees. On the one hand, they believed in the line or, in other words, the authority vested in particular organisational positions to decree action. This belief was not so much concerned with an absolute power to make pronouncements that would result in action, but a faith that “down the line”, subsequent managers would “fall into line” and execute decisions and actions accordingly. Regionalisation, while projected as a move to shift decision making closer to the country programmes, was also concerned with strengthening the line. For example, many of the decisions taken after the 2002 Gender Review were delegated to the RMCs.

On the other hand, senior managers were also keenly aware of the limits of their ability to decree a decision but from different perspectives and to varying degrees. For example, this was evident in Oxfam House senior managers’ initial reluctance to assume a strong and direct approach to mainstreaming gender and their desire for a more accessible approach that would make mainstreaming gender desirable and intelligible. Similarly but conveying a much stronger sense of a disconnection, as the senior regional manager described in Chapter 4 contends, Oxfam House didn’t realise the extent to which could not actually control “the strings” and what was happening down the line. Part of this disconnect was due to the power managers down the line

could exercise. While not necessarily the authority to do so, regional and Cambodian senior managers “pushed back” using various selection strategies. They chose when to respond to policy initiatives, as in the one regional manager stating how he waits to determine the intent of the Oxfam House initiatives, and which initiatives they were going to push down the line, as in the Cambodian senior manager filtering and prioritizing externally driven OGB messages for Cambodian staff. Much of this was concerned with self-preservation and preservation of others.

There was almost an engaged ambivalence when senior managers from different sites spoke of these contradictions and resulting tensions. Despite their scepticism, they still engaged with and in “the line”. For example, after acknowledging what actually happens in the line, senior managers talked about their role in it – sending decisions down and information up – as this is what they do. Why did they continue to maintain the myth of the line when they also understood that it was broken in various places? Hauggard (2003: 93), as mentioned in Chapter 8, discusses how power produces social order that where “Causal predictability [is] created through the reproduction of meaning” through structuration and confirming stucturation”. The line is a structuration of power relations within OGB; engaging with the line are acts of confirming stucturation. To not engage is a refutation of the hierarchical power structure upon which “order” in the organisation is built.

This is not to say, however, that senior managers throughout the line, but particularly at regional and country level, were concerned only with preserving order in OGB. Participating in the line was also a source of power. Selectively engaging with the line, by fulfilling roles such as compliance and reporting up the line, gave the appearance of following the line and therefore staying in line. This allowed regional and country senior manager to then step out of line as they deemed necessary. So when regional managers speak of waiting or selecting what to follow, these were strategies to resist or “push back against the beast”. These strategies were not seen as systemic resistance by senior managers in Oxfam House but as anomalies to be dealt with on a case by case basis (see Chapter 5), which could explain the persistence of the myth of the line: indications of systemic resistance were misdiagnosed as anomalies not as a system of mutual deceit. In contrast, it is no wonder that those farthest down the line, programme

officers who were situated in the thin part of the “hour glass” (Chapter 4), exercised the least amounts of power. Still, as discussed in Chapter 8, they, as members of the web of relations of aid, deployed power that fell outside the formal structure of OGB but with which they were endowed with the establishment of gender infrastructure in the region. It facilitated a mutually beneficial arrangement through an exchange of rhetoric between project staff and regional gender advisors.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN DNGOS

In many ways, the experience of OGB could be seen as an example of good practice and contrasts with other experiences with gender mainstreaming, as described in Chapter 2. In fact, you can say gender was being mainstreamed and OGB efforts addressed many criticisms of gender mainstreaming and related recommendations of, for example, the Gender Review. The research offered insight into these common prescriptions, which I discuss next.

One concerns leadership for and commitment to gender mainstreaming among senior managers as well as programme officers. In OGB and other development agencies, this is often seen as lacking. In my research, gender was not ignored but taken on by senior managers. But, as described in Chapter 6, with this came with particular assumptions and understandings about gender equality and its promotion, which I suggest resulted in policy dilution. The idea of promoting organisational leadership and commitment needs to be alongside an understanding that leadership and commitment are informed by fundamental ideologies about women, gender and, relatedly their promotion which may not be the same as those held by those encouraging leaders to be more active and committed. As Kabeer (1992) shows well, different understandings of gender are attached to different ways of approaching gender, whether concerning analysis, planning or its promotion.

The second reflection on gender mainstreaming concerns gender advisors. The literature on the role and experiences of gender advisors and advocates, usually constituted as gender units, is replete with assertions of being marginalised, under-resourced and lacking decision making influence, if not decision making authority altogether. The examples of this research about the interactions between regional gender advisors and

programme staff suggest otherwise. As described above, regional gender advisors were provided with a fair amount of leeway as well as access to decision making. In Chapter 7, I discussed how senior regional managers made seeking advisory support a requirement and project approval conditional upon the endorsement of regional gender advisors. This would suggest a certain authority held by regional advisors. But in the same way that Byrne et al., (1996) speak of the double-edge sword of being close to centres of power and decision making, the elevated authority of regional gender advisors too was bittersweet. I've suggested in Chapter 8 that this facilitated a mutual exchange of benefits. In other words, while regional gender advisors became "mainstreamed", they also became enmeshed in the relations of aid and the bargaining and negotiating that this entails (Wallace et al., 2006). Partly because of this, women VCDM members also became part of Aidland and their participation and labour were enrolled in service of the project under the auspices of gender mainstreaming. Standing's argument (2004: 85), while referring to development bureaucracies, ring true: "the main myth of gender mainstreaming [...] is not so much a myth of political transformation without politics, but more mythic relocation of the possibility of political transformation to an inherently non-transformatory context."

Related to this is the question posed by Evelien and Bacchi's (2005), "What are we mainstreaming when we mainstream gender?", which concerns the direction of the mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming, in its basic form, is supposed to be about integrating gender concerns in development processes, but the research throws up the question, what is being integrated into what? While Jahan's (1995) typology of integrationist and transformatory gender mainstreaming helps answer this question to some degree, it does not explain the co-option of gender, as in the case of the CDBM project. This concern about co-optation is not that women became more vocal but that they were trained specifically to be more confident to speak to visitors, who played a critical role in the recycling of success.

If gender mainstreaming is about change, what changes? My research suggests that both do: both the mainstream as well as notions of gender, but in different ways. In the case of this study, the mainstream is development bureaucracies and "development". I have already discussed the intransigence of bureaucracies to change. Concerning

development, Gould (2004a) notes that development assistance is concerned with an exercise of disciplinary power, which can be both repressive and empowering, but not directly coercive. It is this disciplining influence that I argue brought “gender” into the fold of development in this research, not vice versa, as the notion of gender mainstreaming conveys. As I described in Chapter 9, women were brought into the service of the project and the reproduction of success under the auspices of gender mainstreaming. As I note, this should not be seen just as an domination of VCDM members in particular, but as acts of agency to take advantage of the various tangible and intangible benefits the project offered through their taking on roles as brokers and translators. Also, I am not suggesting a monolithic machine (Ferguson, 1994). Nor am I suggesting, as does Baviskar (2004b: citing Li 1999), that development is a contested space where power relations are transformed, in part due to resistance by different groups struggling for their livelihoods. Rather it is a question of gender being made governable where “development mainstream versions of what is gender and what has to be done about it has been normalized” (Mukhopadhyay, forthcoming). As Subrahmanian (2007: 117) contends

locating ‘gender mainstreaming’ (in its composite sense as a set of strategies) within the broader context of development discourses, ideologies and trajectories is important. Equally, insisting on more specific and precise definitions of what these strategies are can only help to clarify the nature of transformation and change that is being pursued.

This thesis concerned understanding the promotion of gender equality in OGB and focused on gender mainstreaming. In attempting to understand how policy and practice are linked I have analysed the specific historical, organisational and political contexts in which these processes take place and concluded that these factors are more influential on policy and practice than the relationship between the two.

RESEARCHING DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE IN DEVELOPMENT NGOS

What are the implications of this study for researching development policy and practice?

Commonly, as noted in Chapter 2, gender policies concern both an organisation's programme as well as the organisation itself as "mainstreaming" came to be understood as both an internal and an external process. With this focus, there is an acknowledgement that organisations themselves are gendered (Goetz, 1997a), and that this is related to their outcomes, which are also gendered, reflecting an inward-outward looking dynamic (Rao and Kelleher, 1997, Macdonald et al., 1997). This research suggests that this dynamic is better described as a contestation that is not just concerned with delineations between internal and external, but also what these represent and how the dynamic is historically manifested.

The defining of gender policy is Janus-faced¹⁹⁸. Depicted as two faces looking in opposite directions, forwards and backwards, Janus, a Roman god of gates and doors, stands at the transition between endings and beginnings, the past and the future. To proceed into the future, one emerges from the past. Similarly gender policy is an attempt to establish future gender equality commitments where policies represent new beginnings; hope and promise, as described in Chapters 5 and 6. They, however, do not emerge from a vacuum but arise from historical organizational specificities that both act as the impetus for policy as well as inform the nature of policy. Like Janus, "cursed and blessed [...] with no option other than to look in two directions at once, backwards and at the same time forwards, to be always coming yet going" (Arnold, 2003: 233), gender policy and practice are historically embedded interpretive processes fraught with Janus-faced tensions between the past and the future. It is this embedded-ness that needs to be uncovered and disinterred when attempting to understand disjunctures in gender policy and practice. As argued in Chapter 6, while organizational imperatives to "simplify gender" were an attempt to escape the associations of previous efforts and entailed privileging the future over the past, historical struggles and their legacies remained. This is all the more pertinent, some 20 years after Beijing, when the gender agenda has moved beyond entering the mainstreaming and is concerned with what happens to it once there.

Similarly, as noted previously, the governmentality of both Aidland and organisations plays a role in what happens to gender policy. To appreciate the inward-outward

¹⁹⁸ Thanks to Dr. Ann Whitehead for suggesting the metaphor of Janus.

dynamic of gender policy and practice, one needs to consider that aid concerns power, as anthropologists of development assert (such as Apthorpe, 1996 and Mosse, 2005). But to see such disciplinary power as monolithic (as does Ferguson, 1994) is not to recognize the flow of power (Haugaard, 2002) that allows for resistance as well as agency, as described in Chapter 8 and 9. This calls for a nuanced understanding of both structure and agency and the different ways power operates (Haugaard, 2003). It also calls for a more critical (self) reflection in the ways development professionals may, unwittingly, contribute to the reproduction of structural inequities.

Methodologically, I framed this research from an organisational ethnographical perspective, particularly as method and paradigm (Bate, 1997), in part to be attune to the governmentality of Aid and development bureaucracies, as well as to allow for a more nuanced appreciation for the interplay between agency and structure (Yanow et al., 2011). But this was not unproblematic, particularly for researchers such as myself with previous history with the organisation in question. I have already discussed some of the limits and ethical challenges of my dual identity – as staff and PhD researcher (see Chapter 3) – but what I have not problematized is the assumed access I would have, and to some extent did have, due to my identify.

