

Making democratic institutions work

Going for gender balance



GOING FOR GENDER BALANCE

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Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men
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The **Council of Europe** was founded in 1949 to achieve greater unity between European parliamentary democracies. It is the oldest of the European political institutions and has forty-four member states,¹ including the fifteen members of the European Union. It is the widest intergovernmental and interparliamentary organisation in Europe, and has its headquarters in Strasbourg.

With only questions relating to national defence excluded from the Council of Europe's work, the Organisation has activities in the following areas: democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms; media and communication; social and economic affairs; education, culture, heritage and sport; youth; health; environment and regional planning; local democracy; and legal co-operation.

The Council of Europe's activities to promote equality between women and men in its forty-four member states form an integral part of its central mission, which is the safeguard and promotion of pluralist democracy, the rule of law and fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The definition and implementation of these activities is entrusted mainly to the **Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG)**, in the framework of the Intergovernmental Programme of Activities. However, as equality between women and men is an integral part of most of the Council's work, specific projects as well as multidisciplinary activities are also undertaken by other steering committees.

The CDEG carries out analyses, studies and evaluations, defines strategies and political measures, and, where necessary, frames appropriate legal instruments in areas such as:

- balanced representation of women and men in all sectors of society;
- the promotion of gender mainstreaming;
- trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation;
- combating violence against women.

The CDEG is part of the Directorate General of Human Rights and has a Secretariat which is also in charge of implementing Council of Europe co-operation activities in the field of equality between women and men.

1. Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

Women hold up half of the sky. What if they filled up half of the parliament?

The Portuguese parity parliament

*The biggest myth about women's equality is that
we don't need to fight for it any more*

The Fawcett Society

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FOREWORD

Going for gender balance is intended to be a practical idea-book. The first part of this guide reviews successful experiences and innovative ways of approaching balanced decision-making, giving examples in a range of countries, thus providing access to gender projects and initiatives which have rarely been translated. The book moves beyond electoral politics, which are by far the most documented, and focuses on other groups involved in social and economic decision-making as well, such as trade unions and NGOs, thereby informing and inspiring activists in areas where the most work remains to be done. Part two focuses on persuasive communication techniques used to sensitise opinion leaders and the general public on gender balance. The ultimate goal is to make gender balance second nature to European societies, thus today's awareness-raising strategies – pre-election campaigns, media-sensitisation campaigns, networks, protest actions and grass-roots cookie days – will one day become artefacts from the past.

The author, Alison E. Woodward, is professor of social sciences at the Free University of Brussels and Chair of the Vesalius College International Affairs Programme. Researchers at the Centre of Women's Studies provided extra linguistic resources to carry out this research. As a public policy specialist, she has worked on gender, energy and housing questions. She has produced many policy studies on women in decision-making for the European Union and the Belgian and Flemish governments, her latest being on new political cultures in Flemish parliaments and the role of gender (in Dutch). Her most recent book (with M. Kohli) is *Inclusions and exclusions in European societies: citizenships, welfare and the globe* (Routledge, 2001, London).

Going for gender balance was commissioned by the Council of Europe's **Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men** as part of its task of preparing methodologies for mainstreaming equality and proposing recommendation and examples of good practice to member states.

This publication is a contribution to the integrated project “**Making democratic institutions work**”. This project was launched in 2002 to respond to one of the major challenges facing Europe today – to ensure that democratic institutions support and enter into dialogue with all of Europe's peoples, including groups that have been, for various reasons, excluded from equal participation in the democratic processes. Gender balance is a priority in all of the project's activities.

INTRODUCTION

Thanks to international agreements and local actions, the level of gender balance in many areas of decision-making in member countries of the Council of Europe has improved dramatically in the last twenty-five years. Reports from the Council of Europe have been very important in these efforts. Yet, progress has been uneven. Some member states have undergone radical transformations in their structures of decision-making or economies, while others have encountered road blocks. Parity in decision-making still remains a distant dream almost everywhere. Continued sharing of experiences in attempting to move the goal posts in decision-making closer to parity can strengthen the resolve of activists. It provides positive evidence of the benefits of gender balance for those who might still have doubts. Novel efforts across the member countries are a vital source of inspiration for participants in the entire spectrum of social decision-making.

One of the problems of activism and action research is that action and results are much more important than documentation. “Research” about gender balance in social decision-making is carried out across Europe in settings ranging from universities to the work rooms of women’s councils in school basements. In Europe, actors in sectors ranging from government to trade unions are working to bring about a better gender balance in decision-making. Both women and men have shared in this mission. Sometimes someone puts together a few pages about a project which is disseminated as a kind of grey document among enthusiasts, but accessing this material in another country and in another language is often an impossible mission. For newcomers there are always many questions about what can be done, and what the best ways are to do it. Hence this short and hopefully inspirational guide.

Europeans can be grateful that international organisations such as the Council of Europe motivate efforts to popularise and circulate news about successful and original ideas. This stimulates both the experienced and beginners in this field to find new approaches to further move to a world where women are truly recognised as holding up half the sky.

This guide is one link in a chain of shared ventures and only a tiny new step among the many that could be taken. Yet every time a new step is taken, the point of departure is different. Today, the realms of decision-making that form realistic targets for change are conceived of in much broader terms than twenty-five years ago. Gender balance is not only about getting more of the under-represented sex into all areas of decision-making, but also about making balanced groups work more effectively, and maintaining gender balance over time. At issue are not only

the formal positions of elected seats within democracy, but the entire framework of social and economic decision-making.

Working for gender balance requires examining the inner dynamics of decision-making organisations as well as the external efforts to affect the context of decision-making. In this booklet, we concentrate in the first part on internal issues in a few organisations, while the second part primarily treats tactics to affect external factors.

Internally we look at efforts to improve gender balance in highest levels of organisation in political parties, public administration, trade unions and non-governmental organisations. How are organisations in these sectors addressing their own internal organisational questions?

Achieving balance at the top of these sectors often requires changes in public attitudes. On this topic we have, where relevant or illuminating, also considered the activities of actors such as political parties, national governments, and non-governmental and voluntary associations in attempting to influence the general societal context to be more supportive of gender balance. The book concludes with a special section examining techniques to raise public consciousness.

The dynamics of decision-making in the business sector operate under conditions that are scarcely comparable with non-profit sectors. Further the business sector is relatively impervious to public and political demands. Thus we have excluded them from this brief guide. Nonetheless, some of the reflections on the dynamics of organisational structure will doubtless be relevant for this sector as well.

FIRST PART:

**GOOD PRACTICES
FOR BALANCED REPRESENTATION
IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL
DECISION-MAKING**

CHAPTER 1

HOW TO INCLUDE MORE WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING – JUST ANOTHER GUIDE?

What changed the most in the last fifty years in the Council of Europe member states is the position of women. What we in Europe have experienced in gender relations is the most revolutionary transformation in social relations in the history of human kind. Most people in the richest countries now think that gender equality issues are solved, or at least do not see them as particularly problematic.¹

Indeed, much has altered at all levels in European society. Member countries have now had female leaders in formerly inconceivable positions from minister of defence to prime minister, and even ministerial cabinets sometimes come close to gender balance. Visibly, women are making important societal decisions. That this change has come about has been the result of social action and concerted strategies on the part of women and men who think gender balance in decision-making is essential for democracy and for the future.

However, social decision-making is not confined to the halls of parliament. The progress across Europe in bringing women into decision-making has been highly uneven. Not all sectors have been equally flexible in transforming to new patterns of gender equality. Political decision-making, which is the most visible sector, has been the one which has seen the most dramatic change, but the further we move from arenas of democratic control, the lower the level of gender balance in most countries. International comparison has made it abundantly clear that different arenas for social decision-making are moving towards gender balance at different speeds.

Networking and sharing experience have been crucial for active citizens hoping to change gender balance in decision-making. The work of other women and men shows first of all that change is possible, and second of all, that there are many ways to stimulate change and raise public awareness about the necessity of gender equality. International organisations and groups of women's networks have been instrumental in bringing ideas and smart practices together and disseminating them to publics outside the local range.² These guides, produced at national,

1. See European Commission, 1999a. "Eurobarometer 25th anniversary report".

2. In each section, a few additional readings are suggested including guides and surveys of interesting projects.

regional and international levels, all aim to stimulate others to take action, and fulfil the agreements taken by the international community to empower women and bring them into an equal role in the decision-making processes.

So why yet another such guide? First of all, most of the colourful examples come primarily from one sector – that of politics. Political organisations were among the first to be challenged by the women’s movement. Many people forget that other sectors of social decision-making must also change. This guide focuses on changing the organisational cultures in groups that are fundamental to the selection of women decision-makers. It looks not only at the better known sector of political decision-making, but also at other organisations important in social decision-making. Because of their “social ambitions” these types of organisations, by virtue of their very mission, should be susceptible to the arguments of human rights and social justice that underwrite demands that decision-making reflect gender balance. These organisations are less visible to public scrutiny, and comparative studies are less frequent, but a balanced voice is just as important. Further, even in political decision-making, which is the most transformed sector, much more remains to be done. Inventive approaches that suit the new situations of societies in transition as well as sectors where international networks are less extensive are especially needed. Fresh ideas can lead to happy cross fertilisations and new initiatives.

Second, while many international surveys provide brief mention of a multitude of initiatives, there is a continuing need for more information on the actual practicalities of putting through gender-balance initiatives. This guide goes into deeper detail about a small number of events. It provides insights into what actually has been done and how it was achieved and what sorts of roadblocks needed to be overcome. This should give practitioners and activists a more realistic insight into the particularities of gender balance actions. The guide aims at providing information presented in an accessible language to reach a public beyond the gender specialists. Men and women with varying knowledge and levels of gender awareness and gender analysis skills need to know about the range of possibilities available.

Why more women in all fora for decision-making?

Although activists working on women in decision-making usually have a commitment to the issue based on a complex analysis of the origins of gender inequality and its contemporary structural forms, it is useful to keep in mind a few strong arguments for continuing efforts. The idea that gender equality is already achieved is rather widely held among leaders. This should be countered. Four major arguments provide convincing ammunition. First, member states of the Council of Europe have agreed to commit themselves to increased gender equality. This is documented in international, national and sectorial accords. Second, gender equality is related to fundamental notions about the quality of social justice, human rights and the nature of democracy. Third, there are strong empirical indications that the inclusion of both sexes in policy making leads to better policy making that

better fits a diverse citizenry. Finally, gender balance leads to the introduction of forgotten and/or new issues on the policy agenda.

The first two arguments put moral force and structural backbone into work for gender balance, while the second two provide the “business case”. It is socially and economically profitable to work for gender balance. There is a competitive advantage to utilising the capacities of women in the public sector. As the Declaration of Athens (1992) proclaimed, “women represent half the potential talents and skills of humanity and their under-representation in decision-making is a loss for society as a whole.”¹

International agreements

The United Nations

A fundamental reason for continued effort to stimulate action around women in decision-making is the continuously renewed international commitment to improved results. The strongest international statement of the fundamental need for gender balance in decision-making thus far has been the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. Its commitment to the empowerment of women is based on the conviction that:

13. Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace. (United Nations: The Beijing Declaration 1995)

The Beijing Platform for Action explicitly aims for a 50-50 gender balance in all areas of society, and its analysis places full participation in decision-making in the foremost role. This is one of the most important of a long line of international and national engagements to raise the percentage of women in important decision-making fora.² The basic mission statement of the platform is that policy should be made with the full participation of women and result in programmes that foster the empowerment and advancement of women. Parity in decision-making is the fundamental underpinning of virtually every recommendation in the Beijing Platform for Action (Celis, Meier, and Woodward, 1999).

The Council of Europe and the European Union

The Council of Europe’s forty-three³ member states comprise a much broader membership base than the European Union. The Organisation aims to promote

1. Declaration signed by the female ministers of European Union member states in Athens at the first European Summit on Women in Decision-making, 3 November 1992.

2. For a review of the legal framework of the commitment of the Council of Europe to gender equality as “equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres in public and private life”, see Council of Europe, 2000a, “Positive action in the field of equality between women and men” and Council of Europe, 2000b, “National machinery, action plans and gender mainstreaming in the Council of Europe”.

3. Editor’s note: since the time of writing membership has increased to forty-four.

democracy, and sees equality as a fundamental human right. The Committee of Ministers' Declaration on Equality of Women and Men (1988) states that sex-related discrimination is a hindrance to the recognition, enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The first equality committee was set up in 1979, and in 1992 it became a Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men attached to the Directorate of Human Rights. It was in the Council of Europe that the concept of parity democracy was created¹ and the Organisation stands behind the task of stimulating members to work to achieve effective equality between men and women. Gender balance is seen as a *sine qua non* for genuine democracy. This is underwritten in the above-mentioned declaration as a fundamental criterion for democracy, adopted at the 4th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men (Istanbul, 1997).

Governments and political parties can play a key role in actions to promote the role of women in politics. In its Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1413 (1999) the Council reaffirms its commitment to equal representation in political life and public life. It notes that despite continued work and international commitment, "little progress has been made in the member states of the Council of Europe" and recommends a number of specific actions so that members may achieve an equal representation of men and women in both politics and public life. The Council's work has emphasised the partnership between the sexes both in public and private. This can lead to advancements in life quality for all.²

The European Union has had a long-term concern with gender inequality. It explicitly and directly addressed the imbalance in decision-making beginning in the early 1990s with the European expert network on Women in Decision-Making (1992-96) which spurred the first relatively sophisticated comparative monitoring of the relative number of women in a wide range of important social decision-making sectors (finance, politics, health care, justice)³ and resulted in the establishment of the European database for Women in Decision-Making which monitors the changing fates of gender balance in political decision-making.⁴ The Finnish presidency at the end of 1999 recommended further that standard statistics be gathered on nine fundamental areas of decision-making on a regular basis, providing one important monitoring mechanism to spur progress. This commitment has been followed up by France and Sweden. One of the main goals of the Medium-Term Community Action Programme of 1996-2000 was the maintenance of its commitment to improving gender balance in decision-making through

1. See Council of Europe, 1996, *Equality and democracy*.

2. "Equality and democracy: utopia or challenge", Council of Europe conference, 1995, Strasbourg. See also the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly report on equal representation in political life, May 1999.

3. European Commission, 1997, *Gender, power and change in health institutions of the European Union*; European Commission, 1998, *Women and decision-making in the judiciary in the European Union*; European Commission, 1999b, *Women in decision-making in finance*.

4. The website <http://www.db-decision.de/> provides the most recent figures of women in elected office and includes a report on the situation in the banking and finance sector.

programmatic actions (European Commission Employment and Social Affairs Interim report:1999). Candidates who hope to join the EU are expected to enact EU legislation on equal opportunities and adopt EU goals for improving gender balance in their countries. Thus substantial effort is needed to develop and translate programmes of action to the specific needs of European countries in transformation, with their own unique histories of gender relations. Declarations signed in Athens (1992) and in Paris (17 April 1999) repeat the goal of balance in decision-making fora.

Within the social dimensions of the European Union Structural Funds and employment policies, commitment and arguments have been mustered to increase women in management functions. Projects were initiated under the New Opportunities for Women programme to provide arguments and strategies for ending vertical segregation in higher decision-making among employers and employees' interest groups. The European Trade Union Confederation offices have long had an expert on gender policy, and argue that unions should look within their own organisation at the upper levels to monitor decision-making and representation of all members.

National commitments

Governmental commitments sometimes go beyond the international agreements pleading for better balance in decision-making. Most European national states have also adopted policies with various levels of commitment to gender equality ranging from statements of principle to changes in the national constitution aimed at increasing the number of women in decision-making. In fact, it is thanks to the power of the state over the sectors of political representation and public employees that many of the most concrete changes have occurred. These national policy advances can provide inspiration for lagging sectors. In the accompanying legislative documentation, numerous arguments can be identified that are useful for further social actions. A number of recent statements and policies are available in the national action plans and reviews submitted to the Beijing +5 sessions. These can be consulted on the UN website <http://www.unifem.undp.org/beijing+5/documents.html>.

Social justice, human rights and democracy

International and national treaties and agreements are useful in convincing resistant agencies that "other people" besides "wild-eyed women's activists" also support such initiatives. Internationally, gender balance is considered as a fundamental basis for democracy and is often constitutionally protected. It is seen as an important way to improve the quality of society. Another tactic is to argue from the basics on which these treaties are founded, shared conceptions of human and social rights and of the nature of democracy. In democracy, the points of view of different groups should be taken into account. This is incontrovertible in the case of women, who make up more than half of the population of the member states in Europe. These arguments can be especially persuasive for social decision-making sectors that are outside of the state, and concerned with fundamental

issues of equality in a broader sense, such as trade unions, and non-governmental organisations. Frequently such organisations have mission statements which explicitly indicate their commitment to social justice, but in gender neutral terms. Activists should appeal to these principles and find arguments for gendering conceptions of these topics in the work done in recent political theory.¹

Quality of policy making

If the arguments of international commitment and moral and social justice are not persuasive enough, a third set of arguments for gender balance in decision-making can be made. This is the strong case for the ways in which gender inclusion improves the fit between public needs and public policy and heightens policy legitimacy. These arguments focus on the difference that gender balance can make for policy. The quality of public policy delivery, and its effectiveness and efficiency is an important concern in many European countries. This argument points to the profit that full participation and real democracy provide.

In terms of theory, these arguments are self-evidences in public policy studies. Now the theoretical arguments are increasingly backed up by empirical results, thanks to cases in countries where gender balance has been achieved. New dynamics appear in gender mixed decision-making groups, which can lead to higher competency in conflict resolution. Balanced groups also amplify and diversify the number of surfaces of policy makers present towards the general public. The more diverse the face of policy-makers, the more close to the receptors in the public at large. Activists can refer to numerous studies that demonstrate that public satisfaction with policy delivery is heightened thanks to inclusive decision-making and representation.