In sum, I was granted permission to conduct my research on Oxfam by the East Asia Regional Management Centre, but this did not automatically allow me access to senior Oxfam House managers or decision-making bodies. Gaining access to Oxfam House was somewhat more complicated and required numerous discussions with the Oxfam House gender advisors about the best way forward and various attempts to convince Oxford-based managers. In the end, I only had limited access. What I learned about being an “insider-outsider” is that approval and access are two different things. Approval can be binary – there is approval for research or there isn’t – and this is what I tended to focus on. Access, even with approval, is much more of a slippery concept and is more of a process and a continuum. Unlike argued by Eberle and Maeder (1997: 63), access did not mean “full membership status”. It is the practice of contingent approval that needed to be constantly negotiated and, as a result, continuously posed ethical challenges that needed regular attention, described in Chapter 3. As Hirsch and Gellner (2001: 5) observe, access is not just an issue at the beginning of the research, it is

“something that has to be both scrutinized for the way it transforms the research and continuously negotiated throughout the time of fieldwork.”

Similarly, my position was much more complicated than the binaries of “outsider” and “insider” suggest. These ideas are indeed “hypothetical extremes” that should be seen as part of a continuum that allows for both identities to co-exist but in different proportions and reference points, depending on the context and how I was perceived. For while these terms describe the researcher, they vary depending on different perspectives from how others see the researcher, which are contingent, and how the researcher views him/herself. In the case of Oxfam House, I was an outsider-insider. For Oxfam Cambodia staff, I was an insider-outsider. In negotiating access, one must be cognizant of how others emphasise different reference points of these dual identities, which is critical to reflexivity and maintaining “strong objectivity” (Harding, 1993: 72).

The need to think in less rigid terms is also applicable to the idea of critical interfaces. Other anthropologists (such as Mosse and Lewis, 2006) have criticised the notion for its imposition of rigid boundaries. This was evident when studying a global organisation such as Oxfam that is trans-local with highly mobile staff. Interfaces I observed did not always coincide with geographical boundaries or organisational descriptions of “global”, “regional” and “country”. For example, while in a site-specific location, I was not limited to research about that site. In Cambodia I was also collecting data about Oxfam House and the RMC, as I would meet staff from these sites when they came to Cambodia for work; the same was the case in Bangkok, where Cambodian staff attended regional meetings. Of course, interfaces are not delineated by geographical or physical boundaries. The descriptions I use in this thesis – global, regional and country – also describe spheres of influence that overlap and interact. They are how Oxfam staff describe their remits, which are relative, dynamic and contingent of a particular time and space context. There is also a problem, such as discussed above in defining one’s “field” within multi-sited ethnography, of which interfaces to privilege. The challenge for researching organisations is to look beyond descriptions organisations themselves use but also work with them, for example in my analysis of “the line” (see Chapter 4).

As a global organisation, adopting a multi-sited perspective allowed for a release from the constraints imposed by more orthodox ethnographic notions of the field but was also problematic, at least in my initial conceptualisation. Similar to Hovland's (2005) observation, I overly stressed the *multi* of multi-sited ethnography, assumed links between sites and underprivileged the *sitedness* or, multiple contexts, of these sites. Initially noting (when collecting data) then understanding (through interpretive writing) the contexts of gender policy and practice in both Oxfam House and the CBDM project allowed for the emergence of one of the main findings - policy does not inform practice, other drivers were at play – as well as a focus of critical interfaces beyond organizationally defined delineations.

This brings us back to the issue of “scale” but in a different way than addressed by Eyben (2005: 2), mentioned previously, and her discussion of “regime” and “reach” in her reflections of multi-sited ethnographies. In writing about organisation ethnography and issues of scale, the relative inclusiveness or externality of how one defines one's field, Jiménez (2007) provides some guidance by stating that “relations have consistently played a [central role] in anthropology” (ibid: xvii, citing Strathern, 1995) where they “need to relate to something – to be placed within some sort of scale – if they are to map out for us the terrain of moral and political reasons and choices wherein they have to make sense” (ibid: xvii). In other words, while the notion of context, as defined by Bate (1997), is critical to organisational ethnography, the choice of scale and relative inclusiveness is ultimately ad hoc, in the sense that the delineation of the (multi-sited) field is left to the researcher. In the end, such a choice has to be intelligible to both the researcher and reader and sufficiently credible.

References

Bibliography

- Acker, J. (1998) The future of 'Gender and Organisations': Connections and boundaries. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 5, 195-206.
- Ahikire, J. (2007) Gender training and the politics of mainstreaming in post-Beijing Uganda. In MUKHOPADHYAY, M. & WONG, F. (Eds.) *Revisiting gender training. The making and remaking of gender knowledge*. Amsterdam and Oxford, KIT and Oxfam GB.
- Apthorpe, R. (2005) Postcards from Aidland. Paper presented at the Institute of Development Studies, Brighton.
- Arce, A. (2000) Creating or regulating development: Representing modernities through language and discourse. In ARCE, A. & LONG, N. (Eds.) *Anthropology, Development and Modernities*. London, Routledge.
- Arce, A. & Long, N. (2000) Reconfiguring modernity and development. In ARCE, A. & LONG, N. (Eds.) *Anthropology, Development and Modernities*. London, Routledge.
- Arnold, M. (2003) On the phenomenology of technology: the "Janus-faces" of mobile phones. *Information and Organization*, 13, 231-256.
- Arvidson, M. (2004a) Disputing development discourses Understanding the motivation and performance of local NGO staff. IN GOULD, J. & MARCUSSEN, H. S. (Eds.) *Ethnographies of Aid. Exploring development texts and encounters*. Roskilde, Roskilde University.
- Arvidson, M. (2004b) Understanding performance and motivation of local NGO staff in Development Projects. In MARCUSSEN, J. G. A. H. S. (Ed.) *Ethnographies of Aid – Exploring development texts and encounters*. International Development Studies, Roskilde University.
- Baden, S. & Goetz, A. M. (1998) Who needs [sex] when you can have [gender]? Conflicting discourses on gender at Beijing. In PEARSON, R. & JACKSON, C. (Eds.) *Feminist Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Poverty*. London, Routledge.
- Bailyn, L., Rapaport, R., Kolb, D. & Fletcher, J. (1996) Re-linking work and family: A catalyst for organisational change. Working Paper no. 3892-96. Massachusetts, Alfred P. Sloan School of Management, MIT.
- Ballard, B. (Ed.) (2007) *"We are living with worry all the time": A Participatory Poverty Assessment of the Tonle Sap*, Phnom Penh, Cambodia Development Resource Institute.
- Barriteau, V. E. (2000) Feminist Theory and Development: Implications for Policy, Research, and Action. In PARPART, J. & CONNELLY, M. P. (Eds.) *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development*. IDRC.
- Barthes, R. (1991) *Mythologies*, New York, The Nooday Press.

- Bate, S. P. (1997) Whatever Happened to Organizational Anthropology? A Review of the Field of Organizational Ethnography and Anthropological Studies. *Human Relations*, 50, 1147 - 1175.
- Batiwala, S. & Dhanraj, D. (2007) Gender myths that instrumentalize women: a view from the Indian front line. In CORNWALL, A., HARRISON, E. & WHITEHEAD, A. (Eds.) *Feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges*. London, Zed Books.
- Baviskar, A. (2007a) The Dream Machine. The Model Development Project and the Remaking of the State. In BAVISKAR, A. (Ed.) *Waterscapes: the cultural politics of a natural resource*. Ranikhet, permanent black.
- Baviskar, A. (2007b) The Dream Machine: Following the Course of the Watershed Mission in Jhabua. In BAVISKAR, A. (Ed.) *Waterscapes: the cultural politics of a natural resource*. Ranikhet, permanent black.
- Beveridge, F., Nott, S. & Stephen, K. (2000) Mainstreaming and the engendering to policy-making: a means to an end? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 7, 385-405.
- Biddulph, R. (1996) Participatory development in authoritarian societies: "The case of village development committees in two villages in Banteay Meanchey province, Cambodia. *National Centre for Development Studies*. Australian National University.
- Bierschenk, T. (1988) Development projects as arenas of negotiation for strategic groups. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 38, 146-160.
- Black, M. (1992) *A Cause for our Times. Oxfam, the first 50 years*, Oxford, Oxfam UK and Ireland.
- Boserup, E. (1977) *Women's Role in Economic Development*, London, Earthscan.
- Broussine, M. & Fox, P. (2003) The politics of researching gender in organisations. *Management Research News*, 26, 26-36.
- Buvinic, M. (1986) Projects for women in the Third World: explaining their misbehavior. *World Development*, 14.
- Byrne, B., Laier, J. K., Baden, S. & Marcus, R. (1996) National machineries for women in development: experiences, lessons and strategies for institutionalising gender in development policy and planning. *BRIDGE (development - gender)*. Brighton, Institute of Development Studies.
- CARE International (2002) Flood impact on women & girls. Prey Veng Province. Phnom Penh, CARE International.
- CCIC, AQOCI & MATCH (1992) *Two Halves Make a Whole: Balancing Gender Relations in Development*, Ottawa, Canadian Council for International Co-operation.
- CDC (2007) The Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report 2007. Phnom Penh, Council for the Development of Cambodia.
- Clarke, P. & Oswald, K. (2010) Introduction: Why Reflect Collectively on Capacities for Change? *IDS Bulletin*, 41, 1-12.

- Clegg, S. (1989) *Frameworks of Power*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, SAGE Publications.
- Clifford, J. (1986) On Ethnographic Allegory. In CLIFFORD, J. & MARCUS, G. (Eds.) *Writing Culture*. London, University of California Press.
- CNSN (1997) Moving Forward Together: A Dialogue of the Partnership Between Cambodian NGOs and Support Agencies. Phnom Penh, Cambodian NGO Support Network.
- Coleman, S. & Hellermann, P. V. (Eds.) (2011) *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Problems and Possibilities in the Translocation of Research Methods*, Routledge.
- Cornwall, A. & Edwards, J. (2010) Introduction: Negotiating Empowerment. *IDS Bulletin*, 41, 1-9.
- Cornwall, A., Harrison, E. & Whitehead, A. (Eds.) (2004) *Repositioning Feminisms in Gender and Development*, Brighton, Institute of Development Studies.
- Cornwall, A., Harrison, E. & Whitehead, A. (Eds.) (2007a) *Feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges*, London, Zed Books.
- Cornwall, A., Harrison, E. & Whitehead, A. (2007b) Introduction: feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges. In CORNWALL, A., HARRISON, E. & WHITEHEAD, A. (Eds.) *Feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges*. London, Zed Books.
- Crewe, E. & Harrison, E. (1998) *Whose Development? an ethnography of aid*, London, Zed Books Ltd.
- Czarniawska-Joerges, B. (1992) *Exploring Complex Organizations: a cultural perspective*, Newbury Park, Sage Publications.
- Davidson, A. (2004) The MT Interview: Barbara Stocking.
- Davies, C. (2007) My Way: Oxfam's Barbara Stocking reveals how to get on at work. *The Independent*. London.
- De Sardan, J.-P. O. (2005) *Anthropology and Development: Understanding Contemporary Social Change*, London/New York, Zed Books.
- Eberle, T. & Maeder, C. (1997) Organizational Ethnography. IN SILVERMAN, D. (Ed.) *Qualitative Research. Issues of Theory, Method and Practice*. London, Sage.
- Ebrahim, A. (2004) NGOs and Organizational Change: The Relevance of Foucault and Bourdieu. *Annual meeting of the International Studies Association*. Montreal, Quebec.
- Ely, R. J. & Meyerson, D. E. (2000a) Advancing gender equality in organisations: the challenge and importance of maintaining a gender narrative. *Organisation*, 7, 589-608.
- Ely, R. J. & Meyerson, D. E. (2000b) Theories of gender in organisational analysis and change center for gender in organisations. Working Paper no 8. Boston, Center for Gender in Organisations, Simmons Graduate School of Management.

- Eveline, J. & Bacchi, C. (2005) What are we mainstreaming when we mainstream gender. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 7, 496-512.
- Eyben, R. (2004) Battles Over Booklets: Gender Myths in the British Aid Programme. *IDS Bulletin*, 35, 73-81.
- Eyben, R. (2005) Ethnographies of Aid and Development: Some Notes from A Workshop Held in Dubrovnik (25-29 April 2005). Unpublished report.
- Eyben, R. (2006) Introduction. In EYBEN, R. (Ed.) *Relationships for Aid*. London/Sterling, Earthscan.
- Eyben, R. (2007) Battles Over Booklets: Gender Myths in the British Aid Programme. In CORNWALL, A., HARRISON, E. & WHITEHEAD, A. (Eds.) *Feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges*. London, Zed Books.
- Falzon, M. A. (2009) Introduction: multi-sited ethnography: theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research. In FALZON, M. A. (Ed.) *Multi-sited ethnography theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research*. Aldershot, Ashgate.
- Fawthrop, T. & Jarvis, H. (2004) *Getting Away With Genocide? Elusive Justice and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal*, London, Pluto Press.
- Ferguson, J. (1994) *The Anti-Politics Machine. "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Ferguson, K. (1984) *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press.
- Fish, S. (1980) *Is There A Text in This Class: The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- Fowler, A. F. (1998) Authentic NGDO Partnerships in the New Policy Agenda for International Aid: Dead End or Light Ahead? *Development and Change*, 29, 137-159.
- Fowler, A. F. (2000) Beyond partnership: getting real about NGO relationships in the aid system - Introduction. *IDS bulletin*, 31.
- Freeman, M. A. (2002) Women's Human Rights Evaluation: Use of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to achieve gender equity in the context of poverty alleviation and humanitarian assistance.
- Friedman, E. J. (2003) Gendering the Agenda: The impact of the transnational women's movement at the UN Conferences of the 1990s. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 26, 313 – 331.
- Gasper, D. & Apthorpe, R. (1996) Introduction: Discourse analysis and policy discourse. In APTHORPE, R. & GASPER, D. (Eds.) *Arguing Development Policy: Frames and Discourses*. London and Portland, Frank Cass.
- Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation Of Cultures*, New York, Basic Books.

- Geisler, G., Keller, B. & Norman, A.-L. (1999) WID/Gender Units and the Experience of Gender Mainstreaming in Multilateral Organizations: Knights on White Horses"? A Report Submitted to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Chr. Michelson Institute.
- Gell, F. (1999) Gender concerns in emergencies. In PORTER, F., SMYTH, I. & SWEETMAN, C. (Eds.) *gender works: Oxfam experience in policy and practice*. Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- GIDP/UUNDP (2000) UNDP Learning and Information Pack - Gender Mainstreaming. New York, Gender and Development Programme, UNDP.
- Giles, L. (2004) Pilot Project: Phase One. Men Against Violence toward Women. Evaluation of Phase One and Presentation of Emerging Issues and Themes. Phnom Penh, Project Against Domestic Violence.
- Goetz, A.-M. (1994) From Feminist Knowledge to Data for Development: the bureaucratic management of information on women in development. *IDS Bulletin*, 25.
- Goetz, A.-M. (1995) The Politics of Integrating Gender to State Development Processes: Trends, Opportunities and Constraints in Bangladesh, Chile, Jamaica, Mali, Morocco and Uganda. *Occasional Paper*. Geneva, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, United Nations Development Programme.
- Goetz, A.-M. (1997a) *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*, New York, Zed Book.
- Goetz, A.-M. (1997b) Introduction: Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development. In GOETZ, A.-M. (Ed.) *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*. New York, Zed Book.
- Goetz, A.-M. (1997c) Local Heroes: Patterns of Fieldworker Discretion in Implementing GAD Policy in Bangladesh. In GOETZ, A.-M. (Ed.) *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*. New York, Zed Book.
- Goetz, A. M. (1998) Mainstreaming gender equity to national development planning. In MILLER, C. & RAZAVI, S. (Eds.) *Missionaries and Mandarins: Feminist engagement with development institutions*. London, Intermediate Technology Publications Inc.
- Goetz, A. M. (2003) National women's machinery: state-based institutions to advocate for gender equality. In RAI, S. (Ed.) *Mainstreaming gender, democratizing the state? Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women*. Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press.
- Goetz, A. M. & Sandler, J. (2007) SWApping gender: from cross-cutting obscurity to sectoral security? In CORNWALL, A., HARRISON, E. & WHITEHEAD, A. (Eds.) *Feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges*. London, Zed Books.
- Gould, J. (2004a) Introduction. In GOULD, J. & MARCUSSEN, H. S. (Eds.) *Ethnographies of Aid. Exploring development texts and encounters*. Roskilde, Roskilde University.

- Gould, J. (2004b) Positionality and scale. Methodological issues in the ethnography of aid. In GOULD, J. & MARCUSSEN, H. S. (Eds.) *Ethnographies of Aid. Exploring development texts and encounters*. Roskilde, Roskilde University.
- Gupta, A. & Ferguson, J. (1997) Discipline and Practice: "The Field" as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology. In GUPTA, A. & FERGUSON, J. (Eds.) *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. London, University of California Press Ltd.
- Haddad, L. (2004) Preface. *IDS Bulletin*, 35, 1-10.
- Hannerz, U. (2003) Being there. and there. and there! Reflections on Multi-Site Ethnography. *Ethnography*, 4, 201-216.
- Harcourt, W. (2006) The Global Women's Rights Movement: Power Politics Around the United Nations and World Social Forum. *Civil Society and Social Movements. Programme Paper 25*. UNRISD.
- Hardiman, M. (1979) Taking Account of Women in Oxfam Projects.
- Harding, S. (1987) Introduction: Is There a Feminist Model? In HARDING, S. (Ed.) *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Harding, S. (1991) *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*, Ithaca, Cornell.
- Harding, S. (1993) Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: "What Is Strong Objectivity"? IN ALCOFF, L. & POTTER, E. (Eds.) *Feminist Epistemologies*. London, Routledge.
- Harrison, E. (1996) Big Fish and Small Ponds: Aquaculture Development from the FAO, Rome, to Luapula Province, Zambia. *School of African and Asian Studies*. Brighton, University of Sussex.
- Harrison, E. (1997) Fish, Feminists and the FAO: Translating 'Gender' through Different Institutions in the Development Process. In GOETZ, A.-M. (Ed.) *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*. New York, Zed Book.
- Haugaard, M. (Ed.) (2002) *Power: a reader*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Haugaard, M. (2003) Reflections on Seven Ways of Creating Power. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 6, 87-113.
- Hendry, J. (2003) An ethnographer in the global arena: globography perhaps? *Global Networks*, 3, 497-512.
- Hinton, R. & Groves, L. (2004) The Complexity of Inclusive Aid. In HINTON, R. & GROVES, L. (Eds.) *Inclusive aid: changing power and relationships in international development*. London, Earthscan.
- Hirsch, E. & Gellner, D. N. (2001) Introduction: Ethnography of Organizations and Organizations of Ethnography. In GELLNER, D. N. & HIRSCH, E. (Eds.) *Inside organizations: anthropologists at work*. Oxford, Berg.

- Ho, M. & Ong, D. (2006) Fair Trade in the 21st Century. Interviews with Professor Joseph Stiglitz and Barbara Stocking. *The Cambridge Global*.
- Hobart, M. (Ed.) (1993) *An anthropological critique of development: the growth of ignorance*, London, Routledge.
- Hovland, I. (2005) 'What do you call the heathen these days?' The policy field and other matters of the heart in the Norwegian Mission Society. *Problems and Possibilities in Multi-Sited Ethnography*. Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.
- IDS (1979) Subordination of Women Conference. *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin*, 10.
- Imam, Z. (2005) Implication of the Cultural Influence on Development Discourse Manifested in the Interaction of Cambodian and "Western" Discourse on Development Issues. *Office of Graduate Studies*. Texas A&M University.
- Jackson, C. (1997) Actor Orientation and Gender Relations at a Participatory Project Interface. In GOETZ, A.-M. (Ed.) *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*. New York, Zed Books.
- Jackson, C. (1998) Rescuing Gender from the Poverty Trap. In PEARSON, R. & JACKSON, C. (Eds.) *Feminist Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Poverty*. London, Routledge.
- Jacobson, T. (2008) *Lost Goddesses: the denial of female power in Cambodian history*, Copenhagen, NIAS Press.
- Jahan, R. (1995) *The Elusive Agenda: Mainstreaming Women in Development*, London, Zed Books Ltd.
- Jaquette, J. S. & Summerfield, G. (2006) Introduction. In JAQUETTE, J. S. & SUMMERFIELD, G. (Eds.) *Women and gender equity in development theory and practice: institutions, resources, and mobilization*. Duke University Press.
- Jesi, C. (2009) Ariane Arpa & Barbara Stocking: Women at the helm.
- Jiménez, A. C. (2007) Introduction: Re-institutionalisations. IN JIMENEZ, A. C. (Ed.) *The Anthropology of Organisations*. Aldershot, Ashgate.
- Kabeer, N. (1991) Gender, Development, and Training: Raising Awareness in the Planning Process. *Development in Practice*, 1, pp. 185-195.
- Kabeer, N. (1992) Triple Roles, Gender Roles, Social Relations: The Political Subtext of Gender Training. *IDS*. Brighton, Institute of Development Studies.
- Kapur, R. (2007) Law and Gender Justice in South Asia. IN MUKHOPADHYAY, M. & SINGH, N. (Eds.) *Gender Justice, Citizenship and Development*. New Delhi and Ottawa, Zubaan and IDRC.
- Kazama, S., Nakatsuji, K. & Inoue, K. Z. (2002) Study of the 2000 Flood in the Lower Mekong by Field Survey and Numerical Simulation. *Advances in Hydraulics and Water Engineering*, I and II, 534-539.