New issues in policy making

Finally, better gender balance in decision-making improves policy and democracy because it leads to the introduction of new questions and concerns. This allows organisations to achieve a tighter fit with the concerns of a changing society. Society can gain from the use of women's talents in confronting the complexity of a globalising world. It is already evident from studies on the increase of women in politics that the presence of women leads to new accents and issues on the public agenda. In an ever more complex global context, an increase in antennas to a significant section of the public can help societal decision-makers to better keep up with rapid change.

For each set of arguments which activists mobilise to motivate decision-makers to commit resources to recruit women and empower women in decision-making, it is useful to employ examples which convincingly demonstrate the *added value* of gender balance, both morally, qualitatively, and ultimately quantitatively. Successful change agents develop a capacity to "speak the language of power" to achieve their aims. Those arguing for better gender balance in policy decision-

1. It is beyond the ambitions of this guide to provide a survey of this literature. A recent and helpful starting point is Squires, Judith, 1999, *Gender in political theory*.

making need to use the vocabulary and instruments of policy makers while pushing them to become more sensitive to gender. Gender-balance advocates must demonstrate that policy made in a gender-balanced setting is more likely to be seen as legitimate as it will be based on solid, broadly conceived information input. Such policy may have greater chance of succeeding and be less costly. Grounded arguments are essential in persuading certain types of power holders of the importance of continuing commitment to achieving gender balance.

Increasing the number of women in decision-making – the issues

Diversity of settings: national and sectorial

Armed with arguments, people who want to change gender balance still run into a multitude of obstacles in achieving their goals. The price in changing the *status quo* is high, and those who want change should never underestimate the force of those seeing change as a threat to established power relationships, even if this is not explicitly expressed. Anticipating resistance and difficulties may help in choosing strategies and appropriate tools from the wide choice available. The first consideration is the most obvious: there is no one magic recipe for solving the problem of gender balance in all societies and sectors in Europe. Every sharing of experience highlights common issues, but also makes a practitioner more aware of the special problems presented by her or his national and sectorial context. In looking for new approaches, the context specific elements that lead to success have to be kept in mind. Everyone attempting to go further in achieving gender balance needs to analyse the situation before proceeding. An old saying claims that culture, including organisational culture, is like water to a fish. It is only when the fish is outside the water that it understands what water (or culture) is. International exchange can help activists better understand their own cultural waters. The advantage of multi-national co-operation is that it can help women and men better “see” their own cultures and the problems presented for directed change efforts.

A main element that must be considered is *structure and timing*: the historical and structural points of departure. *Legal contexts* vary dramatically. In 1999, France changed its constitution to achieve parity between women and men. Belgian law mandates that the composition of electoral lists include one-third women. Finnish and Norwegian law govern the gender balance of advisory boards. Portugal’s constitution says it is the task of the state to work for equality. Other legal measures that are part of second generation emancipation legislation also make the context very different between countries. Culturally, the acceptability of the use of legislation and strict quotas to address balance also differs strikingly.¹ Finally the procedures in electoral systems are also important for strategies and results in politics.

1. This guide will primarily highlight other strategies besides quotas, although there are strong arguments for believing that quota regulation may be the quickest way to achieve gender balance. There is a vast literature about the use of quotas to address democratic representation of social groups which is beyond the scope of this guide – see Council of Europe, 2000a, *Positive action in the field of equality between women and men*. This book reflects the Council of Europe’s own long tradition on this matter.

The *speed of change* in achieving various milestones on the way to better gender balance varies drastically both between countries and between sectors. Sometimes a very specific event such as the democratisation of a regime as in the case of Spain or Portugal can lead to lightening progress in some issues of gender representation. While other countries may look as if they are lagging behind the often lauded Nordic situation, we should not lose sight of the fact that almost all members of the Council of Europe are able to identify initiatives that have led to improvement. This may help explain the present state of affairs of relative self-satisfaction on the part of top power holders who believe that gender balance is no longer an issue.

The national historical context is not the only contextual element of importance. Every sector in social decision-making has sector-specific thresholds and dilemmas. The context of change in a metalworkers trade union is quite different than in a department of social welfare or the Red Cross. Gender is just one element in an organisational culture. Gender relations are influenced by other power relationships and definitional issues. We can look at gender balance in decision-making among the governmental and non-governmental organisations working with developing countries as an example. On the one hand, these agencies often work out sophisticated means for gender-testing projects for other countries, while on the other hand many are faced with serious problems of vertical segregation of power within their own organisations.¹ With low financial resources, high ambitions, and a small pool of willing and sacrificial personalities, challenging decision-making on the basis of gender can be extremely difficult.

Contextual factors for success

When planning a strategy, organisers need to identify which contextual factors need to be taken into account. Naturally, such a list can be endless, and each context is unique in time, culture and social and economic context. However, some aspects crop up repeatedly, and can be crudely characterised and anticipated.²

The political context. The political context includes both structural and cultural factors. Structurally each country differs in how the electoral process works. Strategies need to be keyed to the legal and institutional givens. What rules govern

1. An extremely helpful insight into the advanced practices in NGOs working with development for their clients and the challenges they face internally is in their general set of reference publications made available by the OECD Development Assistance Committee on the site <http://www.oecd.org/dac/Gender/html/sourcebook.htm>. See especially Schalkwyck and Woroniuk, 1997.

2. The International Research Network on Gender and the State under the leadership of Dorothy Stetson and Amy Mazur has worked out a theoretical framework for the analysis of gender and policy issues which provides the intellectual structure for these criteria. See Mazur, Amy, and Dorothy McBride Stetson, 1995, *Comparative state feminism* or Stetson, Dorothy, and Amy Mazur, 2000, "Women's movements and the state: job-training policy in France and the US". See also the work of Leijenaar, 1997 about the context of gender initiatives. Also helpful are the concepts developed in Mackay, Fiona, and Kate Bilton, 2000, *Learning from experience: lessons in mainstreaming equal opportunities*. The authors discuss the relationship between mainstreaming and gender balance efforts.

the nomination of candidates, the ways candidates can be financed and promoted and voter choice?

Advocates of gender balance can be aided by contexts in which there are parties with explicit commitments to social justice and even gender awareness in their party programmes.

What are the demographics and culture of the present decision-making elite? How open is the elite? To what extent are women already present in important decision-making positions in politics and to what extent are decision-makers sensitive to gender issues? Are there allies to be found among male elites?

What other gender initiatives such as positive actions or gender mainstreaming are present? Is there an explicit and official analysis of the reasons for gender imbalance or is it not specified or not analysed by political actors. Are the level and direction of gender policy explicit and analytical?

The administrative context. What mechanisms are in place in the public administration and government to support gender initiatives? What is the state of equality policy machinery? For example, are there explicitly gender-dedicated state agencies and specialised personnel such as an equal opportunities officer or a Women's Office?

Is there an official gender/equal opportunities/mission statement at the national or local level with an administrative "home" – an office or offices which are accountable for the implementation and enforcement of policies?

Framing of gender issues. What is at stake in the minds of policy makers and the general and sectorial public, what are the reasons for gender inequality and in what ways is it seen as a "problem"?¹ Countries where biological explanations for the inequality between the sexes are dominant need different strategies than countries where issues of power and oppression have been raised, or where inequality is framed in terms of "patriarchy". "Emancipation" is not the same as "equal opportunities". The "problem" may be very different in countries where there is a large pool of professionally educated women and men in non-traditional fields (such as the feminisation of medicine in the countries of central and eastern Europe) than in a country where less than 10% of the students in engineering are female.

Is gender balance seen primarily as an issue of women's liberation or emancipation? Is it framed as a struggle of opposites so that the relationship between women and men is polar and antagonistic? Or is the focus more on the relationship between the sexes and the positive consequences of diversity?

1. Carol Bacchi writes convincingly that the key issue in policy formation is power over the definition of the problem and its construction: "What's the problem?" is the most important question, and women need power over definition. Bacchi, Carol Lee, 1999, *Women, policy and politics*.

What is the historical framing of gender equality? What was the nature of the struggles that have gone before? At what speed did changes take place? Have new relationships had a chance to solidify?

Pool of potential leaders. People are the most important resource. Who are potential workers and leaders, and what are their capacities in terms of time and other resources? Is there a tradition of voluntary and civil engagement that helps underwrite commitment or is civil society dependent on paid workers?

How sophisticated are potential workers in terms of gender activism and how familiar are they with different approaches? What is the level of training on gender issues available? Does the country have any women's or gender studies programmes?

What is the level of training in the fields where responsibility needs to be taken up? How is training delivered (by apprenticeship or in open training programmes)?

Level of opposition to gender equality and its organisation. To what extent are there parties or groups who are explicitly opposed to a change in the status quo of gender balance in decision-making? Is this opposition highly organised in political parties with non-emancipatory programmes or other organisations? To what extent is there general public tolerance of explicit sexism or discrimination? What has been the experience with backlash to programmes for gender equality?

These factors can all help explain varying speeds of progress in changing the balance in decision-making, as well as guarding against a belief in one or two "miracle" solutions, relevant for all settings – such as the mandating of quotas. These may be effective in terms of quantitative results, but perhaps do not lead to the "business argument" advantages of improved policy making. "Quota Aunties", or women who get into office on the basis of a gender quota and who are not necessarily qualified or interested in women's issues, may be derailed by backlash and long-standing implicit beliefs about biological incapacity, and thus hindered from effective performance.

Sharing experiences – a wealth of choices for action

The above discussion should make clear that there is no one "best" way to improve gender balance in society. Depending on the sector and the country, a good example from one place might be a disaster in another. Still, this does not mean that we should not share experience. This booklet highlights a few examples which seem like "smart"¹ practices, with one or more features which we think are appealing enough that they might inspire others. They were chosen keeping the criteria of economy, originality and success in mind. We were particularly looking for strategies which did not involve a large expenditure of resources. In larger settings,

1. This concept comes from Bardach, Eugene, 2000, *A practical guide to policy analysis*, p.71.

though, it is utopian to think that a major project can be achieved for free. Realistically, we have also seen that external support from an international organisation such as the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Development Programme or the European Union can make the difference between success and failure in countries with limited means.¹

However, one of the most important resources is a critical mass of committed change agents at all levels. Without this, no amount of external funding will suffice. Past experience seems to indicate that the most original projects come from a small group of social entrepreneurs with low resources but high social capital in terms of connections and solidarity.² A “smart” practice here may not always the “best” but may be one that is most easily transferable within the sector or which might provide more general inspiration. Especially interesting are initiatives that are economical in terms of effort, and that act in accordance with a kind of free lunch theory. For instance, if a government is already running an information campaign around a new voting system, projects encouraging gender balanced voting choices can be linked to the campaign at lower cost. The easier an initiative combines with other efforts, the lower the threshold. Although news gets old quickly in today’s information society, we also looked at the originality of a project. Finally, we aimed to find projects that informants saw as “successful”.

The best way to scientifically select interesting practices would have been a complete survey of all countries. However, a survey of every measure taken in the Council of Europe member states to improve gender balance in decision-making was far beyond the scope of this project. Yet most international organisations have been collecting good experiences for a number of different purposes, and the Council of Europe is no exception. The Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men and its associated groups of experts have carried out surveys and contacted members to identify and share strategies and projects in a wide range of equality concerns. Most recently guides have been prepared highlighting transferable practices in the fields of affirmative action (2000) and gender mainstreaming (1998). Through this research, and the activities of the steering committee, numerous examples particularly appropriate to the field of women in decision-making have been collected. The starting point for the selection of projects profiled here was material that had already been submitted to the Directorate General of Human Rights, Division Equality between Women and Men.

1. An important methodological consideration here is the fact that internationally financed projects become much better known than national ones. While initially our ambition was to identify projects primarily carried out by local national agencies, it became increasingly clear that projects considered “good” by national informants, particularly in the southern and eastern Europe were often co-sponsored by the International Labor Organisation, the United Nations or the European Union. The EU and the UN have also been active in documenting good practices especially concerning labour market initiatives (European Commission 2000) and mainstreaming (UN: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/resources/goodpractices/>). Ultimately, when it came to projects in the trade union and non-governmental sectors, we often selected international co-operative projects.

2. The power of a few individuals to change society is well illustrated in Gladwell, Malcolm, 2000, *The tipping point: how little things can make a big difference*.

On the advice of experts within the Council of Europe, we pursued a number of projects in more detail and re-contacted a number of the experts connected to equality projects to up-date and complement information on model projects in their countries. We specifically targeted projects that were already known in one sector or another, although we also hoped to unearth other novel efforts. We asked (through e-mail and by telephone) that informants suggest one or maximally two projects in their countries in the fields of political parties, government, trade unions and other non-governmental organisations that were especially noteworthy, either because of their success or because of their transferable originality. These were followed up where possible with telephone interviews with the directly involved informants or activists.

The range and quantity of activity is impressive. Our choices should be seen as a starting point, and modestly tenuous. Some of the projects selected here are perhaps well-known among western European gender experts, but the intent of this booklet is to reach out to a public beyond this circle. Even when a project's "idea" is well-known, the actual details of what was done may not be so clear.

In the ideal world there would be a giant website where all countries could publish their successful projects in a standard form accessible to everyone. In the future that may be the way such sharing can best be accomplished. This project and the modest research that lies behind it are hopefully a step in the direction of further networking, where activists and interested organisations can directly contact each other.

Among the criteria important in selecting the projects here was diversity. We looked for initiatives from a wide range of countries with different gender traditions, in the five sectors of social decision-making. A predicament we faced is the fact that some sectors of social decision-making, such as political parties, have many more initiatives than others. Equally so, the richer countries in the north of Europe had much more readily accessible information than other areas. Given the pressure of time, the more fully documented cases were easier to include.¹ Another criterion for inclusion in this version of the guide was the completeness of the description we had available. While we attempted to get information on many projects, in the short time we did not always achieve enough information for a full practical depiction.

A final element that played into the selection was an attempt to get a wide variety of initiatives. Generally initiatives can be grouped into several types.² The most

1. We apologise that this version of the guide has a majority of examples coming from northern Europe. This is not a fair depiction of the actual situation, but is due to the time constraints of the project. It can be hoped that future versions will include more cases from the southern and eastern parts of Europe.

2. Leijenaar, 1997, provides a masterly typology of strategies for government and parties in political decision-making dividing them into strategies addressing individual and institutional barriers, and those addressing recruitment, selection and election. We expand her analysis to take in initiatives addressed at improving the work culture for women in decision-making to enhance their retention.

ambitious are those addressing structural conditions. These mandate change through legislation, changes in the electoral and selection procedures and directives which may involve quotas or other forms of positive action and mandatory targets for a higher proportion of women.¹

A second type of initiative is directed at changing the cultural acceptance of balanced decision-making through awareness-raising campaigns directed at diverse publics.

A third type of programme is directed at increasing the efficiency of the transition of new candidates into positions of power. These initiatives include efforts to enlarge pools of candidates through training and construction of databases. They may address organisational culture and develop strategies to enable gender balanced groups to work together in better ways.

The examples in part one are arranged by sector of social decision-making, rather than by country, while the second part is organised by type of initiative. Conditions in a sector can be especially important in setting the ground rules for what is possible in terms of initiatives and contexts of international co-operation. An introduction to each sector briefly sketches some of the important considerations in launching actions. Where possible, we indicate larger studies that can provide further inspiration for change in organisations in that sector. When interview material was available, we attempted to let women and men comment on their initiatives in their own words. For selected cases we present a brief description of the setting, what actually occurred in the example, the duration of the project and its financing, an evaluation of the ways in which a project was successful, and information on contact people and further documentation that might be available.²

1. It should be noted however, that quota and positive action experience is already very well documented in the literature, including in Council of Europe, 2000a, *op. cit.*

2. We also asked about obstacles that projects faced, but found that a much more extensive interview process would be necessary to analyse resistance and tactics for disarming opponents. This problem should be addressed by future research, as should the identification of critical success factors necessary for replication of an effort.

CHAPTER 2

REACHING GENDER BALANCE IN POLITICAL PARTIES

The representation of women in political office has changed dramatically in Europe since 1970.¹ As the recruiting ground for political office, political parties played a crucial role in bringing about this change. In many countries increases in elected women were preceded by changes within political parties themselves.² The parties rethought attitudes about diversity in politics. Discussion of new ways to define democracy focusing on better concepts of inclusive representation occurred.

That political parties are crucial for changing gender balance is most evident in those countries which have used quota laws to obligate change in elected political representation. Here analysts cite the difficulty in bringing about gender balance *inside* political organisations as one of the main stumbling blocks to raising the number of women nominated and later elected,³ so that authorities have been forced to turn to stronger measures. Major European research has been carried out cross-nationally about increased female political representation. However, the situation inside political parties has been relegated to a minor position in both projects and research,⁴ perhaps because of the difficulty of gaining access to internal deliberations.

Political parties are interesting here in two ways. First they play an instrumental role in recruiting and training women to take positions in decision-making. They ultimately aid women in getting elected through selection and promotion of

1. Information about the increase in women in political decision-making in the member states of the European Union is available at Frauen Computer Zentrum Berlin website <http://www.db-decision.de/>. As the International Parliamentary Union (<http://www.ipu.org/>) has done substantial work in documenting and disseminating information about useful strategies in parliaments to foster gender balance, we have not included examples here. Also important are other interactive websites including that of the European Network of Women Elected Representatives of Local and Regional Authorities (<http://www.ccre.org/women/woan.shtml>) and the site of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) (<http://www.int-idea.se/women/index.html>). For readers of Dutch and French, the Belgian interactive women's information site includes a special "Dossier on women and politics and websites" at <http://www.amazone.be>.

2. There are numerous well-documented examples including the early adapters in Norway, the experiences of the Greens in Germany and the Labour Party in the United Kingdom.

3. European Expert Network Women in Decision-Making, 1994, "Participation of women in four political groups in the European Parliament".

4. Lovenduski, Joni and Susan Stephenson, 1999, p. 14, "Women in decision-making: report on existing research in the European Union".

gender balance on electoral tickets. Party support, intellectually, emotionally and financially is essential for election and for later good performance in public office. Second, political organisations themselves need to be taken into consideration as organisations. To what extent have they succeeded in achieving the democratic representation of the sexes that they may be trying to promote for the wider public in their own house? Are the decision-making organs inside political parties, such as the executive council, balanced in terms of gender? To what extent are women's interests integrated into the policy and platform preparation work of the party?