- Kelleher, D. (2002) Organisational learning: a borrowed toolbox? *Development in practice*, 12, 312-320.
- Kolb, D., Fletcher, D., Meyerson, D., Merrill-Sands, D. & Ely, R. J. (1998) Making change: framework for promoting gender equity in organisations. CGO Insights Briefing Note no 1. Boston, Simmons Graduate School of Management.
- Lazreg, M. (2002) Development: Feminist Theory's Cul-de-sac. In SAUNDERS, K. (Ed.) *Feminist Post-Development Thought Rethinking modernity, postcolonialism & representation*. London, Zed Books.
- Ledgerwood, J. (1998) Rural Development in Cambodia: The View from the Village. In BROWN, F. Z. & TIMBERMAN, D. G. (Eds.) *Cambodia and the International Community: The Quest for Peace, Development, and Democracy*. New York and Singapore, Asia Society and ISEAS.
- Ledgerwood, J. (n.d.) "Contemporary Cambodian Society" in *Cambodian Recent History and Contemporary Society: An Introductory Course*. Northern Illinois University.
- Ledgerwood, J. & Vijghen, J. (2002) Decision Making in Rural Khmer Villages. In LEDGERWOOD, J. (Ed.) *Cambodia Emerges from the Past: Eight Essays*. DeKalb, Northern Illinois University, Center for Southeast Asian Studies.
- Ledgerwood, J. L. (1990) Changing Khmer conceptions of gender: Women, stories, and the social order. Ithaca, Cornell University.
- Levy, C. (1996) The Process of Institutionalizing Gender in Policy and Planning: the 'Web' of Institutionalization. *Working Paper*. London, Development Planning Unit, University College London.
- Lewis, D. (2003) NGOs, Organization Culture, and Institutional Sustainability. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Rethinking Sustainable Development, 590, 212-226.
- Lewis, S. (2006) *Race Against Time: Searching for Hope in AIDS-Ravaged Africa*, Toronto, House of Anansi Press.
- Lim, J. (2009) Out of Court Resolutions of Violence Against Women: Practices and Issues in Cambodia. Phnom Penh, DanChurchAid.
- Lipsky, M. (1980) *Street-level Bureaucracy; Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation.
- Long, N. (1992) From paradigm lost to paradigm regained? The case for an actor-oriented sociology of development. In LONG, N. & LONG, A. (Eds.) *Battlefields of Knowledge: The interlocking of theory and practice in social research and development*. London, Routledge.
- Long, N. & Van Der Ploeg, J. D. (1989) Demythologizing Planned Intervention: an actor perspective. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 39, 226-249.
- Lott, C. & Sarann Phany (1995) *Gender and Development Resource Booklet*. Phnom Penh, Gender and Development Cambodia.

- Luco, F. (2002) *Between a tiger and a crocodile. Management of Local Conflicts in Cambodia: An Anthropological Approach to Traditional and New Practices*. Phnom Penh, UNESCO.
- Lukes, S. (2005) *Power: a Radical View*, Houndsmills and New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Macdonald, M. (1994) Issues arising from the workshop. In MACDONALD, M. (Ed.) *Gender Planning in Development Agencies*. Oxford, Oxfam (UK and Ireland).
- Macdonald, M., Sprenger, E. & Dubel, I. (1997) *Gender and organizational change: Bridging the gap between policy and practice*, Amsterdam, Royal Tropical Institute.
- March, C., Smyth, I. & Mukhopadhyay, M. (1999) *A Guide to Gender-Analysis Frameworks*, Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- Marcus, G. (1998) *Ethnography through thick and thin*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Marcus, G. E. (1995) Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, 95-117.
- Marcus, G. E. (2005) Multi-sited Ethnography: Five or Six Things I Know About It Now. *Problems and Possibilities in Multi-Sited Ethnography*. Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.
- Marston, J. (1997) Cambodia 1991-94: Hierarchy, Neutrality and Etiquettes of Discourse. *Anthropology Department*. University of Washington.
- Mattingly, M. (2008) Prospect Lost: When a pilot project does not look to learn. *Public Administration and Development*, 28, 129-137.
- Mayoux, L. (1995) From Vicious to Virtuous Circles? Gender and Micro-Enterprise Development. *Occasional Paper 3*. Geneva, UNRISD.
- Mehra, R. & Gupta, G. R. (2006) *Gender Mainstreaming: Making It Happen*. Washington, International Center for Research on Women.
- Mehta, M. (1993a) Gender and Development in Cambodia - Analysis and Planning. Report on a workshop in Cambodia. Phnom Penh, Oxfam GB.
- Mehta, M. (1993b) Gender Dimensions of Poverty in Cambodia: a Survey Report. Phnom Penh, Oxfam GB.
- Melrose, D. (1999) Two steps forward, one step back: Experiences of Senior Management. In PORTER, F., SMYTH, I. & SWEETMAN, C. (Eds.) *gender works: Oxfam experience in policy and practice*. Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- Miller, C. (1998) Gender Advocates and multilateral development organizations: promoting change from within. In MILLER, C. & RAZAVI, S. (Eds.) *Missionaries and Mandarins: Feminist engagement with development institutions*. London, Intermediate Technology Publications Inc.
- Miller, C. & Razavi, S. (1998a) *Gender Analysis: Alternative Paradigms*. UNDP.

- Miller, C. & Razavi, S. (1998b) Introduction. In MILLER, C. & RAZAVI, S. (Eds.) *Missionaries and Mandarins: Feminist engagement with development institutions*. London, Intermediate Technology Publications Inc.
- Mohanty, C. T. (1991) Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. In MOHANTY, C. T., RUSSO, A. & TORRES, L. (Eds.) *Third World women and the politics of feminism*. Bloomington, Ind., Indiana University Press.
- Molyneux, M. (2007) The chimera of success: gender ennui and the changed international policy environment. In CORNWALL, A., HARRISON, E. & WHITEHEAD, A. (Eds.) *Feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges*. London, Zed Books.
- Molyneux, M. & Razavi, S. (2005) Beijing plus ten: an ambivalent record on gender justice. *Occasional Paper 15*. Geneva, UN Research Institute for Social Development.
- Moser, C. (1993) *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, practice and training*, London, Routledge.
- Moser, C. (2005) Has Gender Mainstreaming Failed? *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 7, 576-590.
- Moser, C. & Moser, A. (2005) Gender mainstreaming since Beijing: a review of success and limitations in international institutions. *Gender and Development*, 13, 11-22.
- Mosse, D. (2001) Social Research in Rural Development Projects. In GELLNER, D. N. & HIRSCH, E. (Eds.) *Inside organizations: anthropologists at work*. Oxford, Berg.
- Mosse, D. (2003) Good Policy In Unimplementable? Reflections on the Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice. *Order and Disjuncture: the Organization of Aid and Development*. London.
- Mosse, D. (2005a) Anti-social anthropology? Objectivity, objection, and the ethnography of public policy and professional communities. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 12, 935-956.
- Mosse, D. (2005b) *Cultivating development: an ethnography of aid policy and practice*, London, Pluto Press.
- Mosse, D. (Ed.) (2011) *Adventures in Aidland. The Anthropology of Professionals in International Development*, Oxford, Berghahn Books.
- Mosse, D. & Lewis, D. (2006) Theoretical Approaches to Brokerage and Translation in Development. In LEWIS, D. & MOSSE, D. (Eds.) *Development Brokers and Translators: The Ethnography of Aid and Agencies*. Bloomfield, Kumarian Press.
- Mosse, J. C. (1993) *Half the World, Half a Chance. An Introduction to Gender and Development*, Oxford, Oxfam Publications.
- Mowles, C. (2008) Values in international development organisations: negotiating non-negotiables. *Development in Practice*, 18, 5-16.
- MRC (2005) Impact of the 2005 flood - Country reports: Impact of the 2005 flood in Cambodia. The Mekong River Commission.

- Mukhopadhyay, M. (2007a) Gender Justice, Citizenship and Development: An Introduction. In MUKHOPADHYAY, M. & SINGH, N. (Eds.) *Gender Justice, Citizenship and Development*. New Delhi and Ottawa, Zubaan and IDRC.
- Mukhopadhyay, M. (2007b) Mainstreaming gender or 'streaming' gender away: feminists marooned in the development business. In CORNWALL, A., HARRISON, E. & WHITEHEAD, A. (Eds.) *Feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges*. London, Zed Books.
- Mukhopadhyay, M., Steehouwer, G. & Wong, F. (2005) *Politics of the Possible: Gender and Organisational Change Experiences from the Field*, Oxford, Oxfam.
- Mukhopadhyay, M. & Wong, F. (2007) Revisiting gender training. The making and remaking of gender knowledge. In MUKHOPADHYAY, M. & WONG, F. (Eds.) *Revisiting gender training. The making and remaking of gender knowledge*. Amsterdam and Oxford, KIT and Oxfam GB.
- Nguyen, D. T. (2009) Transforming through Innovation. Barbara Stocking's Leadership through Oxfam. *Transformation in Leadership*, 1.
- NIS (2004) Cambodia Inter-Censal PopuLation Survey 2004, General Report. Phnom Penh, National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Kingdom of Cambodia.
- O'leary, M. (2006) The influence of values on development practice: A study of Cambodian development practitioners in non-government organisations in Cambodia. *Faculty of Health Sciences*. Victoria, La Trobe University.
- O'leary, M. & Meas Nee (2001) *Learning for transformation: a study of the relationship between culture, values, experience and development practice in Cambodia*, Battambang, Krom Akphiwat Phum.
- Ovesen, J., Trankell, I.-B. & Öjendal, J. (1996) When Every Household is an Island: Social Organization and Power Structures in Rural Cambodia. *Uppsala Research Reports in Cultural Anthropology #15*. Stockholm, Department of Cultural Anthropology, Uppsala University.
- Padmanabhan, V. (1999) From infrastructure to people: Experiences from Cambodia. In PORTER, F., SMYTH, I. & SWEETMAN, C. (Eds.) *gender works: Oxfam experience in policy and practice*. Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- Parpart, J. L. (1995) Deconstructing the Development "Expert". Gender, development and the "vulnerable groups". In PARPART, J. L. & MARCHAND, M. (Eds.) *feminism, portmodernism, development*. London, Routledge.
- Pearson, R. (2005) The rise and rise of gender and development. *A Radical History of Development Studies: Individuals, Institutions and Ideologies*. London, Zed Books.
- Pearson, R. & Jackson, C. (Eds.) (1998a) *Feminist Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Poverty*, London, Routledge.
- Pearson, R. & Jackson, C. (1998b) Introduction: Interrogating Development - Feminism, gender and policy. In PEARSON, R. & JACKSON, C. (Eds.) *Feminist Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Poverty*. London, Routledge.