While more and more European parties claim that their general membership is gender balanced,¹ the upper regions of the party seldom reflect this. Women are vital in mobilising support and campaign efforts, but seldom hold top party functions behind the scenes. In fact, worldwide, less than 11% of party leaders are female.²

Political parties as a context

Ideology

The context of a political party is "political". Gender issues need to be linked to the ideological platform of a party. Parties which aim to increase individual freedom may be less inclined to utilise strategies involving quotas and more inclined to use training techniques. Parties with a focus on collective solidarity need arguments linked to demonstrations of how gender balance relates to collective justice.

Position of women

As in most voluntary organisations in civil society, activity in political parties requires substantial investment of time. A classic roadblock for women has been the combination of a traditional gender role in a household and meeting times after the normal workday. The kinds of availability needed are challenging to all citizens with family responsibilities, but this is especially associated with the tasks of women in many areas of Europe.

A second sort of roadblock is associated with the history of political activism itself. Many political parties were born out of social struggles that were carried out in masculine contexts (industrial strife for example). Women, who were denied the vote, played a smaller role historically and this guaranteed them a place in the back row. These relatively sex-segregated cultures (in all social classes) have carried over into the traditional way of working in the parties.

Party gender cultures

When parties carry out gender analyses of "why there are so few women?", and when interviewers ask female politicians about roadblocks and problems of

1. European Expert Network Women in Decision-Making, 1994, op. cit.

2. Shvedova, Nadezdha, 1998, p. 24. "Obstacles to women's participation in parliament".

working within the party, concerns about the gender culture surface. Each party has its own gender culture.¹ Across the political spectrum, masculinities and femininities are specifically shaped in relation to party history and ideology. A Christian party may seek out the “traditional family person” as the ideal representative. For a male candidate this would be a “good provider”. The female candidate should have worked her way up by serving coffee and not incidentally being a “good mother”. A socialist party’s ideal may be the “masculine trade union activist from a heavy trade who is also well-spoken” while on the distaff side the ideal might be the young, pretty militant woman who puts class before gender interests and the collectivity before all. Each party constructs their own ideal types, and such stereotypical constructions are acted out in the daily work of political organising.

Culture is then reflected in the kinds of social networks (gender mixed or segregated) and settings where work gets done. This might be in bars, top restaurants, offices in the city centre, places of work, or in people’s kitchens and church basements. Each place has its own gender code. Culture is also reflected in the models of behaviour that are expected, with one standard for women and another standard for men, leading to a continuously skewed experience.

If party culture is one of the main reasons for difficulties in improving gender balance in party decision-making, then the problem will be one that is especially difficult to address. Culture change in organisations is one of the hardest sorts of change to achieve, and requires a long time frame and extensive commitment.² Further, because culture is a central part of the problem, varying tactics may need to be employed, including humour. Party mates share a number of common values. Clever strategies can make use of these in lampooning some of the practices that put women and men in concrete cultural corsets.

Resistance

Cultural change is disruptive, and often uneven. Some actors resist, others want to go faster and those who feel that they will lose resources may actually undermine change efforts. This may explain why gender resistance in local parties may be much more intense than at the national level. At the micro-level, losses and dashed hopes are intensely personal. Overcoming resistance through techniques that garner allies is a key feature of successful change efforts, but extremely difficult to achieve. Colleagues and comrades may themselves be unaware that they are resisting change. Obstacles to gender balance may appear without any conscious

1. Two-thirds of respondents to an Inter-Parliamentary Union survey felt that party structures were not ones in which women felt at ease, even if many also positively evaluated their own party. Fifty percent felt that political parties generally were somewhat hostile to including women, supporting an argument that “formal inclusion of women did not always guarantee an equal political gender partnership”. Waring, Marilyn, Gaye Greenwood, and Christine Pintat, 2000, *Politics: women’s insights*. p. 55.

2. Alvesson, Mats, and Yvonne Due Billing, 1997, *Understanding gender and organisations*, and Gherardi, Silvia, 1995, *Gender symbolism and organisational cultures*.

expression of backlash or resistance. The longer party members have known each other, the more likely gender-coloured patterns of interaction and roles are entrenched. Changing these can be personally painful and may be seen as disruptive of party spirit and solidarity.¹ Women and men need techniques to undermine backlash in ways that make new friends and help members see that a better gender culture can lead to electoral gain and more positions for all.

Timing

Nonetheless, it is also the case that no area of social decision-making in Europe has shown as much progress in attempting to improve the position of women in decision-making as the political sector. It is the sector longest concerned with this issue. The increased concern for women's representation in politics dates in Europe from the beginning of the second wave of feminism in the early 1970s, when new sorts of women's organisations were founded within parties. These groups took on their own party as an adversary and lobbied for internal regulations to improve the representation of women, including positive actions and changes in electoral systems. New political constellations arising from new social movements such as "green" parties also pushed traditional parties, (thanks to electoral success), to start to consider gender issues

Financing

Given that democratic representation is frequently a goal of national policy, political parties have been favoured recipients of funding for carrying out gender-balance projects as part of the financing of political parties in general in some countries. For example, France uses the state subsidy for parties as a tool and requires that at least one-eighth of the funds be earmarked for women's activities. Thus parties, as opposed to other social organisations, do not always have to rely solely on their own resources to develop programmes for gender balance.

Smart practices

Another special feature of political parties is that they are well placed to gain access to information about smart practices elsewhere. The increasing process of European integration has led to a heightened degree of "internationalism" among European party formations. European Union parliamentary fractions have worked in an exchange relationship with international party federations so that there has been an ever-increasing synchronisation of tactics and formulations between European party formations.² Women's organisations within such federations have been quick to take advantage of the possibilities to compare notes and develop parallel strategies to sister groups in attempting to change their own national party

1. Cockburn, Cynthia, 1991, *In the way of women: men's resistance to sex equality in organisations* and Benokraitis, A., 1997, "Sex discrimination in the 21st century". This work provides vivid illustrations of the conscious and unconscious faces of resistance to gender balance.

2. See, for example, Hix, Simon and C. Lord, 1997, *Political parties in the European Union*.

structure. A rather unique feature of this sort of work has been the tendency of women to form liaison groups across party lines, both within representative bodies (Network of Parliamentary Committees on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Member States of the European Union and of the European Parliament (NCEO) founded in 1997), and in international bodies (International Parliamentary Union, Council of European Municipalities and Regions). This leads to enhanced networking and sharing of positive ideas. Through cross-party initiatives pressure is applied on individual parties to harmonise in line with “general political practice”. A nice example of the kind of cross fertilisation that can occur was the translation of a small handbook on political effectiveness produced on the basis of Norwegian and Swedish experience by the Social Democrats in Sweden (see below: Power book).

This privileged position of access to fuller information and established networks means that the sector itself has less need of a general guide. It also implies that political parties can provide good ideas for other sectors that are as of yet less networked.

Selected cases

Given the nearly thirty years of experience in developing successful strategies for improving political representation, making a choice of a few exceptional cases is extraordinarily difficult. Strategies to improve the position of women within parties include:

- directed recruitment efforts;
- awareness campaigns directed at the external public;
- awareness efforts within the party;
- construction of better databanks on potential office holders;
- training of both male and female political activists on gender issues and political skills;
- quantitative targets for improvement (either hard, such as quotas, or soft, such as intentional targets).

Sometimes the actors are not the political parties themselves, but governments, or cross-party consortiums of women’s groups aiming at raising the consciousness of political actors inside parties and the general public.

We have taken two sorts of activities into consideration here. First, the work of variously composed political groups aimed at increasing the proportion of women elected to public office through original awareness efforts, and second, the work of individual parties focusing on their internal culture. Thus, the number of cases treated here will be slightly larger than elsewhere in this book.

The parity parliament (Portugal)

How does parity look? Politicians from all political parties in Portugal filled the seats of the Parliament with 50% men and 50% women to provide a photogenic and powerful example of what gender balance can look like. In 1994, this put parity on the agenda. Thanks to the parity parliament the notion of “parity democracy” entered into the vocabulary of Portuguese political opinion leaders. The parity parliament provides a clever example of using cross-party activism to put positive pressure on parties themselves to recognise their own female candidates as potential parliamentarians.

The Portuguese Constitution engages the state to ensure equality between the sexes through action, but the path to parity is long. Illustrating how parity relates to democracy was one of the missions of the parity parliament. The initiative was taken by three Portuguese women who were members of the European Parliament. One hundred and fifteen women politicians invited 115 male colleagues to the session. All the members of the one-day parliament held or had held elective functions. During the session they debated the nature of democracy, the role of women in Portugal, citizenship and parity. The event was widely covered by the press. The impact of the example as an event seems to have gone long beyond that one day, so the example can be seen as a smart practice. With relatively little resources,¹ widespread impact was achieved.

For the public at large, its media-attractiveness offered a visual example of what gender balance is all about. The different political parties were all compelled to come up with a gender-balanced slate of candidates for the parliament. This meant that male allies at high level were mobilised for the cause of gender balance, even if for only one day, so that the general public could see that the issue is not only a “women’s issue”, but a citizen’s issue aimed at improving democracy overall.

The Portuguese example is one that might be possible in most European countries. Today, there are illustrations of what real world parliamentary parity can be like. The Nordic parliaments and regional parliaments in Germany, Scotland or Wales² have achieved almost 50% representation. With the constitutional changes in France and pending changes in Portugal itself, even more examples will be present. However, in the forty-three member states of the Council of Europe women hold only 17%³ of all seats in parliament. The situation varies widely from country to country. In places where women representatives are less than 20%, a parity parliament could be a very good idea.

1. The initiative was partially funded by the European Commission and co-financed as part of the awareness campaign preceding European parliamentary elections in 1993-94.

2. The run-up to the creation of the Scottish parliament is very informative, as women’s activists from a wide range of organisations strongly campaigned for constituting the new parliament on parity grounds. See Brown, Alice, 1998, “*Deepening democracy: women and the Scottish Parliament*”.

3. As of April 2001.

Parties working together – a five-year multiparty awareness campaign, 1997-2002 (Iceland)

When a male prime minister becomes a poster boy acclaiming, with considerable humour, that women may take different angles on problems, and politicians should try to put themselves in “women’s shoes”, you have an awareness campaign with a difference. An important part of any social movement’s success involves recruiting allies. One of the distinctive elements of women’s political agitation has been the use of humour to get attention and break down barriers. The campaign in Iceland sparkles with several nice qualities: it is humorous, it involves women and men across party lines in their political functions and it is part of a long-term strategy of cultural change.

Awareness campaigns are a strategy with one of the longest histories, and have been used in all sectors of decision-making. Most countries have experience with awareness campaigns directed inside party organisations and/or directed to the general public. They may be sponsored by public authorities, women’s coalitions and organisations or by coalitions of parties. The examples are legion, and the role of campaigns encouraging voters to choose for gender balance seems to be important.¹

In Iceland the campaign was initiated by the Althingi (parliament) which instructed the government to appoint a committee including the various political parties, the Office for Gender Equality and the Women’s Rights Association. The initiative was thus across the various sectors being dealt with in this guide. Importantly it was conceived as a long-term effort and well financed by the government with 5 million Icelandic kronur in its first year (1998). It involved all the political organisations in an advertising campaign, and has stimulated women’s groups in the various political parties to collaborate and co-operate.

Specifically the project was concerned with mobilising top authorities behind action to increase the share of women in politics as part of the interests of the nation. Both women and men are depicted in the ads, challenging stereotypes with a smile and indicating that the top members of society do not find gender issues laughable. One problem of reaching gender balance is that it is still seen as a woman’s issue. Raising public awareness that gender balance is important for everybody requires powerful male allies. The Iceland campaign makes men visible. While sex is perhaps still the most powerful tool for getting the general public’s attention in advertising, humour comes a strong second, and some of the best examples of awareness campaigns directed at convincing women and men that gender balance in politics is important make strong use of both. The Iceland publicity campaigns are part of a wider set of strategies including training courses, an educational and communications network and public meetings. This idea of

1. Norway noted that in years where there was no “Vote woman” campaign, voting for women seemed to go backward and similar results were noted in evaluations of Belgian experience (Carton 1998).

using humour and mobilising cross-party/cross-gender support from the very top of the nation is one that can be followed by many other countries with lower resources. The Icelanders feel that they have some success already, as the share of women in the Icelandic Althingi went from 25% in 1995 to 35% after the campaign had been in operation for a year. They will now be targeting local elections for 2002.

Independent women: women's parties initiatives as a shock tactic – the Lithuanian Women's Party and Swedish Stödstrumpor

Grabbing the public attention can also be done by more dramatic means. Women-only parties have a distinguished history across Europe. One of the most famous is the Icelandic party in the period 1975-82. It was probably instrumental in the election of the first female head of state in a developed democracy, but local women's parties have been founded in many European countries. These warn traditional political parties that there is a substantial gender vote that can steal from their own electoral base. While women's parties often exist precariously, they are powerful alarm bells that have been used with significant success. One of the most well known cases is the Swedish "support stockings" movement¹ in 1994. A number of well-known women (often middle-aged, hence the joking "support stocking" name) began to organise their own political party. The threat of an all-woman party full of electorally attractive candidates shook the established parties so thoroughly that they moved to make real commitments in the campaign. One of the most important was a promise, if elected, to gender-balance the governmental cabinet. The winning Social Democratic Party followed through on this.

Today, women's parties have been a very important shock technique in central and eastern Europe. In the 1990s, after it became apparent in several new states in eastern Europe that the representation of women had declined dramatically, women also grabbed the stick of the all-woman assembly or party. In 1995, thirteen women's organisations founded the Lithuanian Women's Party, headed by the female former Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskienė. As in the Swedish case, the party quickly became very popular in the polls and definitely contributed to changing public attitudes. They showed that women do not need the quota favours of the communist past to be independent political actors. This is an important lesson in the eastern European transitional context, where citizens are suspicious of group identities and the label "feminism". Although the party only elected one member and did not get the required 5% needed to cross the representation threshold, it was seventh among twenty-four parties in the 1996 elections to the Seimas (parliament).

It can be argued that the increase from 7% to 18% female representatives in the 1996 election was partly a result of the visibility of the Lithuanian Women's Party, and helped contribute to the establishment of a cross-party parliamentary women's

1. Documented in Stark, Agneta, 1997, "Stödstrumpor".



Some experiences are beyond our reach

Það sem skilur okkur að
gerir okkur sterkari sem heild.

Íslendingar eru heild ólíkra einstaklinga, karla og kvenna,
með fjölbreytta reynslu og viðhorf.

Alþingi Íslendinga hefur það höfuðverkefni að standa vörð
um lýðræðið.

- rétt og velferð hvers Íslendinga.

Lýðræðið felur í sér jafnrétti

- jöfn tækifæri einstaklinga af báðum kynjum, meðal annars
til náms, starfa, launa og ábyrgðar.

Konur eru helmingur þjóðarinnar.

Alþingi Íslendinga hefur hingað til ekki náð að endurspegla
það hlutfall.

Sjónarmið beggja kynja hafa ekki náð lýðræðislegu jafnvægi.

Það er þjóðinni í hag að ólíkum sjónarhornum beggja kynja sé gert
jafn hátt undir höfði. Þess vegna er aukin þátttaka kvenna
í stjórn máttum hagur íslensku þjóðarinnar.

**Cabinet appointed committee
to increase women's share in politics**

This poster and the one on the following page were created for a government campaign in Iceland (p. 35) to increase women's participation in politics. Stereotypes are challenged at top level, as the man in the photo is none other than the foreign minister, and the women, a member of Althingi, the Icelandic Parliament. Reprinted courtesy of the Minister Appointed Committee to Increase Women's Share in Politics, Ministry of Social Affairs, Reykjavik (Iceland), www.fleirikonuristjornmal.is.



***Half the nation is not
reflected democratically in the parliament***

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gerir okkur sterkari sem heild.

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**Cabinet appointed committee
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group in the parliament. The party itself has evolved with a new name and statutes that specify gender balance among the representatives, and is now actively seeking allies with more traditional parties on platforms of equal opportunities.

Sharing good ideas across party lines: training material – The power book (Swedish Social Democrats)

“... it has had a really positive reception.
Many women recognise themselves in the problems that are presented here”

When Norwegian social scientist Berit Ås first sketched the five techniques that made women working in gender mixed groups feel powerless, many had an “ah-ha” experience. The droll insights into the dynamics of gender in organisations became a wide spread underground weapon. Going from normal citizen to politician is not self-evident. Most big parties have gender-neutral programmes of training, awareness, negotiation techniques and law as part of their socialisation process for new politicians. Women’s groups in parties have developed additional material to help with the specific problems women candidates face.¹ Training to help recognise when gender intervenes and confounds political effectiveness is an important strategy to help empower politicians. Before the 1994 elections,² the Swedish social democratic women took the Norwegian secret weapon and included it in their training packet. Women elsewhere were charmed with the idea and wanted to share it with their friends.

The booklet which expanded on some of the earlier ideas was called *The power book* – a quick DIY on how to obtain real personal power. It outlines the steps that women can take as individuals and in groups to get more women into decision-making bodies, and raises awareness about gender dynamics so that women will be more effective once they get there. The booklet observes that “there are innumerable traps on the road towards fair power for women. This guide identifies the traps and provides a guide on how we can avoid or eliminate them”. It emphasises that politics is not only about being a candidate. There needs to be gender balance behind the scenes, if a party is to be credible to women voters. It gives concrete tips on how to change things.

This little booklet became an underground best seller. An important part of this example as a “smart” practice is the fact that the Swedish women were not shy

1. In most northern European countries political parties have developed training programmes for their women candidates. In Belgium, for example, the programmes of the Socialist Party, the Catholic People’s Party and the Green constellation (Ecolo/Agalev) all have their specific accents, cleverly illustrated training guides and interesting angles. Organisers can profit from contacting the various parties in their own countries and others to find out about gender initiatives and new training ideas, even if prepared by the opposition.