- Pettigrew, A. M. (1979) On Studying Organizational Cultures. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24, 570-580.
- Pialek, N. (2008) Gender Mainstreaming in Development Organisations: Policy, Practice and Institutional Change. *Department of International Development, Queen Elizabeth House*. Oxford, Oxford University.
- Pickup, F., Williams, S. & Sweetman, C. (2001) Ending Violence Against Women: A Challenge for Development and Humanitarian Work, Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- Piza-Lopez, E. (1994) GADU: a specialist gender unit in Oxfam (UK/I). In MACDONALD, M. (Ed.) *Gender Planning in Development Agencies*. Oxford, Oxfam (UK and Ireland).
- Plowman, P. (2000) Organisational change from two perspectives: gender and organisational development. *Gender & Development*, 10, 189-203.
- Porter, F., Smyth, I. & Sweetman, C. (Eds.) (1999a) *gender works: Oxfam experience in policy and practice*, Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- Porter, F., Smyth, I. & Sweetman, C. (1999b) Setting up the Oxfam nursery. In PORTER, F., SMYTH, I. & SWEETMAN, C. (Eds.) *gender works: Oxfam experience in policy and practice*. Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- Prugl, E. & Lustgarten, A. (2006) Mainstreaming Gender in International Organizations. In JAQUETTE, J. S. & SUMMERFIELD., G. (Eds.) *Women and gender equity in development theory and practice: institutions, resources, and mobilization*. Duke University Press.
- Purvis, T. & Hunt, A. (1993) Discourse. Ideology. Discourse. Ideology. Discourse. Ideology. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 44, 473-499.
- Quarles Van Ufford, P. (1993) Knowledge and ignorance in the practices of development policy. In HOBART, M. (Ed.) *An anthropological critique of development: the growth of ignorance*. London, Routledge.
- Rai, S. (2003a) Institutional Mechanisms for the advancement of women: mainstreaming gender, democratizing the state? In RAI, S. (Ed.) *Mainstreaming gender, democratizing the state? Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women*. Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press.
- Rai, S. (2003b) Introduction. In RAI, S. (Ed.) *Mainstreaming gender, democratizing the state? Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women*. Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press.
- Rai, S. (Ed.) (2003c) *Mainstreaming gender, democratizing the state? Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press.
- Rao, A. & Friedman, M. (2000) Transforming institutions: history and challenges: an international perspective. IN KIT & OXFAM GB (Eds.) *Institutionalizing gender equality: commitment, policy and practice: a global source book*. Amsterdam and Oxford, Oxfam and KIT Press.

- Rao, A. & Kelleher, D. (1997) Engendering Organizational Change: The BRAC Case. In GOETZ, A.-M. (Ed.) *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*. New York, Zed Books.
- Rathgeber, E. (1990) WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in Research and Practice. *Journal of Developing Areas*, 24.
- Rathgeber, E. (2005) Gender and Development as a Fugitive Concept. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, XXVI, 579-591.
- Razavi, S. (1998) Becoming multilingual: the challenges of feminist policy advocacy. In MILLER, C. & RAZAVI, S. (Eds.) *Missionaries and Mandarins: Feminist engagement with development institutions*. London, Intermediate Technology Publications Inc.
- Razavi, S. & Miller, C. (1995a) From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, United Nations Development Programme.
- Razavi, S. & Miller, C. (1995b) From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse. Geneva, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, United Nations Development Programme.
- Razavi, S. & Miller, C. (1995c) Gender Mainstreaming: A Study of Efforts by the UNDP, World Bank and the ILO to Institutionalize Gender Issues. *Occasional Paper 4*. Geneva, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and United Nations Development Programme.
- Rees, T. (2005) Reflections on the uneven development of gender mainstreaming in Europe. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 7, 555-574.
- Roche, C. (1999) Middle-aged man seeks gender team. In PORTER, F., SMYTH, I. & SWEETMAN, C. (Eds.) *gender works: Oxfam experience in policy and practice*. Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- Royal Government of Cambodia (2005) Law on the prevention of domestic violence and the protection of victims 2005. *NS/RPM/1005/031*.
- Salkeld, A. (2008) The value of gender analyses in humanitarian livelihoods programming: a case study from Nias Island, Indonesia. *Gender & Development*, 16, 117-131.
- Sandler, J. (2005) Gender Mainstreaming in the Age of Aid Effectiveness. *Presentation by Joanne Sandler, UNIFEM to the OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality*. Paris.
- Santry, P. (2005) "When Asparagus Smile" Women and Development in Cambodia 1990-2000: Cultural Barriers to Change. *Faculty of Human Development*. Victoria University.
- Scott, J. C. (1972) Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia. *American Political Science Association*, 66, 91-113.
- Sen, G. & Grown, S. (1985) *Development, Crisis and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives*, London, Earthscan Publications.

- Shore, C. & Wright, S. (1997) Policy: A new field of anthropology. In SHORE, C. & WRIGHT, S. (Eds.) *Anthropology of Policy: Critical perspectives on governance and power*. London, Routledge.
- Shutt, C. (2006a) Money Matters in Aid Relationships. In EYBEN, R. (Ed.) *Relationships for Aid*. London/Sterling, Earthscan.
- Shutt, C. (2006b) Power in Aid Relationships: A Personal View. *IDS Bulletin*, 37, 79-87.
- Shutt, C. (2008) Power and Aid Relations: A study of Cambodian NGOs and their international funders. Brighton, University of Sussex.
- Simmons, M. & Bottomley, R. (2001) *Working with the Very Poor. Reflections on the Krom Akphiwat Phum Experience*, Battambang, Krom Akphiwat Phum.
- Slater, D. (2003) Barbara Stocking CBE. *Honorary Graduand at the Degree Ceremony*. Loughborough University.
- Smyth, I. (1999) NGOs in a Post-Feminist Era. IN PORTER, M. & JUDD, E. (Eds.) *Feminists doing Development: A Practical Critique*. London, Zed Books.
- Sneddon, C. (2007) Nature's Materiality and the Circuitous Paths of Accumulation: Dispossession of Freshwater Fisheries in Cambodia. *Antipode*, 39, 167–193.
- Sonnois, B. (1990) Women in Cambodia Overview of the situation and suggestions for development programmes. Phnom Penh, Redd Barna.
- Soontornwong, S. (1996) Role of Local Elites as Brokers in Rural Development: a Case of an NGO's Rural Development in Kong Pisie, Cambodia. *Graduate School of Development Studies*. The Hague, Institute of Social Studies.
- Standing, H. (2004) Gender, Myth and Fable: The Perils of Mainstreaming in Sector Bureaucracies. *IDS Bulletin*, 35, 82-88.
- Standing, H. (2007) Gender, myth and fable: the perils of mainstreaming in sector bureaucracies. In CORNWALL, A., HARRISON, E. & WHITEHEAD, A. (Eds.) *Feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges*. London, Zed Books.
- Staudt, K. (2002) Dismantling the Master's House with the Master's Tools? Gender Work in and with Powerful Bureaucracies. In SAUNDERS, K. (Ed.) *Feminist Post-Development Thought Rethinking modernity, postcolonialism & representation*. London, Zed Books.
- Staudt, K. (2003) Gender mainstreaming: conceptual links to institutional machineries. In RAI, S. (Ed.) *Mainstreaming gender, democratizing the state? Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women*. Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press.
- Subrahmanian, R. (2007) Making Sense of Gender in Shifting Institutional Contexts: Some Reflections on Gender Mainstreaming. In CORNWALL, A., HARRISON, E. & WHITEHEAD, A. (Eds.) *Feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges*. London, Zed Books.

- Surtees, R. (2003) Negotiating Violence and Nonviolence in Cambodian Marriages. *Gender and Development*, 11, 30-46.
- Tager, M. (1986) Myth and Politics in the Works of Sorel and Barthes. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 47, 625-639.
- Tarr, C. M. (1994) Irrigation Rehabilitation Study in Cambodia: Annex E - Women in Development. Sir William Halcrow & Partners Ltd.
- Theobald, R. (1983) The decline of patron-client relations in developed societies. *European Journal of Sociology*, 24, 136-147.
- Tiessen, R. (2005) What's New about Gender Mainstreaming? Three Decades of Policy Creation and Development Strategies. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, XXVI, 705-720.
- Tiessen, R. (2007) *Everywhere/Nowhere: Gender Mainstreaming in Development Agencies*, Bloomfield, Kumerian Press, Inc.
- Tong, R. (1989) *Feminist Thought. A Comprehensive Introduction*, Boulder and San Francisco.
- United Nations (1995) Beijing Platform for Action. *Fourth World Conference on Women*. Beijing.
- Unknown (2005) Q&A. World Poverty. *Times On Line*. London.
- Van Eerdewij, A. (2009) Energies and (dis)connections: the practice of gender mainstreaming in Dutch development cooperation. *On Track with Gender*. The Hague.
- Van Maanen, J. (1979) The Fact of Fiction in Organizational Ethnography. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24, 539-550.
- Vermeulen, J. & Van Strobbe, M. (2005) Why management studies need the organizational ethnographer. IN MARREWIK, A. & VERWEEL, P. (Eds.) *Exploring Organizations. The development of organizational ethnography in the Netherlands*. Amsterdam, SWP Publishers.
- Vijghen, J. & Ly Sareoun (1996a) Customs of Patronage and Community Development in a Cambodian Village. a study of aspects of local decision making and participation in development in Cambodia. Phnom Penh, Cambodian Researchers for Development.
- Vijghen, J. & Ly Sareoun (1996b) Decision Making in a Cambodian Village. Decision Making Processes in a development project n Cambodia, Takeo. Phnom Penh, Cambodian Researchers for Development.
- Vittarreal, M. (1992) The poverty of practice: Power, gender and intervention from an actor-oriented perspective. In LONG, N. & LONG, A. (Eds.) *The Battlefields of knowledge: the interlocking of theory and practice in social research and development*. London, Routledge.
- Vlaar (1998) Gender-blind or Gender-bright Targeting of Projects in Cambodia. In GUIJT, I. & SHAH, M. K. (Eds.) *The myth of community: gender issues in participatory development*.