2. This election had as a theme for the Swedish social democratic women “Every other dance is for the ladies” (*Varannan damernas*) as a reaction to the electoral checkmate experienced in 1990 for women. Women had resolved to work for really dramatic change. The title referred to a national investigation in 1987 (SOU) that had rejected quotas as a method in favour of voluntary measures.

about their discoveries. They found the resources to share them with others by translating it into English. From there other women's groups have translated it into French, Serbian, Croatian, and other Slavic languages and even into Chinese. The example of Australia's power handbook (Kirner and Raynor 1999) written by politicians was important in pushing the idea of making the knowledge wide-spread. What is really interesting about this initiative is that the ideas easily cross party lines, and can be used by a wide variety of women's political organisations. Across Europe, political parties try to train their politicians, and sharing of good training material on working together to make gender balance a reality is a way to empower ever-broader groups of citizens.

***Target 50:50 – it takes cash, confidence and culture to get ahead in politics!
(Liberal Democrats, United Kingdom)***

What keeps women out of politics? Many parties have internal analyses of how this comes about. Increasingly parties attempt to attract new women candidates. The example of the liberal democrats demonstrates a combination of analysis with policy measures to attract women candidates and help them succeed. The catchy slogan "cash, confidence and culture" makes this a particularly interesting campaign. It addresses the three major roadblocks newcomers face in politics. In the late 1990s a number of ideas came together in the women's section of the Liberal Democratic Party to smooth women's way into politics. In the electoral system of the United Kingdom, small parties such as the liberal democrats face an uphill battle. Given that only three of the forty-six liberal democratic members of parliament are female, this recent campaign looks like a needed initiative, and shows that even in rather negative situations inspiration can be forthcoming. Based on the slogan, the Lib Dems have taken the following action.

Cash. Borrowing from the American idea of the Mama Cash Trust Fund built on donations to help woman candidates meet the exorbitant personal costs of election, the Liberal Democrats established the Nancy Seer Trust Fund in 1997 to help finance extra expenses. This addresses the problem of the unequal monetary resources of women and men candidates. The fund was established to help pay for campaigns, travel expenses and child or elder care, costs which are often gender-linked.

Confidence. Initiatives included a programme for shadowing members of parliament at work so that the real aspects of political culture and the demands it poses could be realistically assessed, and specific training for women on speaking at public meetings, selection interviews, hostile questions and debates.

Culture. This is often cited as the most difficult roadblock in politics, as it seems invisible. Here the 50:50 campaign has worked on sensitising the most local party level to influence selection proceedings and encouraged the construction of skills databases to recruit spokeswomen and candidates.

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CHAPTER 3

DECISION-MAKING IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNMENT – IS CHANGE A MATTER OF POLITICAL WILL?

Contexts of public decision-making

At first glance, one might think bringing about gender balance would be easiest in the public sector. After all, public administrations are governed by political decision-making, and must respond to other considerations than merely the market when it comes to employment policies.¹ Issues of fairness, justice and democracy are important in choosing staff. But indeed, it may just be the fact that public bureaucracies' staff questions are ruled by more than mere market demands that has made change in this sector slower than we might expect.

It was in fact the world of public bureaucracy and its supposedly gender neutral norms that inspired some of the early surveys of gender in organisations.² Social scientists poked holes in the idea that the public bureaucracy was in any way a sex-neutral place of employment.³ They remarked that the ideal typical bureaucrat was always a “full-time” employee with full commitment to his place of employment and no career breaks. The standards and examinations used to choose top civil servants could be seen to be anything but culture or gender neutral. Was it then any mystery that the top regions of European ministries and administrations were peopled primarily by males, while the lower regions were the realm of the female secretary and coffee-cart mistress? The sector quickly inspired comparative research (Wurster 1990) which showed a European trend towards high vertical segregation, with few women in top functions and many women at the bottom.

Public administration, which is the face of the state, became a significant front line for those desiring better gender balance in decision-making. Thanks to its

1. Parsons, Wayne, 1995, *Public policy*. Colebatch, Hal and Peter Larmour, 1993, *Market, bureaucracy and community*. This book provides excellent insights into the limitations of change through bureaucracy and public institutions.

2. Morgan, Nicole, 1988, *The equality game: women in the federal public service (1908-1987)* or Wurster, Barbara, 1990, *Women in the higher public service: career development*, and Castello-Branco, Maria Jose, 1987, *Women in the higher public service levels*.

3. Witz, Ann, and Michael Savage, 1992, “The gender of organisations” and Stivers, Camilla, 1993, *Gender images in public administration legitimacy and the administrative state*, or Staudt, Kathleen 1990, “Gender politics in bureaucracy: theoretical issues in comparative perspective.”

visibility, strength and symbolic importance as a mirror of the values of a policy, increasing numbers of activists, from inside and outside the state worked to improve the representation of women and men across the different levels of responsibility. The targets were two-fold: on the one hand the composition of publicly appointed regulatory bodies and on the other the composition of the higher-level public functions in the civil service.

Because the state can be regulated by the public, it is no wonder that legislation has been a key instrument for bringing about quick change, especially in the composition of public bodies. From the early 1980s when the Norwegian Gender Equality Act began to require a minimum 40%:60% gender balance in advisory committees at the local level, an increasing number of governments have used legislative reform to come closer to gender balance or even parity in the publicly appointed sector. The majority of northern European democracies have adapted some form of strong guidelines or regulation for the composition of governmental appointed bodies¹ ranging from one-third to 50%.

Strangely, however, imposing gender balance within state personnel has proved to be a much more difficult task.² Contextually several things are important about the state administration as a venue for gender balance efforts.

Knowledge about the position of women

The relative simplicity of acquiring data about the actual state of affairs of women's and men's representation at different levels is a positive aspect. Public administrations are "public". Increasingly citizens demand transparency. While many public administrations had rather antique systems of personnel administration in the 1970s and the 1980s, and frequently lacked sex segregated statistics, they were necessarily more responsive to demands for revealing this information than could ever be the case in the private sector. International as well as national bodies increasingly pressed for full and regular reporting of the employment situation. For example, the United Nations asks all member nations to report statistics on gender balance for most public decision-making functions. This occurs on an increasingly regular basis.

The need to be responsive to political directives

A bureaucracy can avoid political direction in the short term, but determined leadership, backed up by legislative and treaty demands gradually force change in

1. Leijenaar mentions Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Netherlands and Germany, Belgium and France, Norway. (Leijenaar 1997, p. 46)

2. The European Union under the Finnish presidency recommends that regular statistics be reported on the proportion of the highest ranking female civil servants in member states and in the European institutions, as well as the distribution of women civil servants in different fields of action and the proportion of women in the higher magistrature. (Council of Europe 2000, p. 77, based on report of Finnish presidency 10-1999). The Council of Europe publishes annual statistics on the number of staff in the Organisation split up by sex and by grade.

ways that are much more dramatic than what may be achieved in voluntary associations such as a political party. Influences that have pushed forward gender balance in public administration have come both from the citizenry and the organised women's movement. They have been very critical of gender imbalance in powerful administrations.¹ The demands also result from the increasing harmonisation processes across European public administration as a result of European integration, and heightened administrative professionalisation (European training schools, the public management movement, and so forth) which have put emphasis on changing personal administration into human resource management. This type of management requires a more holistic approach to the qualities of employees and frequently has an eye for diversity and balance issues in employee groups and management.

Success stories

The relatively high rate of success in changing administrative balance in a number of countries with varying administrative traditions, shows the responsiveness of public administration to strongly administered political will (Canada, United States and Scandinavian countries). This makes it possible to convincingly show public officials and civil servants that change is indeed possible, and can be part of quality improvement efforts in public management.

Variety in the public sector

Government and public administration cover an extraordinarily wide range of activities. The public sector includes museum guards, food inspectors, TV producers, schoolteachers, and bridge builders. The types of organisations are also infinitely various, ranging from the executive offices in the national capital including cabinet ministers to the local administration of a community health care centre. In many countries, all of these various sorts of functions were governed by a uniform set of recruitment rules and promotion and salary standards for most of the 20th century. Today public management reform has encouraged more tailor-made approaches to personnel. Depending on the setting and tasks, different projects are needed to achieve gender balance.

Roadblocks: rules and rarities

Several specific sorts of roadblocks are particularly typical of this sector. First, the fact that bureaucracies are governed by laws and regulations provides both advantages and disadvantages. Agreements about functional classification schemes or promotion policies and recruitment procedures are inflexible in many countries. It requires a virtual public administration revolution to allow more modern

1. See, for example, the gendered opposition to the European integration process in Scandinavia, such as Bertone, Chiara, 1998, "Constructing a women's perspective on the European Union: the Danish debate." *Nora*, 6:108-121.

personnel management practices. The degree of freedom in hiring top managers, which is the area in need of greatest change, varies widely between countries, and is seldom as complete as in the private sector. This is a boon for those who wish to change demographics, given that it is rule bound, but a block when decisions of the past continue to haunt the present. The popular perception of bureaucracies as sluggishly stable and burdened with mountains of bureaucratic ennui¹ has some truth. A special roadblock characteristic of this sector is the demand for specific technical education where women are under-represented. Although female engineers are more likely than men to work for a public rather than private sector employer, there is a general shortage of highly skilled technical personnel. The pool of potential female candidates to even up the gender balance may be limited.

The importance of timing

As mentioned above, this sector has long been a target for change. While the aim continues to be a better balance in the top regions of administration, the ways in which it is talked about and possible strategies have evolved. Techniques that were new fifteen years ago when gender equality issues first became news have now been around so long that they meet backlash just on the basis of looking old. “We tried that and it didn’t work.” Smart projects aimed at changing female representation in the higher regions of public administration sometimes just learn to talk about “positive action” in new language. The concept of “balance” is such a new approach, as is the use of “target figures” linked to the potential pool or the code word “diversity” taken from the American management literature. (See below: Dutch and Belgian examples of new packaging of old gender equality aims to obtain bureaucratic support.) The presence of women in decision-making, the so-called femocrats, may have been highly influential in launching organisation-appropriate initiatives from within. Perhaps more so than elsewhere, the critical success factor is a firm alliance with top power holders both within the administration and within the political structure.

Selected cases

Given the variety of employment and decision-makers in the public sector, we have attempted to choose from several levels of administration and sectors. We are very aware of how deficient this is as a representation of the richness of the sector. As it is important to acknowledge the role of the state in carrying out international commitments, we have chosen a pair of examples showing how government can be influential in raising general awareness of the importance of gender balance in all areas of decision-making.

1. By doing nothing, public bureaucracies escape the pitfalls of the faddish, but sometimes life passes them by, as in the crisis of governance efficiency in recent years.

Learning to work together to make decision-making more effective – seminars for key persons in Swedish society (Sweden)

“Today, when working with gender equality, the problem is often that the people at the top do not always practice as they preach.

This project could be done in any country!

Even though, of course, one needs to do some preparation and find the political will among the highest officials ...

I see this as a very important target group as they are ultimately responsible”.

Statistics Sweden

Even when gender balance is near, a country may not reap the expected fruits. Many times top decision makers have been used to working in a segregated gender setting. Working together with diverse colleagues can turn governing into an ethnic or gender challenge. A pair of projects in Sweden have particularly original ways of helping to address some of the issues of gender balance in practical daily work.

Equality between women and men has been a goal in Swedish public policy for a long time. However, for such a goal to become reality, society’s leaders need to take responsibility for its achievement. This conviction drove former Swedish Equality Minister and Vice-Prime Minister Mona Sahlin’s initiative in launching special seminars about working with gender diversity for top officials. The first three-hour seminar took place in 1996, and assembled the prime minister, the cabinet members, state secretaries, political advisors and some other top-level officials. Later, similar seminars were held for regional governors, general-directors, bishops and university deans. By 1998, almost all key societal officials had taken part in these seminars.

Two women, Birgitta Hedman, head of the Gender Division at Statistics Sweden, and Agneta Stark, a professor in gender studies and economics, were responsible for the seminars. They discussed Swedish gender policies and problems arising in various policy fields. The point of departure was large statistical material out of which relevant choices were made for each occasion. The content was adjusted to each group’s area of activity. All participants received a small book called *Women and men in Sweden: facts and figures*.¹ In addition, Ms Hedman and Ms Stark asked the participants what they did themselves to address gender equality questions. In this way an interactive debate was initiated, yet the responsibility to take action was left in the hands of the participants.

According to Birgitta Hedman, the participants generally saw this idea in a very positive light. Several regional governors and general-directors asked them to

1. This book is re-edited every year. The Swedish title is *På tal om kvinnor och män: lathund om jämställdhet 2000*, (Örebro: SCB, 2000), and the publisher also puts out an English version: *Women and men in Sweden: facts and figures 2000*.

come back and hold seminars for lower officials as well. This project was unique because it was initiated and supported by the highest political level. Due to the active support from Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson, it became difficult for other officials to avoid participating. Ms Hedman further says that “by discussing these issues, it became clear to everybody that these are important questions that Sweden has to work for”.

Unions of cities and regions – the JAM-KOM project and governance initiatives of the Swedish Landstingsförbundet or Union of County Councils (Sweden)

In many countries, the role of leagues of municipalities and regions can be crucial in stimulating projects to improve gender balance in government. The Nordic countries are rich in interesting practices launched by many sorts of actors, including teams of local governments, local governments working with international partners and certain types of publicly managed workplaces such as hospitals. Particularly interesting in this regard is perhaps the work of local and regional governments in Sweden. They have stimulated a large number of projects within the equal opportunities programme, especially focusing on the issue of democracy in the workings of local and regional government. At the local level, one particularly original, and yet low cost idea that can be used elsewhere was in the JAM-KOM project (“Women and men working together”)¹ sponsored by a larger project working on “Equality in cities with the work environment fund”. In the north of Sweden a number of local municipalities set up mock working sessions to train women and men to become more aware of the gendered citizen they were planning for. Women and men top managers were given guidance in trying to think through the implications of being the opposite sex. They played the role of the other sex in a mock policy session: women and men attempted to role play the “other” in terms of the policy that they were designing. They also played cross-gender roles in terms of interactions in meetings, after training sessions. This eye-opening project is an example of how gender balance in practice can be supported by initiatives at the local level aimed at decision-makers.

The Union of County Councils in Sweden has a long-term commitment to gender equality. Under the theme of “democracy”, its work includes projects such as mentoring young women politicians to encourage longer career commitment and help them over initial difficulties in entering local politics, and analysis of equality issues that can be addressed by employers and employees unions. Of special interest for our theme is a project looking at work in balanced boards and advisory commissions.

1. Swedish Working Environment Fund, 1994, “Women and men working together: the KOM programme” Uppsala: Arbetsmiljöfonden and Hagberg, Jan-Erik, Anita Nyberg, and Elisabeth Sundin, 1995, *Att göra landet jämställt: en utvärdering av kvinnor och män i samverkan – Sveriges största satsning av jämställdhet på arbetsmarknaden.*

A number of Council of Europe member states are moving towards requiring gender-balanced memberships of boards. This has been law in Norway and Finland. Sweden concentrates on the practical issues of working together in boards that include both sexes in an even mix. The initiative was extremely practical and resulted in a book of methods and video training techniques to facilitate work in gender-mixed settings that can be used across Sweden.

Another useful feature of the county council initiatives in general is the custom of publishing frank evaluations about the success or failure of the projects, so that others have a better chance of avoiding pitfalls. For example both the projects on the training of politicians and a gender project in five hospitals published reports which demonstrated the many problems in a realistic manner and suggested ways to do better in the future.

The transferability of many of these efforts is heightened by the fact that they are published and often translated into English and accompanied by a special web page. Naturally such encompassing efforts need to be carried out by a strong organisation with many members, in a relatively affluent setting with politicians committed to seeing gender balance improve. These preconditions were available for the Swedish counties. Luckily their experiences can be shared.

Bringing diversity into public service and public service week (United Kingdom)

*“It turned out that people don’t know what public appointments are!
To get more diversity we will have to change this.”*

The Labour Government in the United Kingdom directly advocates complete parity at the top levels of public decision-making with its “Target 50:50” programme. All departments filed action plans for public appointments and equal opportunities from 1998-2001. In the United Kingdom there are more than one hundred thousand public appointments to a wide range of public bodies. The aim is to make them more representative of “ordinary people” from different walks of life and backgrounds, and gender balance is an important part of this effort. The first step in achieving balance in decision-making is identifying the relevant candidates and motivating them for a job in public service. Still, it seemed according to one informant that “we are just standing still, so we tried to find out what we could do”.

A public opinion survey identified one of the reasons why more diversity was hard to achieve: most people did not know what a public appointment or advisory committee was about. Since 1998, the government, and the independent office administering public appointments has worked actively to raise the number of “ordinary people”, including women and ethnic minorities, in public service. The approach includes a number of attractive and transferable initiatives:

- booklets such as *Stepping out: a woman’s guide to public appointments* hope to stimulate new candidates and train them to be successful;

- current office holders are receiving more attentive appreciation and also being groomed to help in getting new recruits. They are encouraged to offer mentoring and shadowing opportunities, so that potential candidates can see what the job actually entails;
- the office holds workshops with various public groups to determine how they can do better in recruiting more diverse appointees and what support recruits need;
- during “National public service awareness week”, special days were held in a few test regions in the United Kingdom. Mock boards were organised so that non-office holders could experience what kinds of issues come up in the different fields in public service and what kinds of input they could have. The different public bodies were represented with demonstrations and stands. Aid in preparing a curriculum vitae and succeeding in interviews for an appointment helped build confidence among new candidates. Young people were especially targeted through, for example, engaging the annually appointed Scottish youth parliament to mobilise its members.

The project was first organised in 2000 with a regional focus. The costs were carried by the national government as a pilot project. Hopes are that it will be repeated on an annual basis across the United Kingdom. Crucial in the success of the project have been the clear commitments from the top executives and cabinet to changing the demographics of public advisory and management bodies and the willingness to try a wide variety of tactics aimed both at the inflow of new candidates and the retention of those already working.

A holistic approach to the higher public administration (France)

France is famous for the introduction of parity into the constitution, but has not stopped there. The French Government has taken measures to promote the access of women to high-level posts in the public administration. Following the report submitted to the prime minister in February 1999 on “high-level posts in the civil service: towards equality between women and men”, several measures were adopted to facilitate women’s access to posts of responsibility. These were:

- fixing a minimum percentage of women to sit on panels for professional competitive examinations;
- the administration’s nomination of an equal number of women and men to joint bodies;
- the introduction of progressive targets for each ministry and for each level of management to ensure a balanced participation of women and men in top management posts.

A circular of 6 March 2000 endorsed these measures and the prime minister asked each ministerial department to prepare a pluri-annual programme to improve the access of women to jobs and posts in top management.

While many of the techniques have already been tried with success elsewhere, the importance of the French effort is just the fact that it builds on previous experiences, and expands them to a holistic analysis of the entire problem. It commences with recruitment (education and awareness) selection (the composition of juries, and clear statutes of non-discrimination and protection against sexual harassment) looks at career trajectories and roadblocks, demands tracking of progress and setting of targets including identification of management potential, addresses issues of bureaucratically inflexible hours and inefficient meetings, and possibilities of horizontal movement between specialties.

Language and anchoring techniques to overcome resistance – “Gender in balance” and “Steering numbers initiatives” (Belgium and Flanders)

Both national and regional governments in Belgium are reforming the civil service. The national and regional ministers responsible for gender equality launched efforts in collaboration with gender expert consultants to attempt to redress the long-standing problem of gender segregation in top functions using the reorganisation as a window of opportunity. By the late 1990s, the words “quota” and “positive action” were like red flags to many public officials. Consultants worked on new ways to talk about increasing the presence of women in top areas in government, using the language of human resources management. They used organisational change techniques developed in the private sector, including top level seminars to secure legitimacy with key elites in the administrative structure. Instead of talking about positive or affirmative action, the Flemish report refers to “gender in balance” and uses action research to secure co-operation from all affected members of the bureaucracy. The national Belgian strategy talks about “knowledge numbers” (*Kengetal*) and “steering numbers” (*Stuurgetal*) rather than targets. Both plans include new methods for calculating the level of segregation in an administration, and for planning targets for change. They have a step-by-step plan for attaining change and are good examples of talking the language of public management to convince public managers to undertake action. They emphasise the role and responsibility of regular policy actors in personnel management, and thus see themselves as examples of a mainstreaming approach. As the projects are still underway it is too early to pronounce on their success. The plans are available and a comparative European project (Nelens and Hondeghem 2000) has also documented and evaluated these efforts along with projects in Norway, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Additional reading

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CHAPTER 4

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING AND THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

No single social organisation has more effect on the economic and work conditions for individual workers than the trade union. Yet the penetration of gender equality issues into trade unions and national collective bargaining structures has been slower than in the political sector. Historical and structural reasons help account for the fact that women have been somewhat less likely to be organised in trade unions than men. Gender-specific life situations including care of children and work patterns (including the high proportion of female part-time work) explain the continuing lower rates of representation in some sectors.

Today however, with the dramatically increased participation of women in employment and the feminisation of some very important sectors, many trade unions have feminised or reached gender parity in their membership.¹ Unfortunately this is not always reflected in proportionately parallel representation in the higher regions of decision-making. The extent to which gender was an issue for organisers has also varied, and surveys of women in decision-making generally (Lovenduski and Stephenson 1999) note the desperate need for statistics and monitoring of membership and leadership of the different unions. Even the most recent European Trade Union Conference (ETUC) survey in 1998-99 was thwarted by a lack of response (from 42% to 66.6%) which was sometimes based on the lack of membership data divided by sex. The situation in trade unions varies dramatically between countries and between industrial sectors. Some unions have memberships that are more than 70% female, while others are below 25%. Garcia et al. report that generally the membership rate for women stands at around an average of 40% (Garcia et al. 1999:12) with strong variance.

1. The European Trade Union Confederation commissioned two studies in the 1990s which were among the first to assemble statistics on membership and representation in the trade union sector. (Braithwaite, Mary and C. Byrne, 1995 and Ada Garcia et al. 1999/2000). Cynthia Cockburn's analyses shed further light on the specifics of trade union dynamics across Europe. A further important source is the ongoing research of the European Foundation on the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Dublin) which carried out a major five year project looking at collective bargaining and equal opportunities and identified good practices (Bleijenbergh et al. 1999).

Specific conditions in the sector

Position of women

There are contradictory patterns of unionisation among female workers discernible in the trade union sector. While political parties and public administration are relatively comparable, cross-cutting pressures of the national contexts for union cultures and distribution of employment opportunities for women produce widely varying representation of women in the trade unions themselves. In some countries women have become union members in a parallel process to becoming integrated in the work force. These countries tend to have strong union traditions as in the Rhine/Nordic model of high rates of unionisation in homogeneous sectorial organisations, and peaceful models of collective bargaining. In other countries, features such as short part-time employment undermine the female potential as unionised workers (UK).

Across the board there is a skewed representation of men in the upper regions of unions relative to their representation in the membership as a whole. Only a few of the Nordic unions begin to approach representation of the same proportion of women and men in leadership as in the membership.¹ The higher the level of decision-making; the more likely that the body will be unbalanced in terms of gender. (Cockburn 1997) This pattern reaches its most spectacular peak at the European level where the majority of European delegates to the ETUC are male. However, the optimistic news is that the “presence of women in trade union decision-making bodies has appreciably improved” since the early nineties (Garcia et al 1999: 43). ETUC itself affirms that “greater numbers of women should be present at all levels of decision-making and the collective bargaining process in order to fully represent the needs of women in different policy areas”,² and pledges to increase the number of women in decision-making bodies to be proportional to the number of women members and increase gender balance in the collective bargaining process. More female bargainers will have a positive influence on equality bargaining, as “sometimes the presence of women among the negotiators was a decisive factor in obtaining a good collective agreement” (Bleijenbergh et al, 1999:10).

Roadblocks in relation to labour markets and national regulation

The gradual integration of women onto the labour market. Women are only gradually approaching a labour market participation rate equivalent to that of men, and thus the perception that they are only sojourners rather than real participants can be difficult to overcome. This affects their acceptance as fully valued members within the union.

1. TCO Sweden and Akava in Finland are identified in Garcia et al. as having reached parity representation in their Trade Union Congresses, while Turkish, Polish and Bulgarian unions seem to be at the bottom (1999: 16).

2. European Trade Union Confederation “Plan to promote equality in the ETUC and its affiliated organisations”, Brussels (no date), p. 7.

Transformation of labour/employment markets. With the rise of new occupations with different occupational cultures, traditional trade unionism faces significant challenges. The flexibility of work forms also undermines traditional organising methods and women's possibilities to meet. Most new jobs created in Europe are taken by women. The challenge is to develop forms of organisation that can reach these diverse sectors. The more that women are unionised, the more the context is open to women's candidacy as leaders.

Gender cultures of trade unions. Trade unions in some countries were powerful actors in excluding women from certain occupations. The bad examples from the past act as a spook in some countries. These may be further underlined by what are described as "macho" organisational cultures. This cocktail makes the catch-up actions especially desperate and may lead to quotas and positive action programmes as in France (CFDT) or Belgium (CSC) to remedy historical lags. As Garcia comments on aspects of institutional cultures: "At each level of trade union hierarchy these special characteristics tend to select women according to criteria and attitudes in accordance with traditional trade unionism. We must also take account of the organisational cultures which encourage "kitchen cabinets and all the other informal masculine networks which may influence and distort decisions including those directly affecting nominations" (Garcia et al. 1999:21).

The special case of central and eastern Europe and rejection of the "worker woman". In economies in transitions in central and eastern Europe, few things have changed as much as the position of women in the labour market. Moving from the old stereotypical employment patterns to new forms of work is still underway. Women in these economies are rejecting the socialist past, but have ended up under-employed or unemployed. What their attitude will be to the labour organisation forms available under capitalism is still in evolution. On joining the European Union potential member countries will have to adopt the equal opportunities directives. But in these countries female participation in labour organisation decision-making dropped drastically after 1989. In the ETUC survey central and east European respondent confederations had not incorporated equal opportunities into their constitutions or worked on policies.

Timing of concern for representation of women

Trade unions are perhaps next on the list of areas in social decision-making where balance issues will become more important. The International Labour Organisation has begun to devote more and more resources to gender equality in work organisation since the late 1990s (<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/gender/>) and the role of women's bodies and caucuses in pressing for changes has been increasing. A special issue to be kept in mind is the necessity to look for inclusive strategies to reach out to new membership groups including ethnic minorities and flexible workers as globalisation forces transform the European employment forms. Taking the challenge of gender seriously could prove advantageous to unions in a time of generally lessening union affiliation.

They can increase their organisational clout by attracting previously unorganised workers.

Selected cases

Garcia et al. (1999) identify a number of different situations of representation of women in union decision-making, depending on the percentage of women members. Guaranteed representation on executive boards seems to be virtually the only answer when membership is lower than 30%, but a number of medium-term strategies are suitable for increasing representation in situations where membership itself is balanced. Initiatives to improve gender balance have been stimulated internationally especially by the European Union, which through its European Foundation on Living and Working Conditions has also monitored aspects of equal opportunity in collective bargaining, funded cross-country co-operation and shared experiences. The International Labour Organisation has been strongly pursuing a gender mainstreaming strategy that is also bearing fruits in Europe. While the northern European countries have been active in pursuing gender equality in unions independently, the impulses from international organisations have been crucial for first initiatives identified as smart practices in southern and eastern Europe.

The strategies employed closely mirror those in political decision-making, including awareness-raising techniques, the grooming and selection of candidates through special training, the development of structures to ensure the representation of women's interests (such as women's caucuses and committees), leadership training programmes and various forms of positive action. For this study, informants identified training initiatives being taken across western Europe as especially important. While men had long been groomed for taking their place at the bargaining table, there was a pressing need for training designed especially for women.

Gender awareness days for trade union negotiators (Spain)

The major promoter of equality between women and men in Spain is the Women's Institute (Instituto de la Mujer), a state organ attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Women's Institute is active in all aspects of society. Since 1996, the judicial department together with the governments of the autonomous communities and three major trade unions,¹ have organised gender related sensitisation days. This project was initiated within the frame of the IV Community Action Programme for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women (1996-2000) and is financed by the European Social Fund. The purpose of the project is sensitisation of trade union representatives. This can increase active feminine participation – to increase women's position in decision-making and to achieve a more balanced participation in public life.

1. The participating trade unions are Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) and Unión Sindical Obrera (USO).

The gender days have been held in fourteen out of eighteen Spanish autonomous communities. About 100 participants from the three trade unions and from the governments of the autonomous communities meet to discuss, and to learn more about, equal opportunity rights and official gender policies. European, national and regional regulations and conventions are studied. This more theoretical part is then complemented by more practical examples illustrating existing problems. All different areas where equal opportunities are important are treated.

Aware and well informed trade union representatives and human resource managers can take this knowledge back to their work places. Hopefully they will work more actively to introduce measures to achieve a more balanced gender representation and equal opportunities. According to Belén García de Andoain-Rays at the Women's Institute, this is indirectly beneficial for increased gender balance in public as well as private organisations. She further explains that even though there has been no official evaluation of the project, it has, since its start, been received with great interest and a high level of participation.

From fairy tales to fair deals (Finland)

“In a good workplace everyone should be consulted, and this includes women so equal opportunities should not be regarded as an isolated issue.”

Historically, Finnish women have been organised in a Women's Committee within the SAK since 1938. Naturally, their emphasis has changed over time. Women today are trained to be self-aware as trade union members and negotiators. The focus in Finland has turned toward gender co-operation, as the work towards a fair deal needs men as well. Co-operation is stressed at all levels of the labour market organisation, as equal opportunities can benefit everyone. But in trade unions not everyone is convinced that gender equality can really benefit the whole. Getting men to work for gender balance and getting enterprises to support it wholeheartedly still requires tangible examples. To show that equality is advantageous for all, the social partners (employers and employee organisations) carried out an action research project with ten companies in 1998-99 that demonstrated that more balanced opportunities lead to a more pleasant place to work. They raise the competitiveness of the organisation as well. The project will be continuing, as one of the findings is that men are still less likely than women to see that equal opportunities are a problem.

The “Starlet initiative” – LO and KAD and international gender training (Denmark)

“The starlet is not a stunning blond nor a blind Barbie, nor a blue-eyed brunette, but a young woman between 25 and 35 who wants to make a difference”
(Starlet project campaign brochure)

In Denmark where the rate of unionisation is very high, there has been long-term effort to improve gender balance at the top of the labour movement. The National Trade Union Confederation (LO) launched a survey to investigate the representation

at both local and national levels and to develop new tools to correct gender inequalities especially at the top. The KAD (Kvindeligt Arbejderforbund), which is a woman-only union has been in the forefront in developing initiatives on training women to lead. The 100-year old union is the only union in the world which only organises women and with its 85000 members is one of the larger members of the LO. In co-operation with international partners, this union has developed a major package of good training practices and handbooks that can be used all over Europe to develop new talent for union leadership. Sponsored by the European Union,¹ the training packet includes study sheets and set-up sheets for courses to mainstream gender into unions and incidentally improve the climate for women leaders. An especially interesting project is aimed at young women, and called the Starlet initiative. The Vice President of the LO, Tine Aurovig Broendum, notes, "There are many men in the trade union movement with grey hair or bald on top. They do a great job. But we also need to see more young women putting their mark on the trade union movement in the new millennium" (www.lo.dk/view.asp?documentID=1782). It aims to provide a springboard to a career as a union leader. Co-ordinated by the LO it will train some twenty-five women from 25-35 years old from all the different unions, mostly with children. The idea is that the union movement needs more women, and the training programme can make young women more effective, if set up to suit women's needs. The insights of KAD and the earlier international good practice experience have been influential in the construction of the programme.

ILO pilot projects – building networks of women's organisations for community economic development (Estonia)

Getting women to the decision-making table in international labour relations discussions is a long standing problem, as statistics gathered by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/gender/pol-set/conf98.htm>) indicate. In recent years Estonia has been at or near the top in terms of gender balance of delegations sent to international meetings organised by the ILO (62.5 % in 1998). While this performance is no doubt related to a high and long-term integration of women in the labour force in Estonia, consistent effort by multinational partners may also have contributed to Estonia taking the lead in parity in decision-making teams, even while facing the extreme challenges to women's employment placed by a transition economy. The ILO has been important in this task. Its work in Estonia around gender equality issues is primarily aimed at improving the work situation and employment opportunities for women. But the work seems to have had positive spin-offs in maintaining the position of women in decision-making. The gender promotion project "National action plan for more and better jobs for women" (started in 1997 in co-operation with the

1. CISL (Italian Confederation of Trade Unions), co-ordinator with the Trade Union Congress the Kvindeligt Arbejdersforbund, European Trade Union College and European Commission (no date): *Mainstreaming in the trade union training guide to good practice and Training for men and women.*

Finnish and Estonian governments) aimed at first to improve the situation of the poor and rural regions.

However, the 400 rural women in Valga county received wide-ranging training in leadership and negotiation skills as well. "One particularly successful element of the pilot project has been the establishment of networks of women's organisations and the development of their regular dialogue with local authorities, ensuring women are starting to have a greater voice in their community's development", according to the contact representative. "Women are very educated in Estonia but we have a lack of free market experience," said national representative Riina Kütt to *World of Work* (No. 31 September/October 1999). "We have very limited business traditions in Estonia, though some remain from the time between the wars. We have to learn everything." The Estonian case provides a good example of the role of international organisations in stimulating learning local networks and eventually local social partners to take on international good practices. It further highlights the usefulness of international sources for inspiration, ideas and network potential when local resources are low.

Additional reading

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CHAPTER 5

WOMEN'S NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

The continuing importance of women's organisations in new settings

Women's empowerment and the importance of gender balance in decision-making processes is a central target of European women's movement organisations. No survey of actions to improve gender balance can overlook the role of women's councils, organisations and grass roots activists in stimulating attention for this issue. Within their own ranks, as a special interest group, woman's organisations are by their nature not gender balanced. Very few such groups include men in any level of activity. The sex-segregated nature of the women's movement is its source of strength as it provides a fruitful base for thought and networking, but this aspect may prove a roadblock to any future actions designed to harmonise masculinities and femininities in the aim of achieving gender balance. Women's organisations are conceived within an oppositional interest-group framework. They remain an essential participant in the work to achieve engendered decision-making. Their support of this goal provides democratic legitimacy for efforts and new arguments and strategies.

There are thousands of women's groups and organisations in the member states of the Council of Europe. As the Beijing Platform for Action states "Non-governmental and grass-roots organisations have a specific role to play in creating a social, economic, political and intellectual climate based on equality between women and men". The activities of the United Nations provide a target and platform for nationally based women's movements as well as being an important source of sharing ideas. We can speak today of transnational networks of feminist organisations that provide important intellectual and moral resources to non-governmental organisations working with grass-roots activities.¹

Women's groups play an irreplaceable role in this struggle, and all the more so in countries where women's representation in decision-making has decreased, as in areas of central and eastern Europe. As one eastern European informant commented more generally about the fight for gender balance in her country, "there is no wonderful example that springs automatically to mind. It is quite a struggle with gender equality issues here, and success is only ever partial." One of the most stunning examples of the importance of coalitions between west and east is the case of the countries sprung from the former Yugoslavia, where 100 prominent women activists lobbied the negotiations of the Stability Pact in 1999 and managed to get a Gender Task Force included in the Stability Pact for South-East

1. Moghadam, V. 2000, "Transnational feminist networks: collective action in an era of globalisation."

Europe.¹ It now operates in ten European countries and has as a main priority “equal access to power”. The Serbian arm of the task force focused particularly on the election of women and received support from Austria, Switzerland and the European Union among others thanks to well thought-out projects flowing from the Gender Task Force initiative. Many Serbian opposition parties agreed to gender quotas for their lists. The December election in Serbia led to an increase in the number of women in parliament from 5% to over 12% according to first results, and this was primarily thanks to the effort to get women on the lists in eligible places. The project’s outreach has been considerable by using the strategy of providing western training for trainers to reach women candidates (the “Women can do it” approach) and then mobilising trainers to do local organising like rings on the water.