- Walker, B. (1996) The hand that rocks the cradle should also rock the boat. *Links*, 6-7.
- Walker, B. (1999) Changing the rules: Implementing a gender policy through organisational procedures. In PORTER, F., SMYTH, I. & SWEETMAN, C. (Eds.) *gender works: Oxfam experience in policy and practice*. Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- Wallace, T. (1998) Institutionalising gender in UK NGOs. *Development in Practice*, 8, 159-171.
- Wallace, T. (1999) GADU remembered: Some reflections on the early years. In PORTER, F., SMYTH, I. & SWEETMAN, C. (Eds.) *gender works: Oxfam experience in policy and practice*. Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- Wallace, T., Bronstein, L. & Chapman, J. (2006) *The Aid Chain. Coercion and Commitment in Development NGOs*, Warwickshire, ITDG Publishing.
- Wallace, T., Crowther, S. & Shepherd, A. (1997) *Standardizing Development: Influences on UK NGOs Policies and Procedures*, Oxford, WorldView Publishing.
- Wallace, T. & March, C. (Eds.) (1991) *Changing Perceptions: Writings on Gender and Development*, Oxford, Oxfam.
- WFP (2010) WFP Food Security Atlas for Cambodia - Takeo. World Food Programme.
- Whitaker, B. (1983) *A bridge of people: a personal view of Oxfam's first forty years*, London, Heinemann.
- Whitehead, A. (1979) Some Preliminary Notes on the Subordination of Women. *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin*, 10, 10-13.
- Williams, S. (1996) From then to now. Too gentle, too polite, too careful? *Links*.
- Williams, S. (1999) Chronicle of a death foretold: The birth and death of Oxfam GB's Gender and Development Unit. In PORTER, F., SMYTH, I. & SWEETMAN, C. (Eds.) *gender works: Oxfam experience in policy and practice*. Oxford, Oxfam GB.
- Williams, S., Seed, J. & Mwau, A. (1995) *The Oxfam Gender Training Manual*, Oxford, Oxfam.
- Win, E. (2004) Not Very Poor, Powerless or Pregnant: The African Woman Forgotten by Development. *IDS Bulletin*, 35, 6164.
- Woodford-Berger, P. (2007) Gender mainstreaming: what is it (about) and should we continue doing it? In CORNWALL, A., HARRISON, E. & WHITEHEADS, A. (Eds.) *Feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges*. London, Zed Books.
- Wright, S. (1994) 'Culture' in Anthropology and organizational studies. IN WRIGHT, S. (Ed.) *Anthropology of Organizations*. London, Routledge.

- Yanow, D., Ybema, S. & Van Hulst, M. (2011, forthcoming) Practicing Organisational Ethnography. IN SYMON, G. & CASSELL, C. (Eds.) *The Practice of Qualitative Organisational Research: Core Methods and Current Challenges*. Sage, London.
- Young, K. (1993) *Planning Development with Women*, London, MacMillan.
- Young, K., Wolkowitz, C. & McCullagh, R. (Eds.) (1981) *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's subordination in the international perspective*, London, CSE Books.

Internal Documents, Reports and Meeting Minutes

- Burrows, S. (2004) Oxfam International. Mid-Term Review of OI Strategic Plan 2001-6 (Executive Summary).
- Dem, M. & Hopkins, A. (2002) Gender and Participation in Senegal. Oxford, OGB.
- Demontis, C. (2002) AGRA East 2002. Gender and Humanitarian Work (Hanoi, Vietnam, 5-8 November 2002). Oxford, OGB.
- Flood Preparedness and Mitigation Team (2006) Flood Preparedness and Mitigation Project. Reporting Period: May 2005-April 2006. Phnom Penh, OGB.
- GADU (1986b) Notes taken at meeting of Area Coordinators. Oxford, Oxfam UK/Ireland.
- GADU (1987) Minutes from GADU meeting. Oxford, Oxfam UK/Ireland.
- Gell, F. (2001) History of Process of Gender Mainstreaming in OGB (presentation to UEA). Oxford.
- Gell, F. & Motla, P. (2002) Gender Mainstreaming Tools: Questions and checklists to use across the programme management cycle. Oxford, OGB.
- Gender Working Group (2006) Gender Impact Assessment of Three Oxfam Projects February-June 2006 (July 28, 2006 final draft). Phnom Penh, OGB.
- Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Team (2005) Double Jeopardy: Cambodian Poverty and Natural Disasters. A Strategic Plan (2005-2008). Oxfam.
- Joint Oxfams DM Team (2005) The Joint Oxfams' Disaster Management Programme Annual Progress Report. From 1 May 2004 - 30 April 2005. Volume 1. Phnom Penh, OGB.
- Mohideen, R. (2002) Gender Review Synthesis. Oxford, OGB.
- Murison, S. (2002) Assessment of OGB's Institutional Arrangements for Gender Equality.
- Nixon, C. (2003) Takeo Field Trip Report.
- Norseman, C. (2004) Comments on Cambodia DM proposal.
- OGB (1993) Gender and Development - Oxfam's Policy for its Programme.
- OGB (1998) Setting course for the twenty-first century: Oxfam Strategic Review Report 1998. Oxford, OGB.
- OGB (2001a) Proposal for Gender Mainstreaming Review, Oct 2001 – June 2002. Oxford, OGB.
- OGB (2001b) Proposal for Gender Mainstreaming Review, Oct 2001 – June 2002.
- OGB (2001c) Proposal to enable women and marginalised groups claim their equal rights, end violence Against Women and Trafficking in women and children in East Asia. Bangkok, OGB.

OGB (2002a) CMT Meeting. Action Notes. May 27, 2002.

OGB (2002b) Gender and Humanitarian Interventions. Non Negotiables in the OGB East Asia Programme. OGB.

OGB (2002c) Highlights of Gender Review discussions at IDSMT.

OGB (2003a) Gender Mainstreaming Strategy. Bangkok, OGB.

OGB (2003b) Minutes: Core SCO5.1 Team Meeting 3 April 2003.

OGB (2003c) Oxfam's Rationale for Working on Gender Equality.

OGB (2003d) Proposal to the Oxfam in Cambodia for the Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Programme in Cambodia (2003-2004). Phnom Penh, OGB.

OGB (2003e) Report of the Global Gender Leadership Meeting (Edinburgh, 12-17 February 2003). Oxford, OGB.

OGB (2003f) Training outline. Gender in Emergency OGB. OGB.

OGB (2004a) Annual Report. The Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Programme in Cambodia (1 May 2003 - 30 April 2004). Phnom Penh.

OGB (2004b) Proposal to the Oxfam in Cambodia for the Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Programme in Cambodia (2004-2005). Phnom Penh, OGB.

OGB (2004c) Quarterly Management Report (Feb-Apr 2004). Bangkok, OGB.

OGB (2005a) Oxfam Headcount.

OGB (2005b) Programme Impact Report. OGB's work with partners and allies around the world. OGB.

OGB (2006a) Aim 5 Strategic Framework 2006/7-9/10 (draft for consultation).

OGB (2006b) Appendix 16: End of Project Financial Management Evaluation.

OGB (2006c) Gender Mainstreaming Strategy May 2005-April 2008. OGB.

OGB (2006d) The Joint Oxfams' Disaster Management Programme. Year 1 - Interim progress report. Reporting Period: May 2005-April 2006. Phnom Penh, OGB.

OGB (2006e) The Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Programme - Cambodia (short description).

OGB (2006f) OPAL Short Summary for The Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Programme - Cambodia.

OGB (2006g) An overview of Oxfam.

OGB (2006h) Quarterly Management Report (Feb-Apr 2006). Bangkok, OGB.

OGB (n.d.-a) Authorised Wording of OGB Aims and SCOs.

- OGB (n.d.-b) Oxfam's policy on gender equality.
- OGB (n.d.-c) Oxfam Programme Accountability and Learning (OPAL). Building Capacity and Prepare for the Humanitarian Emergency Response (01 May 2006- 30 April 2008).
- Oxfam International (2005) Communiqué. *Board and Executive Director's Meeting, Consultative Forum and Global Coordination Team Meeting*. Doorn.
- Oxfam UK/Ireland (1976) *The Oxfam Field Directors Handbook*, Oxford, Oxfam UK/Ireland.
- Oxfam UK/Ireland (1985) Latin America Field Coordinators Meeting Minutes. Oxford, Oxfam UK/I.
- Oxfam UK/Ireland (1994) Strategy for Gender Policy Implementation in The Overseas Division. Oxford.
- Oxfams Humanitarian Programme Office (2002) Joint Oxfams' Disaster Management Programme: Strategic Plan (2002-2005). Phnom Penh, OGB.
- Padmanabhan, V. (2006) Interview. Oxford.
- Pearson, R. (2002) Gender Evaluation of the Cut the Cost Campaign. Oxford, OGB.
- Pialek, N. (2006) Global Gender Meeting Notes. OGB.
- Rahman, T., Porter, F. & Davis, S. (1998) Mapping the Implementation of Oxfam's Policy on Gender. Oxford, OGB.
- Rahman, T. & Roche, C. (1998) Paper for Council on the Ongoing Review of Gender Work in Oxfam. Oxford, OGB.
- Rowe, B. & Menh Navy (2005) Building a Wider Institutional Culture in Cambodia for DM Community Preparedness and Disaster Response. Joint Oxfams Disaster Management Programme Evaluation.
- Seed, J. (1990) Gender Training in Oxfam. Oxford, OGB.
- Smuthers, J. (2004) A Kind of Trip Report. RHC Introductory Visit to Cambodia DM, October 6-9, 2004.
- Stuart, R. (2005) Evaluation of OI Strategic Plan. Gender Internal Assessment and External Context.
- Terry, G. (2000) "Women and men will enjoy equal rights" Developing the Strategic Change Objective on Gender Equity. Oxford, OGB.
- Trujillo, M. (2000a) Gender Mainstreaming presentation. OGB.
- Trujillo, M. (2000b) Gender Mainstreaming within Oxfam. Oxford, OGB.
- Williams, S. (1985b) Gender and Development Unit Workshop.

Wood, C. (2004) Review of OGB's Disaster Management Programme in East Asia. Oxford, OGB.

Zuckerman, E., Bell, E. & Derbyshire, H. (2002) Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in Advocacy Work on Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Oxford, OGB.

Interviews

Armstrong, M. (August 31, 2009)
Barlow, E. (July 6, 2006)
Blackwell, I. (May 13, 2008)
Blair, F. (September 5, 2007)
Blair, F. (November 12, 2008)
Davies, S. (November 29, 2011)
Dikorn Ieng (June 8, 2006)
Fitzgerald, J. (April 28, 2006)
Heller, D. (May 4, 2006)
Hogan, M. (October 5, 2005)
Im Ching (April 30, 2006)
Kilpatrick, M. (November 25, 2008)
Moore, A. (September 7, 2007)
Moore, A. (December 5, 2011)
Pha Lina (May 6, 2006)
Picker, L. (August 31, 2009)
Pilkington, D. (March 7, 2009)
Saunders, K. (January 12, 2008)
Singa, R. (March 5, 2006)
Smith, P. (February 24, 2006)
Smuthers, J. (January 29, 2006)
Sokha Cheat (June 3, 2006)
Spence, A. (December 14, 2008)
Stamstead, J. (September 9, 2011)
Tep Viphou (February 20, 2006)
Weinstein, B. (September 11, 2011)
West, D. (October 4, 2011)
Winslet, D. (May 3, 2006)
Wright, S. (December 4, 2008)

Internal communications

- Amhurst, K. & Farrell, S. (2002) *Covering note re: gender review*.
- Bailey, J. (2003) Re: *KAM 019*.
- Ballard, J. (2003) Re. *DM proposal for 2003-2004*.
- Blair, F. (2002) *Gender Review - Actions and Resources*.
- Blair, F. (2003) Re: *Rewriting the Oxfam GB gender policy*.
- Bronstein, A. (1985) *Memo on development work with women in SAR*.
- Brown, D. (1985) *Proposed Gender and Development Unit*.
- Bryer, D. (1984) *Women in Development/Gender and Development*.
- Davies, S. (2003) *Analysis of proposed OGB gender equality policy statement*.
- Dikorn Ieng (2003a) *Comment on field visit report of Nixon to CD dated 9-11 December 2003*.
- Dikorn Ieng (2003b) re. *KAM 19*.
- Downey, J. (2003) Re: *Rewriting the Oxfam GB gender policy*.
- GADU (1986a) *Memo on Gender*.
- Kirkwood, K. (2006) re. *comments on detailed agenda*.
- Marshall, S. (2003) Re: *Rewriting the Oxfam GB gender policy*.
- Mason, P. (1989) *Regarding my post as gender and development advisor*
- Moore, A. (2005) *Meeting with Pilkington*.
- Pilkington, D. (2002) *Oxfam GB's Institutional Arrangements for Gender Equity*.
- Phoung Tola. & Choueng Samkol. (2003) *Clarification to the visit report prepared by Nixon*.
- Stamstead, J. (1989a) *No Subject*
- Stamstead, J. (1989b) *Grading at GADU*.
- Stamstead, J. & Mason, P. (1989) *Re-grading*.
- Stocking, B. (2002a) *A Letter from Barbara Stocking, Director to all staff and volunteers*. (May 2002).
- Stocking, B. (2002b) *A Letter from Barbara Stocking, Director to all staff and volunteers*. (November 2002).
- Stocking, B. (2003a) *Meeting with Barbara*.

- Stocking, B. (2003b) *A Letter from Barbara Stocking, Director to all staff and volunteers.* (May 2003).
- Stocking, B. (2004) *A Letter from Barbara Stocking, Director to all staff and volunteers.* (November 2004).
- Stocking, B. (2005a) *A Letter from Barbara Stocking, Director to all staff and volunteers.* (March 2005).
- Stocking, B. (2005b) *A Letter from Barbara Stocking, Director to all staff and volunteers.* (May 2005).
- Stocking, B. (2006) *A Letter from Barbara Stocking, Director to all staff and volunteers.* (March 2006).
- Walker, A. (2003a) *Re: Quick analysis of new Gender Policy.*
- Walker, A. (2003b) *Re: Rewriting the Oxfam GB gender policy.*
- Williams, S. (1984) *LA FD Conference: Women in Development.*
- Williams, S. (1985a) *GADU - Gender and Development Unit.*
- Williams, S. (1985b) *Proposed Gender and Development Unit.*
- Wong, F. (2003) *Feedback on proposal.*
- Wright, J. (1985) *End of Decade Conference -Nairobi.*

Oxfam's Policy on Gender Equality (2003 Final Version)

1. Oxfam's mission is to work with others to overcome poverty and suffering. People experience poverty when they are denied the right to livelihoods, water, education and health, protection and security, a voice in public life, or freedom from discrimination. Oxfam's definition of poverty goes beyond the purely economic to encompass capabilities, powerlessness and inequality. Women often have less recourse than men to legal recognition and protection, as well as lower access to public knowledge and information, and less decision-making power both within and outside the home. Women in many parts of the world frequently have little control over fertility, sexuality and marital choices. This systematic discrimination reduces women's public participation, often increases their vulnerability to poverty, violence and HIV, and results in women representing a disproportionate percentage of the poor population of the world.
2. Gender equality gives women and men the same entitlements to all aspects of human development, including economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights; the same level of respect; the same opportunities to make choices; and the same level of power to shape the outcomes of these choices.
3. This policy represents our organisational commitment to gender equality. It has been written to help staff and volunteers ensure that our work improves the lives of both women and men and promotes gender equality.

Principles

4. Throughout the organisation, we will base our work on a common understanding that gender equality is key to overcoming poverty and suffering
5. We will work with both women and men to address the specific ideas and beliefs that create and reinforce gender related poverty
6. Women and girls will be empowered through all aspects of our programme and ways of working, and we will often prioritise work which specifically raises the status of women
7. Our own internal practices, and ways of working, will reflect our commitment to gender equality

Strategies for achieving gender equality

8. A thorough understanding of the different concerns, experiences, capacities and needs of women and men, will shape the way we analyse, plan, implement and evaluate all our work
9. We will address the policies, practices, ideas and beliefs that perpetuate gender inequality and prevent women and girls (and sometimes men and boys) from enjoying a decent livelihood, participation in public life, protection and basic services
10. We will seek to ensure the full participation and empowerment of women in all areas of our work, and will promote women's rights as human rights, particularly in the areas of abuse and violence

11. We will work with both men and women, together and separately, to have a more lasting impact on beliefs and behaviour. We will ensure that any work we do with men and men's groups supports the promotion of gender equality
12. Partnerships and alliances will be assessed on the basis of their commitment to gender equality
13. Our campaign, advocacy and media messages, and the images we use to support these, will emphasise the importance of gender equality in overcoming poverty and suffering. Our communications will also highlight our own commitment to gender equality, and the essential role played by women in all aspects of development and humanitarian work
14. Managers will encourage groups and forums across the organisation to share learning and best practice on gender equality. Gender training will also be made available to staff and volunteers
15. In all our work we will demonstrate commitment to gender equality through setting appropriate team and individual objectives, and through allocating adequate staff and resources to enable us to fulfil the gender equality policy
16. Managers of all divisions will devise and report on measurable objectives and actions relating to the gender equality policy; and our management, finance and human resource systems will facilitate and contribute to our gender work
17. Gender awareness and understanding will be used as a criterion for recruitment and development of staff and volunteers
18. Within the organisation we will pursue family friendly work practices that enable both men and women to participate fully in work and family life
19. This gender policy is closely linked to Oxfam's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies.

Oxfam's Gender and Development Policy (1993 Version)

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT - OXFAM'S POLICY FOR ITS PROGRAMME

1. 'Women are half the world's population, yet they do two thirds of the worlds work, earn one-tenth of the world's income, and own less than one-hundredth of the world's property' (UN, 1985)

POVERTY AND GENDER: WHY OXFAM IS CONCERNED

2. Oxfam's mandate is to combat poverty, distress and suffering, and to educate the public about the root causes of these problems. While there are some aspects of poverty and exploitation which are shared by women and men, many aspects are different. Women are poorer than men and face social and cultural discrimination on the grounds of sex. This affects every aspect of their life, including development. Oxfam must both analyse and address these differences if it is to be successful in its development practice.
3. Today there is a growing awareness of women's absolute and relative poverty and inequality all over the world. In spite of the significant efforts of many national governments and at international level, the situation of women has worsened. The feminisation of poverty has accelerated in the last decade and further increased women's dependence and vulnerability.
4. The present social and economic crisis has had devastating effects on the Third World poor and these have been particularly adverse on women. Cuts in public expenditure, coupled with discrimination in employment practices, have led to more female unemployment. Falling commodity prices have forced the intensification of cash cropping, resulting in more manual work for women without an increase in their pay. Structural adjustment policies, particularly cuts in subsidies on drinking water, food, health, education and transport, have had a disproportionate effect on women. Widespread armed and ethnic conflict have a gender dimension. Women and their children form the majority of refugees or displaced populations and the proportion of woman-maintained households in turbulent situations has increased. In addition, women in conflict situations suffer abuses such as sexual assault and other forms of exploitation which are not experienced by men.
5. The growing environmental destruction has multiple repercussions for women. Increasingly they are unable to fulfil their responsibilities for providing fuel, wood and water for family needs. Urbanisation has cut women off from traditional support systems. Industrialization in factories with poor safety regulations has exposed women to hazardous substances, dangerous equipment and dangerous processes. In many areas of the world the spread of AIDS is particularly affecting women because of their role as mothers and carers and also as sufferers.
6. Lack of understanding on the part of governments, multilateral agencies and NGOs of the different impact of development aid on men and women, has led, in many cases, to a further marginalization of women from traditional decision-making structures, displaced them from their economic activities and ignored their valuable knowledge and contribution to development. Development aid is less effective when women are not participating on an equal footing.

7. Apart from adverse macro socio-economic conditions, women and girls have to contend with aggression and discrimination in their own local contexts due to the patriarchal structure of most societies. In many regions of the world they suffer violence that breaches their human rights: physical abuse, rape, sexual assault, female infanticide, "honour killings", "dowry murder" at the hands of family members and other forms of aggression related to cultural customs and practices. To cite a few examples, discrimination is expressed in preference for male children, and in double standards in nutritional patterns and education.
8. In the public sphere, religious and cultural intolerance in many societies restricts the movement of women and limits their control over their own lives.
9. Women are not a homogeneous group and their lives vary depending on the place in which they live as well as their age, social class, ethnic origin and religion. Nevertheless there are some common elements which hold for most women and which Oxfam recognises as important to understand and to address in the development process:
10. * In all societies men and women have different responsibilities for the tasks necessary for the survival and development of the community. However, within the existing division of labour, responsibility for the maintenance of human resources falls largely on women's shoulders. Gathering fuel and water, processing food, caring for the children, nursing the sick, and managing the household is heavy and time-consuming. This is widely seen as a woman's role, and is economically unrecognised.
11. * Women have less access to power, wealth and resources and are less likely to own land or property. In most cases they have inferior status both legally and culturally. They have less access to education and training, and to paid employment. They are less likely to be represented in decision-making bodies and their voices are less likely to be heard. Frequently they have no control over their own bodies and fertility.
12. * Violence against women constitutes an infringement of basic human rights, undermines their self-determination and their ability to participate fully in and to benefit from development.
13. * Faced with many forms of discrimination, many women are challenging the patriarchal or male-dominated structures of their societies - either through organised groups or networks or through individual actions that defy the system.
14. * Balancing the unequal power relations between men and women cannot be done in isolation. For the development process to be gender-fair, changes will have to take place in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres.
15. Oxfam believes that unless gender-related inequalities are addressed it will not be possible to achieve sustainable development and alleviate poverty.
16. In Oxfam's experience gender-related oppression varies according to context, as do women's opportunities for involvement in development. Therefore, Oxfam's responses to the above issues will be sensitive to local circumstances and respect the pace, capacity and strategies of local women for change.

OXFAM'S WORK ON GENDER AND THE NEED FOR POLICY

17. Oxfam addresses many of these problems by working towards meeting women's immediate and long term needs in mixed or women-only projects. Oxfam has taken

positive action to counterbalance gender discrimination in development and so ensure that its programme reaches women - the poorest and most disadvantaged in most communities.