In central and eastern Europe, women’s organisations have to forge a new identity, divorced from the official story of past women’s organisations, and perhaps also divorced from the socialist view of feminism which has made this a dirty word in some circles. Few identify completely with the feminism of the west either.² Forging authentic identities and strategies specific to this environment is a major challenge. One of the techniques that has surely been of importance, but is perhaps beyond the purview of this book, has been the creation of interlocking networks of women’s organisations between the west and the former communist countries. These have been particularly important in the area around the Baltic Sea and in the Russian Federation, where for example, *Femina Borealis*, a league of Nordic and Baltic women’s organisations, was able to form a critical mass among feminists in the Barent Straits region in the mid-1990s with special interest for indigenous peoples. Sporadic efforts such as the “Young women and democracy” programme which enjoyed some funding from the EU Phare/Tacis programme also brought eastern Europeans interested in gender and democracy together in 1995-97, but the longevity of these efforts seems to depend on the constancy of external funding.

Activist women in transition societies also use the platform of women’s studies to build up a woman’s voice in civil society. New centres of women’s studies are arising across eastern Europe. When they have access to Internet, these groups can link up with supportive centres elsewhere and form an important conduit for practical ideas. A further important technique to establish a base for promoting balance in decision-making has been the creation of umbrella organisations of women’s groups such as the Russian Consortium of Women’s Non-governmental Associations. Using the information highway has also become increasingly important for east-west and intra-east communication of practices and ideas through networks such as the Network of East-West Women (<http://www.neww.org>).

The characteristics of women’s non-governmental organisations that specifically structure their possibilities are the fact that they are relatively gender segregated

1. For Gender Task Force activities, see <http://www.spgtf.org>.

2. Watson, P., 2000, “Politics, policy and identity: EU eastern enlargement and East-West differences.”

and working within a single gender culture. Further, as non-governmental organisations they often rely on volunteer work and are frequently low on financial resources. Thus their ability to undertake expensive actions is lower than is the case for the other social organisations discussed above. As volunteer organisations they may also be short on management skills, and some educational schemes such as the brief EU stimulated Regina project (European Network for Management of Women NGO's and Associations) with its French, Italian, Belgian and Dutch partners have focused specifically on developing training material for NGO managers. Much more remains to be done. Given their weakness, many NGOs find moral strength in being part of an international movement which may help them overcome some of the material roadblocks to effective action. Another source of strength is the commitment of members to the cause. High levels of energy and mutually reinforcing synergy can be produced, and networks can increase the potential impact surface. A good example is provided by the networks of professionals in emancipation such as the German national network of equal opportunities officers working in cities and in the public sector who meet regularly and share good practices and strategies (Bundesarbeitssgemeinschaft kommunaler Frauenbüros – <http://www.bag.kommazwo.com/bagwww.bag.kommazwo.com/bag>).

The specific dynamics of women's organisations make certain kinds of shocking awareness actions possible, as well as allowing infiltration into civil society when official channels are road-blocked. The women's movements in non-governmental settings in eastern Europe have made savvy use of new techniques of organising such as the Internet to keep the message of diversity and empowerment in the public eye. Because women's non-governmental organisations are themselves not the target of these actions, the types of action are usually in the category of awareness-raising, which is somewhat marginal to the task of this brochure. We have therefore only selected a very few examples. The ideas can, however, perhaps inspire other types of organisations in ways of targeting their own mixed membership and alerting them to the importance of balance.

Selected cases

Putting women in the picture with gender audits (United Kingdom – Scotland)

How can we find out if gender balance commitments are being honoured? Women's organisations are particularly well-placed to serve as a watch-dog and gadfly. They can goad other organisations into making good on their international and national commitments. Monitoring progress should be the task of the public administration (as is the case in the "Statistics Sweden" brochure mentioned above), but it seldom is. In some countries women's networks and NGOs take over the function of providing the "Blunder book" on gender relations for public authorities. Publication of the record on gender issues both shames those sectors of society where progress is lacking as well as rewarding those who are doing well.

The Scottish example is particularly nice.¹ Thanks to the gender audits produced from 1993-2000, general statistics on the status of women have improved. The audits gather statistics together and further provide commentaries and interpretations of the situation by expert observers. From the beginning they were produced by volunteers in the group “Engender”, a network of research and networking groups. The early years certainly demonstrate the energy available in civil society. Small amounts of support garnered from widely differing sources all contributed to bringing about a high quality resource without substantial external funding.

Engender always argued that “the development of accurate data on women’s lives is essential if action to empower women is to work, gender sensitive policy is to be made, targets are to be set, and progress is to be monitored”(Engender 2000:3). The audits became such a basic tool of information that the final year was sponsored by a major newspaper. With the *Gender audit 2000*, the authors also declare their job to be done. The new Scottish regional government seems ready to take over auditing the progress of gender relations. They will make significant efforts to present gender transparent statistics so that the progress of attaining gender balance can be monitored.

Gender audit 2000 reports on the position of women in contemporary Scotland in politics, in rural areas, in transport, education, health and in terms of sexualities. It updates information on gender relations in fields ranging from business and childcare to poverty, trade unions, violence and voluntary organisations. In past years it has focused on providing information on women of colour, and minorities or issues of poverty and disabilities.

As a “smart” practice, the experience of the Scottish gender audits are notable particularly because of the networking features. The collaborators stimulated contacts across social boundaries and empowerment on a wider front. Information on women is spread in widely varying sources, and it took the efforts of people from universities, public administration, voluntary organisations and civic organisations such as trade unions to start along the road to a fuller picture of gender relations. This also develops a good basis for mainstreaming strategies. The encounters in preparing the reports may also have led to the training of new generations of candidates to share in decision-making thanks to skills acquired in the preparation of the audit. People active in Engender and publishing information about skewed gender balance in decision-making later lobbied behind the scenes with the result that the first Scottish Parliament includes 37% women.

That the idea of the gender audit is transferable is illustrated by the widespread interest around the globe. It has been promoted by the British Council as an innovative model. Produced primarily by committed volunteers, it has always been democratically accessible to serve as a resource for campaigning, lobbying,

1. Another good case is Ireland, where the Commission on the Status of Women carried out several lengthy audits in the early 1990s and is now developing indicators to monitor gender equality. (Yvonne Galligan, private communication).

training and teaching. The latest version of the audit is published on the Internet (<http://www.engender.org.uk>).

New tactics in transition countries – a consortium of NGOs (Russian Federation)

The splintering of civil society in societies in transition has meant that organisations have had to start from scratch in many places in eastern Europe. Although visions of gender equality and tactics vary deeply between eastern and western Europe, alliances between east and west with sharing of information on organisation and lobbying tactics have been instrumental in helping those who wish to pressure for better representation of women. Especially important has been the constitution of networks of organisations. One of the largest may be the Consortium of Women's Non-governmental Associations, which was founded in 1993 between NGOs in the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States. In the Russian Federation alone it has some ninety-eight member groups from thirty-seven regions which work on many different projects. As a consortium they have been able to be much more successful in gathering international economic resources to support their network and specific gender issues than they would have been as separate groups.

The “smart” in this example is the effort put in to creating communication channels between often isolated and resource poor groups who can profit from strengths elsewhere. The sharing that is taken for granted in countries with active umbrella organisations of women's groups such as national councils of women has needed to be (re) developed in many areas in eastern Europe. The consortium can offer support in helping groups present their arguments. It tries in general to “empower them”, profiting from international aid (USAID – US Agency for International Development) to train groups in lobbying and advocacy. They have been successful in building an e-mail network to help regional groups follow legislative developments. The number of women NGOs working with information technologies has grown. Again this project would have been more difficult without the substantial help from international aid (Ford Foundation).

Cybergirls – using the net, gimmicks and empowerment training to put women back into politics (Croatia)

“We believe that gender democracy is an essential part of any democracy, and that a state which denies equal rights to women and minority groups cannot call itself democratic.”

BaBe Network (Be Active, Be Emancipated, Budi aktivna, Budi emancipirana)

“Women were delighted with this activity, they need training and wanted to practice communications skills which are really important for professional politicians. As a result of our training, a greater number of women reached the parliament ... and we hope for an increase in the local elections in 2001 as well.”

Civil education and engagement are controversial activities in many areas in eastern Europe, and new communication techniques have been crucial to help counter

critiques and rally supporters. The informal BaBe (which also means “old granny” in Croatian) network began working for democracy in 1994 and launched a platform for the parliamentary elections in 1995 and 1997. It also protested strongly and repeatedly against violence and in 1998 won the EU-US Democracy and Civil Society Award through its committed human rights activities and new communication techniques.

Another initiative took place with the founding of a Women’s Studies Centre. Women’s studies in central and eastern Europe has had an uphill fight, but shares with its western European sisters a core of social engagement. The Centre for Women’s Studies in Zagreb which was founded by feminists and scholars in 1995 immediately took an active role in encouraging women to take up leadership roles and working on public consciousness. Especially important has been its mission in political education with a goal of encouraging women to work across divides on issues of human rights for women and more women in leadership. The centre has successfully organised many pre-election activities to raise consciousness about the necessity of gender balance in decision-making. It sold t-shirts, organised a web campaign and was highly present in street actions. It has also reached out with a programme called “Dissolving the fear of power: leadership training for women in local communities” (2000-01) which gathered wide support (funding from the American Embassy, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, US Information Agency and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy among others.) The aim was to use training to empower women to be carriers of political changes within their local communities and teach them skills for making effective public appearances. The need for coalition building around specific issues and co-operation in the realisation of interests at micro, macro and international levels has been key. The training sessions seem to have been important for participants and the combination of actions of the centre has led to more women in parliament and optimism about an increase in women at the local level from the current meagre 4% in coming elections.

Mobilising young women for equality (European Women’s Lobby: EU)

The European Women’s Lobby is the largest coalition of non-governmental women’s organisations in the European Union. It organises more than 2 700 associations of women across Europe and lobbies for them in the institutions of the European Union. As such it is well placed to receive resources and gather information on issues affecting women in Europe. There is a danger that new generations of women for places in decision-making may not appear automatically. This led to a European Union supported project (1999-2000) to create new training material attractive to young people and to bring them together to voice their specific concerns. Bringing the young co-ordinators together resulted in a manifesto in Lisbon affirming young women’s commitment to equality issues, including fighting discrimination, violence, and sexism in the media and education and claiming a space in decision-making.

The overall objective is supporting the integration of young women's concerns into European and national policy concerns through an increased participation of young women. Thus far this has been done through the organisation of national and international seminars and the preparation of "The young women's guide to gender equality and equal opportunities in Europe". The process of making the book was discursive, so that the book also has a special eye for the multiple aspects of discrimination in Europe. Not only gender is at work, but also differences of race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and physical ability. Work on this project, as collective work in NGOs often functions, can also spin-off to reach the longer term goal of stimulating the contacts necessary for networks of young women to appear. The project gave young women a chance to meet, voice their concerns and confront the differences. It is one of several across Europe that looks towards the future of equality by preparing new participants.

Kader – women help women to get into parliament (Turkey)

Women's NGOs can play a significant role in increasing the participation of women in decision-making, as shown by the example of Turkey. Kader is an association for the support and education of women candidates. It was founded in 1997 by visible and influential women including journalists. It helps improve the legitimacy of women's demands for increased political participation and acts as an active NGO. One of its main aims has been to increase the number of women in parliament from 2% to 10%. The percentage reached 4.2% in the last elections.

Additional reading

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Scott, J. W., C. Kaplan, et al., eds. 1997. *Transitions, environments, translations: feminisms in international politics*. New York: Routledge (Taylor and Francis).

Silliman, J. 1999. "Expanding civil society: shrinking political spaces – the role of women's non governmental organisations", *Social Politics* 6 (1):23-53.

CHAPTER 6

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

No area of social decision-making has been as little investigated as the role of gender in the management of non-governmental organisations. The activities of non-governmental organisations are among the most wide ranging covered here. They can range from Greenpeace and football clubs to the Red Cross. The gender problem is initially straightforward. In a large variety of voluntary organisations, the work is frequently done by female volunteers, but management and paid jobs are disproportionately in hands of men. The composition of boards of directors and executive boards of trustees is also disproportionately male. For these organisations, going public with their internal problems would undermine their legitimacy. Hence while non-governmental organisations linked to the UN may be in the forefront in developing instruments to gender test policy towards developing countries, they may be lagging in investigating the issues in their own backyard. This is not always the case however and it is in development assistance that the issue of gender balance in the organisation itself is most publicly raised, and where training efforts seem to be have been carried out.

There is an crying need for research and shared comparative projects on the issue of gender balance in the management of non-governmental organisations. The present lack may be related to the scale and resource poverty of the sector. It is also only relatively recently that non-governmental organisations have seriously begun to consider using professional management techniques and managers. We suspect, that at least as far as managing directorships and general secretariats are concerned, much is changing. Anecdotally it seems that many Brussels offices of NGOs are now headed by women, but there is little or no statistical evidence available. The EU study of women in decision-making noted that no area was so little studied as that of women in the “third sector” of voluntary associations, charities, churches, and other non-profit-making organisations (Lovenduski 1999).¹

This sector should potentially be one of the most sensitive to the issue of representation. Many of the organisations are strongly committed to social justice. Yet the irony is that their economic survival may depend on support from sectors where decision-making is extremely unbalanced in terms of gender. The world of

1. The Council of Europe funded a report by Helge Hernes in 1984 which seems not to have been paralleled nor followed up since then. Yet the sector has evolved dramatically. (Lovenduski and Stephenson, 1999, p. 19).

large corporations and finance is noted for its gender segregation, but is also an important source of financial support for some non-governmental organisations. Boards of directors of charitable organisations frequently include members who are able to mobilise the financial world to make contributions. These directors are disproportionately male. With the changing role of women, the base of activism of these organisations has been transformed. An important question for future research is how the decision-making structure has been responding to these social changes.

Selected case

Unfortunately, for this report, very few examples of efforts to change gender balance in management of NGOs were forthcoming. We include here only one example. Some of the informants informally suggested that non-governmental organisations working with developing countries that gender test projects in terms of development aid are also concerned about the gendered relations of decision-making within their organisation. Examples from the United Kingdom and Flanders were mentioned, but these seemed to be in a fledgling stage. This observation that the work within the United Nations framework stimulates a broader concern for gender issues goes for governmental organisations that work with NGOs as well as within NGOs themselves. The OECD also hosts a gender unit within its Development Assistance Commission that has prepared an exceptionally useful handbook (Schalkwyck and Woroniuk 1997) for addressing some of the issues inside organisations including resistance to gender equity, and organisational culture. The literature lists in this guide provide a signpost to NGOs in the development sector such as Oxfam, who are carrying out gender training and gender balance efforts within their organisations.

Woman to woman – a mentoring programme (Switzerland)

“One of the reasons we ended up doing a mentoring project was that we found out, through questionnaires to all our member organisations, that 50% of all the people involved at the grass-root level in youth organisations were women. So women were actually equally represented at the grass-root level, but when it came to more responsible jobs, higher up in youth organisations, women totally disappeared. A lot of our member organisations ended up having problems finding women to take on jobs that were a little bit more time consuming and responsible... a lot of them just doubted their capabilities.”

The Swiss Council for Youth Activities¹ – an umbrella organisation for about ninety different types of youth organisations reacted to the absence of women in key positions with the launch of a mentoring programme in January 2000. This

1. The name in Switzerland's official languages are the following: Le Conseil Suisse des Activités de Jeunesse (CSAJ), Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Jugendverbände (SAJV), Federazione Svizzera delle Associazioni Giovanili (FSAG), and Federaziun Svizra da las Uniuns da Giuventetgna (FSUG).

one-year pilot programme gives young women the opportunity to meet and learn from older women, in the hope that they will later be more familiar with the responsibilities of leadership.

The Swiss council wrote women politicians to ask if they would be interested in becoming mentors and had an unexpectedly warm response. The young women were elected among applicants from different youth organisations. A common first meeting was held with all the participants in January 2000. The thirty “couples” were already paired up, but met for the first time. Since then they have met about once a month and spend an afternoon or evening together. The contents of the meetings are varied as it depends on the participants themselves. Some couples organise workshops together while others just discuss. Some participants have been able to shadow their mentor at her place of work.

The project is being assessed as it evolves. According to Dominique Grisard, who is responsible for this initiative, reactions so far have been “very, very positive”. However, she points out that “obviously some couples have worked out better than others...if the two end up getting along very well on a personal level as well that really helps”. On the whole, Ms Grisard sees the project as successful, not only for the young women: “most mentoring couples are very positive about what they have been able to learn...many mentors actually say that they have learned a lot...they have learned how to pass on their knowledge. They have also seen what motivates these young women, what kind of political problems are interesting to them and what they are interested in learning”.

Considering the success so far, the Swiss Council for Youth Activities (CSAJ), in co-operation with the Federal Commission for Women’s Issues, decided to introduce a second cycle of mentoring. On the basis of an application and a personal interview, twenty-three duos were selected by the organisers of the project. The teams met regularly over one year, from June 2001 to June 2002. The experiences gained during the pilot project on mentoring have been included in a guide developed by the organisers of the project. This detailed guide, published in German, French and Italian in the magazine *Women’s issues* No. 1, 2001, aims at encouraging other organisations to start similar projects.

The initiators of the programme believe that it is transferable to many different domains and national contexts. “It would not even have to be in politics.”