18. The Gender and Development Unit was created in 1985 to develop a gender perspective in Oxfam's work. Since then Oxfam has promoted gender training for its staff and partners, facilitated exchanges and provided financial support and accompaniment to women's groups and networks working for change. Other activities have included the appointment of gender experts and consultants for field research, evaluation and project development; discussions on gender with partners; and the development of criteria for programme evaluations and project appraisal. Documentation of Oxfam's experience in gender work through reports, manuals and books has contributed to the debate in the North and the South and provided platforms for Southern practitioners. Increasingly gender considerations are used in the recruitment and selection of staff. Oxfam has taken an active role in advocating gender-focused policy changes with bilateral and multilateral agencies and is trying to ensure the full integration of gender into all its lobbying and communications work.
19. However, in spite of this awareness and positive action, the lack of a corporate policy has made it difficult to close the gap between principles and practice and to ensure an integration of gender into the work of different parts of the organisation.
20. A corporate policy is seen as the next essential step in Oxfam's commitment to gender - to ensure the issues are fully integrated into its programme and management, and to give Oxfam a coherent and consistent framework against which objectives can be measured and poor performance rectified.
21. Oxfam's vision and experience of gender has developed as a result of constant interaction between staff, project partners and other NGOs in the South and the North. It has been inspired by the struggles of Southern women's movements, individual men and women and by the real changes taking place in villages and communities where Oxfam works. Because gender relations are dynamic, Oxfam's vision and policy cannot be static; adjustments and changes may be required over time.
22. Oxfam also recognises the constraints faced by different divisions in their responsibility for implementation. Therefore, the policy promotes a creative look at ways of overcoming these constraints.
23. **Principles**
"Oxfam believes in the essential dignity of people and their capacity to overcome the problems or pressures which can crush or exploit them". Oxfam's principles apply across the gender divide - to allow women as well as men their essential dignity, and to work with women and men in its emergency and relief programmes in overcoming the pressures which exploit them. To achieve this, gender relations need to be transformed.
24. Oxfam's focus is on gender, rather than on women, to ensure that changing women's status is the responsibility of both sexes. It acknowledges that development affects men and women differently and that it has an impact on relations between men and

women. A focus on gender is required to ensure that women's needs (set in the broader context of class, ethnicity, race and religion) do not continue to be ignored.

25. Women are poor because their lack of material wealth is compounded by a lack of access to power, skills and resources. Fully integrating gender into Oxfam's programme should tackle the causes of women's poverty and promote justice to the advantage of women as well as men. Because women are in a subordinate position, special efforts and resources are required to promote their full and active participation in Oxfam's work and to make them equal partners in the fulfilment of Oxfam's mandate. To achieve this Oxfam will try as far as possible to give women the opportunity to formulate their own priorities and to work with men in addressing the status quo.

26. Objectives

Oxfam will work towards ensuring that its development and relief programmes will make the lives of women better. It is committed to:

27. developing positive action to promote the full participation and empowerment of women in existing and future programmes so as to ensure that Oxfam's programme benefits men and women equally;
28. confronting the social and ideological barriers to women's participation and encouraging initiatives to improve their status including basic rights;
29. promoting independent access for women to key resources (eg land, employment), services and facilities;
30. recognising and helping women exercise their rights over their bodies and protection from violence;
31. ensuring all programme work in the UK/Ireland takes gender considerations into account and, wherever appropriate, to promoting initiatives with a gender focus.

32. Strategy

33. OVERSEAS PROGRAMME

Oxfam will achieve its objectives by:

34. ensuring that all emergency and development responses incorporate a gender perspective in assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation;
35. promoting women's access to basic needs, knowledge, education, new skills, and actively encouraging their participation in decision-making;
36. supporting the development of women's self confidence; strengthening women's organisations/groups, promoting dialogue, and networking;
37. continuing to support and strengthen links between women's groups and organisations nationally and internationally to enhance mutual understanding and solidarity for action;

- 38. continuing to expand Oxfam's knowledge of and commitment to gender issues, through research, documentation, publishing, institutional learning and work on global themes;
- 39. including a gender perspective in all Oxfam's lobbying and communications work;
- 40. strengthening the lobbying of bilateral and multilateral agencies on gender issues; promoting advocacy work in coordination with networks and organisations in the North and the South including institutional support for international gender-focused lobbying networks;

41. UK AND IRELAND PROGRAMME

Through the work of the Marketing and the Trading Divisions, Oxfam will:

- 42. apply gender considerations and sensitivity to all Oxfam's materials for the UK/I public;
- 43. where appropriate, communicate the essential role played by women in all aspects of development. This means highlighting Oxfam's work on gender, communicating the contribution women give to development, and encouraging international links with women's groups and organisations;
- 44. wherever possible, present positive images from a gender perspective by written, verbal and visual means, and try to counterbalance dominant and stereotyped images of women provided by the media and other agencies;

45. MANAGEMENT

Through its management and policy implementation, Oxfam will -

- 46. raise issues with men and women, sensitising them to gender needs and involving them actively in supporting gender equality;
- 47. promote the understanding and commitment of Oxfam staff to ensuring policy implementation through gender training of all programme staff;
- 48. use gender-awareness and understanding as criteria for recruitment and selection of overseas and UK/I programme staff; promote women to decision-making positions at all levels; and strengthen commitment to Oxfam's Equal Opportunities Policy;
- 49. develop guidelines and procedures for implementation and monitoring by managers in all relevant divisions with measurable objectives, targets and time tables;
- 50. ensure that staff are given the resources for implementing policy;
- 51. establish a structure for updating and monitoring the policy within agreed time frames, and integrate this structure into the organisational strategic plan;
- 52. make information available to Oxfam's trustees and keep them regularly informed about the progress of implementation and monitoring of the gender policy;
- 53. ensure that staff, partners and volunteers in the UK/I and overseas are aware of the existence of the policy by communicating it in accessible ways;

54. ensure that managers are responsible and accountable for the implementation of policy;
55. set a timetable for policy implementation and ensure staff adhere to it.

AGREED BY OXFAM COUNCIL ON 16TH MAY 1993

Oxfam's Gender Equality Policy Statement (2003 Draft Version)**1. Oxfam GB's belief**

We believe that all of our work should overcome poverty and suffering, and contribute to gender equality. We believe the power imbalance between men and women must be addressed in order for equality to be achieved.

2. Who is this policy for and how should it be used?

This corporate policy is for all Oxfam staff. It represents our organisational commitment to gender equality. If you work for Oxfam you are expected to understand this policy and apply it, and to encourage its application in all areas of work, by anyone you manage or are managed by.

Principles

3. Throughout the organisation, we will base our work on a common understanding that gender equality is central to overcoming poverty and suffering.
4. We will address gender inequality through:
 - analysing and understanding the different implications for women and men of all our development, humanitarian and advocacy work
 - devising strategies and systems to ensure that the different concerns, experiences and capacities of women and men fundamentally shape the way we analyse, plan, implement and evaluate all our work
 - specific programmes to overcome the many different manifestations of gender based discrimination which occur across the lines of gender, race, class, age, colour, religion, sexuality, ability and all other aspects of identity
 - ensuring that Oxfam GB's internal practices are consistent with the above through continuously improving systems and ways of working across all departments
5. Women and girls will be empowered through all aspects of Oxfam's programme and ways of working.
6. We will work with both women and men, separately and together, to address poverty issues relating to gender inequality, and the ideas and beliefs that create and reinforce it.
7. We prioritise work which specifically raises the status of women due to the systemic gender based oppression women face.
8. Initiatives with men and men's groups will be supported when they are collaborative, and not competitive, with programmes supporting women's rights.
9. In all of our work we will demonstrate commitment to gender equality through the allocation of adequate resources, accountability, measurable criteria and targets.

Goals

10. Humanitarian and development programmes ensure the full participation and empowerment of women and promote women's rights as human rights, particularly in the area of protection from and elimination of abuse and violence.
11. Humanitarian and development programmes change policies, practices, ideas and beliefs that perpetuate systemic gender inequality and prevent women and girls (and sometimes

men and boys) from enjoying a decent livelihood, public participation, protection and basic services.

12. Humanitarian and development programmes encourage men to take responsibility for their violence and to challenge the violence of other men.
13. Campaign, advocacy and media messages consistently convey that gender equality is central to overcoming poverty and suffering.
14. Management, Finance and Human Resource systems across the organisation contribute to and facilitate our work on gender equality goals.

15. Oxfam Strategies for achieving Gender Equality

This gender policy forms the overall framework for Divisional gender action plans, which are the responsibility of all divisional Managers. These plans will feed into the Corporate Gender Action Plan.

The Goals outlined in the Policy Statement will be achieved through broad strategies in four main areas:

16. *Cross-divisional organisational development*

Managers will promote the understanding and commitment of all Oxfam staff to gender equality objectives, by leading cultural change and through performance management and capacity building.

17. Gender training will be made available to all staff.
18. Gender awareness and understanding will be used as criteria for recruitment and development of personnel.
19. The Gender, Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies will be linked and Senior Management and HR processes and procedures will reinforce these linkages.
20. Managers will encourage staff groups and forums across the organisation to share learning and best practice on gender equality objectives
21. Oxfam managers will pursue family friendly work practices that encourage both men and women to participate fully in work and family life.
22. Managers of all divisions will regularly report to SMT and CMT on gender mainstreaming achievements with measurable objectives, milestones and time-tables.
23. Resources will be allocated to the achievement of gender mainstreaming and gender equality objectives.
24. The Corporate Action Plan on gender will be regularly monitored, evaluated and updated.

25. *International Division - Humanitarian and Development Programmes*

26. Management, team and individual objectives will include the achievement of gender equality outcomes

- 27. Potential and actual partnerships and alliances will be assessed on the basis of the value they add to the promotion of gender equality and women's rights.
- 28. Development and Humanitarian preparedness and response teams will research and analyse gender relations and build understanding of gender and diversity issues into all stages of their work.
- 29. Women will be actively involved in all programme planning

30. *Campaigns and Policy*

Policy development, and knowledge of gender issues, will be developed through investment in research, documentation, publishing, institutional learning and work on global themes.

- 31. A well developed, ongoing gender perspective will be integrated by all teams working on policy, advocacy and campaigns work.
- 32. Specific advocacy on women's rights will be pursued with external actors including bilateral and multilateral agencies, in coordination with global gender and development networks and organisations.

33. *Marketing and Trading*

Marketing materials will routinely communicate the importance of gender equality in achieving lasting solutions to poverty, and the essential role played by women in all aspects of development and humanitarian responses.

- 34. Positive images of gender equitable relationships and equity between men and women's roles will be communicated by written, verbal and visual means, to counterbalance dominant and stereotyped images of women and men provided by the media.
- 35. The role played by Oxfam GB, in collaboration with others, in overcoming poverty and suffering through the promotion of gender equality will be communicated and celebrated.
- 36. 'Gender equality refers to women and men having the same entitlements to all aspects of human development, including economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights; the same level of respect for their human dignity, acknowledgment of their equal human capacities to make choices; the same opportunities to act on those choices and the same level of power to shape the outcomes of their actions'. Adapted from Marsha Freeman, Oxfam GB Gender Review September 2001