Going forward gradually

Efforts to increase the presence of women in decision-making spread like rings on water across the different sectors of decision-making and through different countries. One early conclusion in collecting examples is that there continues to be a need for examples of new ways to raise awareness about the need for gender balance in decision-making. Building consensus that gender balance is essential is long-term work, and each new sector, each country continues to need ideas. As this collection of examples indicates, the further one gets from the democratically

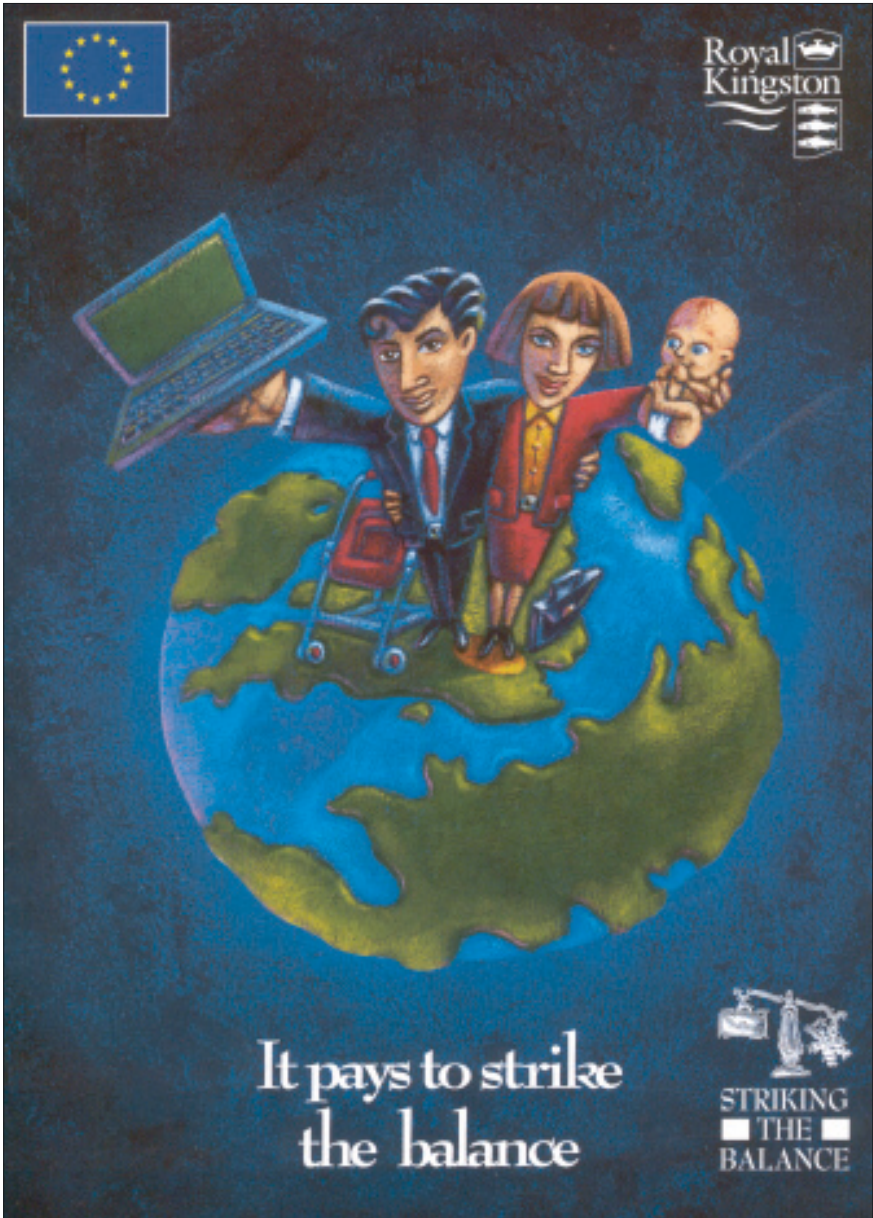
controlled public sector, the fewer examples there are of efforts to change. And the first effort made is usually awareness-raising. However, strategies are necessary at all stages of the process of raising the participation of women. In the second part we look specifically at what has been learned about awareness-raising in Europe in the last thirty years.

Additional reading

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Staudt, Kathleen 1990. "Gender politics in bureaucracy: theoretical issues in comparative perspective." in Kathleen Staudt (ed.) *Women, international development and politics. The bureaucratic mire*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.



The “Striking the balance” project was initiated by the Royal Borough of Kingston in 1996. To respond to concern over a work-life balance, the project has worked with small businesses in Kingston to help them capitalise upon their inherent flexibility to create flexible working patterns that support their business objectives. ©Striking the balance.



The work group Vrouw & Maatschappij is a political women's group of the Flemish CD&V political party in Belgium. Working for equal rights for both women and men, it focuses on equal representation in economic and political decision-making and supports professional and social regulations that enable family and work to be combined successfully. Reprinted courtesy of Vrouw & Maatschappij, illustration ©Goele De Wanckel.



The slogan *No te quedes detrás* (don't get left behind) was created for an awareness-raising campaign in 1999 on women's participation in public and political decision-making (p. 56) carried out by the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The campaign focused on strengthening women's participation in political and economic life and in trade unions, school councils, to name a few. Reprinted courtesy of the Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Instituto de la Mujer, design ©Número uno comunicación.



The Raad voor gelijke kansen is a Flemish women's organisation that has produced *Power-training*, a humorous booklet on, among other things, strategies for dealing with male tactics of undermining women at meetings. *Power-training* is also a well-known training course in Belgium. Reprinted courtesy of the Raad voor gelijke kansen, illustration ©Jaklien Demuyck.

SECOND PART:
A GUIDE TO AWARENESS-RAISING
STRATEGIES

CHAPTER 7

EQUAL TIME FOR GENDER BALANCE

Letting mice escape at a bridal fair, bringing cows to a beauty contest, and writing “I am the Boss in my Belly” on your naked abdomen to parade at a gynaecologist’s conference ... it used to be called “protest”. Today we can see that it was about provoking, influencing and ultimately persuading the public to look again at the taken-for-granted, to wake up and notice women and their worth. Western European and American feminists are busy writing their history, recalling the heady days of the 1970s with its marches and demonstrations, buttons and the legendary “bra-burning”. One of the major victories is the transformation of the taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs about the possibilities for gender equality in all walks of life. We witnessed a transformation of consciousness. This was a result of consciousness-raising for individual actors, and sensitisation or awareness-raising for the general public.

Persuasion is one of the oldest activities of political communication, aimed at transforming the political context, and as such is one that must have long-term ambitions, even while aiming for short-term impact. Consciousness-raising at an individual and collective level was central for the changes brought about by second-wave feminism, in the early 1970s but we sometimes forget that cultural change takes a long time. There continues to be a need to inspire leaders and motivate the general public to work for gender equality in the framework of social justice and human rights. Today we are working on the third wave of social change, where the goal is not only to notice the worth of women, but also to include them at all the tables where important decisions are made, on an equal basis.

The need for new ideas in a changing Europe

To achieve this change, efforts to persuade the public and transform norms are necessary, but new issues and changing contexts require fresh approaches. The new democracies of eastern Europe in the 21st century provide a different challenge than Amsterdam or Paris in 1970. Communication techniques have evolved, and the women’s movement is increasingly diverse, including everything from small grass roots women’s support groups in local communities to global networks linked by international organisations such as the United Nations and the Council of Europe. This part of the guide provides a brief survey of some of the many techniques being used by this wide variety of actors to sensitise opinion leaders and the general public about the need for the participation of men and women in decision-

making. The goal is to reach a point where the public sees gender balance as the norm, and the lack of women (or men) around the tables of power as a serious problem. Getting to this point requires both long-term actions in the field of education and public media, as well as short-term reminders.

The approach – a mini snowball

As in the first part of this booklet, what follows does not pretend to be an exhaustive survey of all the things an activist can undertake to wake people up to the need for gender balance. It is a selection of projects which gives a taste of some of the variety in awareness-raising today. After a short discussion of some considerations in choosing an awareness-raising technique, we present a list of many of the possible techniques now being used to influence public opinion on gender and their advantages and disadvantages. This selection is based on a mini-inventory of activities culled from responses to surveys by Council of Europe experts in 1998 and 2001. Some of the projects in the inventory were followed up to find out who helps pay for campaigns, how they are organised and which techniques seem to have the most success. The heart of the second part of this guide are these small case studies of how people have actually worked for higher awareness across Europe in the last decade. Some are working against desperate odds with a sense of purpose and enthusiasm that reminded us of the second wave of feminism. They work, usually as volunteer citizens or at low rates of pay. When congratulated on their superhuman efforts against what sometimes seemed like eternal opposition they replied “Don’t thank me, this is my life”.

What is clear is that awareness-raising is the first thing that needs to be done in a country, but it is also a process that never stops. Experience in several countries demonstrates that election campaigns that are not preceded by sensitisation on the need to vote for female candidates frequently lead to a drop in female representation. The Nordic countries are as busy as the transitional countries in central and eastern Europe with awareness-raising, even if they are addressing different problems.

We hope this part of the guide will be a stimulus to new thinking tailored to the problems in each country and the evolving debates such as the one on parity democracy, and will help users to consider the wide range of strategies that new media provide today.

Awareness-raising techniques as a strategy in creating gender balance

Awareness-raising to bring about cultural change is a long-term endeavour. Keeping up the energy to think up just one more way to get attention is difficult. Among gender specialists, other alternative efforts such as developing new policy instruments and working on mainstreaming may have more “sex appeal”. But continuing to persuade and inspire are essential until the attitudes, power relations and behaviour that prevent gender equality are eradicated.

Political change and tactics – why communicate?

Bringing about political change requires collective action, and motivating others to support your cause means they have to know about it. The first step in political action is articulation of a problem and the discovery that it is shared by others. This is where communication comes in. The purpose of communication is of course to persuade (McNair 1999). There are at least three good reasons for bringing the message of gender equality to the public.

The first reason is to influence the agenda. International treaties and agreements put gender equality as a goal into the policy responsibility of every member state of the Council of Europe. However, the day-to-day problems of politics usually take an upper hand. Groups need to communicate in ways that keep the problem of gender equity on the ever-changing political agenda. Ultimately, the goal is to see that most issues on the policy agenda are formulated with an eye to gender equality issues. This is the purpose of gender mainstreaming. First, however, ways to increase women in decision-making have to be on the agenda in a continuous fashion. Political communication is crucial for this.

The second important role of awareness-raising is to directly affect decision-making. By indicating the scope of voter support for equality issues, decision-makers can be influenced. Further, awareness tactics and the launch of new ideas and new formulations of ideas change the policy discourse.

Finally, the third reason is to bring about long-term changes in behaviour. Gender interest groups hope that through awareness-raising tactics, awareness-raising will finally become unnecessary. Gender awareness should become second nature and reflexive in society. Continuous and varied chanting of the melody of gender equality can gradually lead to the whole society singing the same song. For these long-term changes in behaviour, gender awareness material has to be built into the educational curriculum itself.

Who communicates?

The activists who are bringing gender messages can be of many types. The most important actors bringing the message of the need for more women in decision-making have been *political parties*, *public agencies* including the government and schools, and *interest groups* and *social movements*. These can include trade unions, women's organisations and local groups who have specific concerns. But even *businesses*, through their human resources policies and attempts to attract highly qualified women, can have an effect on public attitudes. The resources, timing and methods used to communicate change depend on who is communicating and for what purpose. Political parties encouraging the public to vote for their women candidates will usually focus their activities around elections, while those working with the young might choose an event such as a rock festival or the beginning of the school year.

How to communicate?

Communication has become a professional field, and is one of the fastest growing subjects of study in most universities. The expansion of the need for information and the channels where information can be found has revolutionised public life and decision-making. More and more political candidates and messages are packaged. To compete, social messengers are forced to consider their strategies carefully and creatively. Every channel of communication and each messenger need its own tactics. This means that the diversity in gender movements is necessary and useful. We need everything from grass-roots rural organisations and ethnically oriented clubs to “tailored suit” professional associations to successfully address all the nooks and crannies of the public consciousness. The same message about the need for gender balance in decision-making can be brought by grass-roots organisations through “cookie days” and teach-ins in small towns, and by professional and internationally connected women’s organisations who can target elite decision-makers with tailor-made training sessions.

Channels and tactics

The channels of communication range from personal networks to television networks and the Internet. Newsletters, newspapers, flyers, posters and helium balloons are all ways of carrying messages. Choosing a channel usually depends on who one is trying to persuade and what goals one has in mind. Awareness-raising about the importance of gender balance is primarily aimed at two main publics: *decision-makers* and opinion leaders and the *general public* of men and women alike. Reaching decision-makers requires a shrewdly crafted strategy and sometimes special channels of access. Elites are targeted by a wide range of interest groups and citizens and have limited time. Yet, they are crucial because of their impact as opinion leaders. All studies on gender balance and change emphasise the centrality of top-level support for project success. Decision-makers are a public that cannot be ignored.

The general public is also not a blanket audience. Convincing women to vote for women may need different arguments and channels than convincing men to vote for gender balance. Young women in many countries will resist messages that smack of “feminism” and need to be approached differently than employed middle-aged professional women. The tactics available are as varied as the channels. The examples below demonstrate that tactics can be combined in campaigns that bring the message in several different forms.

The special role of mass media in awareness-raising: limitations of the press and issues of editorial choice

The role of the journalist (print and electronic) in helping carry messages to the general public is one for special concern. A long running complaint in the

women's movement has been the limited coverage of women's issues and the image of women in the press (Spears et al. 2000). The usual constraints of getting journalistic attention such as the problem of deciding what news is and filtering what reaches the public are always at work. Additionally, special interests groups are much more savvy today and bombard the press with requests for coverage. Further, there seems to be substantial gender bias (see, for example, Switzerland below). The relation between the media and political communication is a two-way street, both sides profit from each other, and both sides need each other. The issue of civic responsibility and fairness of coverage is one that is explosive. Editorial priorities have an enormous limiting effect on what women's groups can hope for in terms of publicity, and many awareness-raising tactics hinge on being distributed through the mass media. In our interviews, when asked about opposition, the main problem mentioned was not so much open opposition from male publics, but instead, the general lack of attention and indirect opposition revealed by media journalists who ignore actions or provide back page coverage.¹

The possibilities of Internet

Because of the filtering of news media, the Internet can be seen as a tremendous boon for the maintenance of networks, the communication of actions² and the provision of ammunition for arguments and data to help support awareness-raising efforts. The Internet is also subject to commercial interests and targeted. Thus, interest groups without funding can hardly use the Internet to reach the general public. However, as a way to support women without resources to libraries and public documents, the Internet has opened new vistas, and can be an invaluable tool in structuring the content of awareness-raising efforts.

Changing the agenda – transforming what is considered political

A hallmark of the late political mobilisation of the late 1960s was the minting of new themes and techniques to get the new political messages across. The subject of politics was transformed by critical younger voices concerned with the environment, gender and social justice. For women, sexuality (contraception), bodies (abortion) and families were thrust onto the agenda, and new forms of communication were used to get them there. Not only was the definition of what was political changed, but it was also clear that women's issues would be put on the agenda by women, and that more women in politics was vital for true democracy.

1. A case in point was the 2000 World March of Women which culminated in Europe in Brussels, and was virtually ignored by the television channels and print media based in Belgium, despite being one of the biggest and most international demonstrations of the year.

2. For example, the *Meute* movement in France campaigns against sexist advertising, and organises its blitz demonstrations in front of stores through an e-mail list.

Changing the form of political communication: the 1960s and the 1970s

No longer were the vote, letters to the editor and strikes the only means of getting the message across. The expansion of mass media and the higher general literacy rate opened new channels to a wider public, including TV and visual means. The women's movement exploited these channels in the most original way. Humour was one of the most powerful weapons for getting attention. Through funny cartoons, songs and visual demonstrations such as women's parliaments, women's position or lack of position in society was lampooned. The peaceful demonstration, sit-in in the editor's office and march became art forms that were colourful and carnivalesque. They were parades of emancipatory freedom. The protest march was transformed by gender and sexuality activists into a show. Numbers swelled making them more and more effective. The women's and affiliated movements developed a new political communication vocabulary and style which can still be drawn upon today, as we will see below.

Problems with social movement tactics: getting attention today

Cartoons, jokes, and marches with special attention-getting devices are all designed to catch an increasingly world-weary media eye. The problem is that the novelty has worn off, and getting attention with a continuing theme becomes more difficult. The gender issue is not "new" and suffers from what Downs (1972) called the "issue attention cycle". If there is no simple solution to a problem, public interest simply ebbs away. Nonetheless, the new movement techniques remain solidly entrenched as tools in getting attention and gradually raising awareness. The contemporary successors of the political marches include gay pride parades and the "World march of women" in 2000 following five years after Beijing, which peaked in New York and culminated in Brussels with a broad gamut of colourful units from all parts of the globe and political spectrum. The women's gimmick to catch attention was a kilometre-long scarf knitted by women from all over Belgium (a successor to the famous Aids and other quilts of the 1970s – combining traditional female skills with a colourful protest message).

Much has changed since the 1970s, including the organisation of the women's movement. While the tactics may bear resemblance to those of the past at times, the women's movement has become more institutionalised (Ferree and Martin in Ferree and Martin 1995) and even professionalised, as has its communicative approach. In many countries the movement has become an established interest group (Threlfall 1996). Today professional public relations and communications specialists are enlisted (sometimes on a *pro bono* basis) to help movement messages compete with the commercial messages that bombard everyone. Not only have women's organisations changed, but also external circumstances. In northern Europe women are more in the labour force than ever before, and facing the ups and downs of the economy on an individual basis. Their free time for political engagement has become correspondingly more limited. In eastern Europe, new democratic institutions have been established. The role of interest groups in the

fledgling democracies is still in development. Both these factors (who is the woman, and what is the context?) have an impact on the kinds of awareness tactics that will be successful.

Some of the examples chosen below have been produced by the new professional organisations working for global gender balance. They solicit funding from sponsors and members to hire professional staff to get their message across. Examples of specialised non-governmental organisations with a gender awareness focus and a long track record of original campaigns include the Fawcett Society in the United Kingdom and the Women's Majority Foundation in the United States (<http://www.feminist.org>). The central European countries in democratic transition banded together in the Network of East-West Women to help create broader awareness-raising initiatives, while northern women are grouped in efforts such as *Femina Borealis* and *Femina Balticum*, and Mediterranean women working for women in decision-making are found in the Association des Femmes de l'Europe Méridionale (AFEM) including Spain, Greece, France, Italy and Portugal. Even national associations increasingly network across cultural borders to become more numerous and financially stable enough to compete in the communication circus in a professional manner.

Finding out what's happening: a scratch on the surface

Most of the surveys have had as a focus efforts made to increase the number of women elected representatives, and included multiple strategies. The focus in this section is on awareness-raising efforts in the broadest sense. This means also sensitising the public to a general need for more women decision-makers in all sorts of organisations including businesses and the public sector as well as government. As in the first part of this study, we selected interesting cases from information already gathered by the Council of Europe. We contacted the informants who had provided references to projects to find out more about the details of the projects as well as asking these experts known to be committed to gender equality issues and familiar with the scene in their country, to help find other interesting ways to make people aware of the need for more women in public leadership positions in politics, unions, and other organisations. This new wave of contacts occurred over a period of six weeks at the beginning of the summer 2001, using e-mail, fax and postal contact addresses. This booklet makes no claim to provide a complete inventory of what is happening in terms of awareness campaigns in the forty-three member states of the Council of Europe, but merely to provide a snapshot of the variety of activities and intensity of creativity today.¹ Some replied with either new projects or references to others who might be able to supply additional information. A number of these were followed up with telephone interviews to collect

1. Although the initial ambition of the project was to provide an analysis of the general state of affairs in awareness-raising, it quickly became apparent that the data were inappropriate for such an analysis, given the uneven response rate (despite three reminders) as well as the snowball selection of informants and projects, which increased the chance that projects of a similar nature were identified.

more in-depth information on the projects including their sponsors, timing and any evaluation of the problems faced and the eventual success of the effort.

Who to choose?

The limited time and scope of the survey, and the fact that many of the experts are involved in public decision-making, naturally affects the kinds of projects that were identified here. Not surprisingly, many of the activities for more women in decision-making had to do with influencing the public to elect more female representatives. Reaching out from Brussels with electronic means meant inevitably that the more sophisticated and better-funded efforts (with websites or someone to answer computer mail) dominate this inventory of what is being done today.

The field of political communication and of course advertising has become increasingly sophisticated, and this was also reflected in the submitted projects, where countries and groups worked with professional consultants who sometimes donated their time. Recommended projects were frequently campaigns with many different strategies and techniques to raise awareness, and thus it is hard to group them under one tactic or another. Many were notable for the combinations they chose. In the presentation of some of the cases, we specifically tried to identify particular elements in campaigns, but this may mislead, as often times there was a carefully considered whole. We looked especially for fresh approaches or fresh publics (the young, women from outside Europe, new democracies) and the campaigns used to address them.

A short typology of tactics

In what follows, as a general set of suggestions, we consider some of the many approaches that have been used by the gender movement to get attention and persuade. We do not focus on organisational techniques, although it can be argued that new ways of organising, such as the loose networks for specific purposes, can help support a widespread awareness campaign. Thanks to the very act of bringing different organisations together, awareness is generated, especially in areas where there are deep-seated social or linguistic conflicts over other issues.

The range of tactics that were used is very wide and we do not want to provide a textbook in marketing here. However, it may be useful to consider the following short-list of some of the possible ways that the awareness problem can be addressed and their most obvious advantages and disadvantages. Any organisation has first to consider what audience it wants to persuade, and then what resources it has at its command to find strategies that are both suitable and possible. Effectiveness often hinges on innovation and creativity in presenting the message. An additional consideration is the attractiveness and aesthetics of a project. A number of informants were particularly proud of how a campaign illustrated the beauty of a woman's touch.

Media sensitisation

Advantages. The media are opinion leaders and getting them to see women's presence as normal, and to react in positive ways helps shape the climate of opinion, and the level of tolerance. If the media co-operates, many other tactics become more successful.

Disadvantages. The media is fickle, and victim of consensus and stereotypical thinking. If gender and equality are "generally considered" old news, the media is hard to win. Decision-makers in media are also frequently male stakeholders who have something to lose and may not be willing to listen to gender balance arguments.

Campaigns for specific purposes

Advantages. There is a long track record for this sort of action and so activists do not have to reinvent the wheel. Such an effort has a clear goal with a definite beginning and end making it easy to evaluate, and they offer a range of possible expenditure levels.

Disadvantage. Such campaigns are necessarily finite, and primarily good for short-term goals rather than long-term consciousness.

Development of study material

Advantages. Educational material and curriculum offerings provide for a wide-spread distribution radius, and a long-range time perspective. They have a long shelf life, can be applied by various trainers and educators. Audiences in schools are slower moving targets than the general public, and by nature captive, even if they may be hard to motivate.

Disadvantages. Preparing good educational material is time-consuming, and requires a high level of professional and pedagogical skill.

Poster campaigns

Advantages. Such campaigns can be inexpensive, are flexible in terms of distribution, and good design can have unforgettable impact.

Disadvantages. Posters are finite and ephemeral and are sometimes defaced or taken away.

Film, radio and TV programmes and spots

Advantages. Ours is a media and pictorial society and images stick. The reach of the electronic media is extensive. Once a film is made it can be distributed by electronic means and re-shown, and thus can have a lasting and spreading effect.

Disadvantages. The high cost, in terms of production and distribution, means that electronic visuals are often only within the realm of public organisations who can get free time or donated services.

Postcard campaigns, e-mail petitions

Advantages. These offer a low threshold way for people to be involved, and are cheap in terms of effort on part of participant. Clever design can be an eye-opener, and when sent to the correct decision-makers in a concerted effort, indicate the extent of public support for a cause in a convincing manner.

Disadvantages. A good campaign requires group mobilisation to get sufficient postcards or messages in the mail to make a dent when trying to persuade decision-makers.

Demonstrations and marches

Advantages. A good theme, high participation and good agreements with the media for coverage can lead to a splash of attention with colourful pictures and empirically visible physical public support.

Disadvantage. The successful demonstration relies on large numbers of participants to be successful and a high if temporary level of commitment from volunteers. These efforts are very susceptible both to the vicissitudes of media coverage and the weather (!).

Study days, colloquiums, conferences

Advantages. A study day or conference offers depth, intensity and focus, and can be relatively inexpensive. If one relies on expertise, small scale and specialisation can encourage synergy and co-operation. These events produce print material and an easily digestible media event with press releases. Important guest speakers can heighten media visibility and impress opinion leaders.

Disadvantages. Exclusivity. Primarily suited to trying to reach opinion elite and those with time to devote such as professionals, such events are less well suited for general public unless there is also a newsworthy element and advantage in concentration of opinion elite in one place.

Distribution or sale of gadgets (buttons, pins, jewellery, hats, tee shirts, shopping bags)

Advantages. By using people as advertising hoardings and billboards gadgets are a good way to get a logo or message known.

Disadvantages. Buttons, which were among the most effective communication modes in the 1970s and remained a relatively permanent part of a persons' apparel, are no longer fashionable. Other products have a sliding scale of increasing

expense. There is a relatively limited amount of message that can be communicated by this means, so it is primarily useful for campaign recognition.

Aggression, protest, (violence) and public disturbances

Advantages. Protest seems to need to be increasingly strong to gather media attention as the examples in an increasingly violent world of demonstrations, as Seattle and Gothenburg have clearly shown.

Disadvantages. There is a widespread public disapproval of violent tactics, leading to loss of sympathy from potential supporters. Destroying shops, property or hindering freedom of movement inevitably alienates the general public.

CHAPTER 8

EXAMPLES OF EUROPEAN GENDER-AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Pre-election campaigns

Elections are a crucial opportunity to increase gender balance in political decision-making, and not surprisingly, many of the nominated initiatives were aimed at elections. Especially in southern and eastern Europe, the low political representation of women is a serious problem, and almost all of the countries continue to organise strong campaigns either through the political parties or from government.

Pari è di più/Equality is more – pre-election campaign 2001 (Italy)

A women's open eye observes the words "democracy", "justice", "politician" – all singular and feminine in Italian. Gradually the eye shuts, the word "power" appears on the screen with the words "masculine/singular" next to it. The message: "Italy has the lowest representation of women in parliament in the European Union (at around 9%). We need to do something about it". The spot with the colourful logo lasts only a few seconds, and heads up a website. It has a real attention-getting message. It was provided for free to women running for election across Italy as well as being shown for several weeks before the 2001 election. The National Commission for Parity and Equal Opportunities between Men and Women, a horizontal commission directly under the prime minister, took office near the end of 2000. Coming from all sectors of society (political parties, law, the unions and women's movements among other things), the members threw themselves into a campaign to get more women elected when the upcoming elections were announced. In an intensive month a full campaign was developed including the attention-getting spot and radio announcements, educational material for candidates, commitments from the top party leaders to provide conspicuously present women on their lists and a rock concert on International Women's Day.

Thanks to lobby work, the professional ad was donated by a leading advertising agency and the voice donated by one of Italy's more famous actresses, which kept the costs down. The ad was disseminated on national TV, but candidates could use the ad with their own picture and buy ad time on local TV as well. While the ad is an "eye catcher" in more ways than one, other aspects of this campaign are also noteworthy. Particularly interesting and long lasting was the preparation by

members of the commission of more than fifty pages of informative material on a number of social issues seen from a gender point of view. These information sheets on some twenty-two subjects from work to education and trafficking in women were distributed to all women candidates, as well as being available to the general public on the website <http://www.pariedipiu.com>. The research was donated by commission members.

“In theory, everyone agrees parity is important,” says Pia Locatelli, a lawyer on the commission. “But the effort was not successful, since less women got elected, and we only remained at the same level thanks to replacement of seats by female candidates.” But maybe it was thanks to the heightened consciousness that parties suggested women candidates to fill vacant seats, and certainly the intensive campaign can provide others with many good ideas for reaching out to schools, and even to fans in soccer stadiums with a clever quick message for parity.

Stability Pact Gender Task Force in seven South-East European countries:¹ local “Women can do it” (WCDI) projects

One of the most ambitious sets of awareness-raising efforts in recent years was carried out in the countries gathered in the Gender Task Force of the Stability Pact for South-East Europe, beginning in 1999. Shocked by the fact that the percentage of women in the region’s parliaments had fallen back to 7% without a single woman minister, leading women in the region demanded a role in change, and building democracy. An important focal point has been elections, trying to use synergy and the best practices developed elsewhere in Europe to improve electoral results. Each country developed programmes particular to its own local conditions. A total review is beyond the scope of this report (see Stability Pact 2001). However, a number of countries did see significant electoral success or the construction of important networks of knowledgeable women in a very brief period of time thanks to one particular effort, the “women can do it” technique. This had been developed by the Norwegian Labour Party and in part financed by Norwegian charities and government funds,² as well as finding support from the OSCE. The technique is a large-scale training tool for women politicians but also works as a pre-electoral awareness-raising technique. The specific feature of the approach is that a few trainer/activists are educated for the work, and like rings on water they train other trainers and activists to be aware of the potential of women in politics and to develop their skills. An unexpected side

1. The countries which provided the best documentation for this effort include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Romania and Serbia. Other active countries in the Stability Pact include Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia and Montenegro, while Kosovo sometimes enjoys observer status.

2. The different countries mobilised in the Gender Task Force put together wide-ranging funding arrangements depending on their previous contacts and skills and situations (see Stability Pact Gender Task Force, 2001 for full information). The “Women can do it” project was only one of the projects carried out within the task force between 1999-2001 and together the experiences provide a cocktail of present-day gender awareness-raising techniques around political representation.

effect has been that many of the trainers have themselves become political candidates. The more successful countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, thanks to the “Women can do it” initiatives and quota regulations for electoral lists, raised women’s representation in the state parliament from 2% (1996) to 26% in 1998 and representation in municipal councils from 5% in 1990 to 18.2% in 2000. They shared their trainers and strategies with their neighbours in international collaboration building crosscutting alliances.

Pre-election campaigns for vote for women (Croatia)

“Less than 5% of women are involved in local and county governments. Use your voice and vote for the lists that include many women.”

Pre-election spot with seven top women and the Croatian president.

“With this training we have succeeded in creating local, regional, and national networks between different organisations and so have a firm foundation for future work. And party leaders are including more women on their lists ... even the governmental Commission for Gender Equality would like to organise WCDI training for government staff!”

As an example of the local application of the “Woman can do it” (WCDI) campaign technique with pre-elections, we can look at the success in Croatia, where the campaign began in 1997 when five women did “Women can do it” training in Budapest and brought their ideas home to start training Croatian women. Each year more trainers have been trained and local training meetings have expanded, reaching small groups of women in many localities. Each trainer joins with another to agree to organise up to three local trainings in her or his own region. In the year 2001 running up to the local elections in May, some eighty separate local one-day training sessions reached women with basic knowledge about gender equality and the need for more women in politics. A particular matter for pride is that the local training actions were also supported by male politicians and mayors.

Action was organised on many fronts besides the WCDI training. Running up to the elections, women’s groups such as BaBe (Be active, Be emancipated, see p. 65) as well as the Centre for Women’s Studies also organised seminars and workshops to train women in debating techniques, public appearance and public speaking. There was an attempt by opposition NGOs to get a gender equality quota bill through the Croatian Parliament in 1999. In the national elections of 2000, representation in the national parliament leapt from 7.8% to 21%. The local elections of 2001 saw an increase from 4.25% of municipal representatives to 20% in one election. A large proportion of the elected women had attended training sessions.

They were also supported by a media campaign with products including shopping bags and badges and posters and leaflets and a TV spot. The gadgets were distributed through a bus tour in twenty-three cities in twelve days, accompanied by a band, which helped increase media attention. The informants are very positive

about this approach, as it has wide spin-off effects. The requests for training have grown as well as the need for more advanced political training using translated versions of the training material. The various active NGOs were successful in attaining finance from a wide variety of sources for the combined activity including the following sponsors: the governments of Austria, Norway, Italy, the Olof Palme International Centre, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the OSCE mission in Croatia, the city of Osijek and the Croatian Government.

“Women voters can do it” and the SEF Foundation (Equal Opportunities For Women) and local networks for electoral mobilisation (Romania)

Romania sank to the bottom of the European league in the representation of women after 1990 and has had dramatic socio-economic difficulties that make survival itself problematic. Local organisations such as SEF in the city of Iasi began in the mid-1990s to try to support women’s efforts to raise their standing. SEF, for example, began trying to train women politicians on campaign tactics and to work for parity in the Romanian Parliament and spread their training programme to the Moldova region and Bucharest in 1996. The early efforts were funded by the Women in Development Division of the United Nations Development Programme, project “Liberty” of Harvard University and the Soros Foundation. Their efforts continued into a Phare financed training programme in 1996, and a programme dedicated to women as essential participants in Romania’s future, financed in part by the Irish government and the Open Society Foundation.

However, the initiative of the Stability Pact Gender Task Force took these raw materials and professionalised them, aiming at voters particularly in the lead up to the election of 2000. The six-month campaign (June 2000-January 2001) was called “Women voters can do it” and had a nation-wide spread at the local level. There was significant opposition and direct sabotage from powerful men, to the extent that the fledgling coalition for more women in politics eventually disbanded, only a few months after the start. Ultimately the project tried to reach all of Romania’s forty-two electoral districts with a series of three actions in each locale: a meeting with party heads, a meeting with voters (especially women) and a media event/press conference. To organise this, other local NGOs were mobilised. One positive outcome of the effort was an expansion of local and national networks. A written agreement with the state radio helped guarantee media coverage. To do this local version of the “Women can do it” project, a small grant from the Italian foundation A. I. Zaninoni (20 452 euros) was essential, but even more important was the volunteer work from the local NGOs. Ultimately twenty-eight districts were covered. The electoral results were more positive for women, if not dramatic. The percentage of the Deputy Chamber went from 7% to 10%, and the Senate from 2% to almost 9%. But the effect of being noticed has been reached, according to the Iasi based informant: “As we had made a lot of enemies and trouble after the general elections, we think the initiative has been

very successful!” And the involvement has grown, from a time when only five or six women carried the effort to a nation-wide network.

“Women in parliaments” campaign – central and eastern Europe (Hungary, Croatia and Slovenia)

“We are aware that women MPs alone cannot make changes, they need support, we need to find out what coalitions women should form to be effective in their work.”

Making women in political functions stronger and more visible can also contribute to awareness. In new parliaments, there is a key role for women, but since women are often also new to parliamentary politics and very much in the minority, this can be a problem. This project was designed to improve the work of women MPs in three countries and assisting in the formation of women’s coalitions in parliament to drive women’s issues more effectively. It began in the summer of 2001 and will run three years. The project (financed by East-East Open Society Institute programmes) has a number of activities. A collection of statistics will help demonstrate that the representation of women is still low, and with the evolution of where they are located in parliaments and monitoring of the present situation. Secondly, an analysis will be carried out on how women are doing presently – how long they speak, what topics they speak on and third, how effective have they been in getting proposals passed, and in rallying support from men and women. Workshops will be held to present the experiences and compare between the three countries, which share similar histories and are all in line to join the European Union. This material is being used to help develop strategies for political action within parliament, training for new women politicians as well as to sensitise the media and to build cross-national women’s alliances.

Training and educational efforts

Long-term awareness can be built only by an informed general public, and education is central in this. Curricular efforts are somewhat beyond the scope of this booklet, but changing textbooks and including information about gender history and inequalities as part of basic information all citizens must know is essential to creating a society that takes gender balance in decision-making as part of the fundamental quality criteria for democracy. To carry out this task requires informed teachers and trainers.

Audur: creating wealth with women’s vitality – training and special events: girls’ leadership camp and Daughter’s Day at Work (Iceland)

“Audur was the first woman settler in Iceland, and the word is both an Icelandic woman’s first name and the noun in Icelandic meaning wealth. Women have a competence that is not used and is necessary for the financial development of Iceland.”

This is a project with many meanings and the name reflects it. It is a woman-centred project, aimed at women’s awareness of their role in creating wealth

through better participation on the labour market and especially in business, but it sensitises businesses about the wealth of women as well. It started in 1999 (with some inspiration from the United States) and today is focusing more and more on reaching women before they reach the job market, and orienting them to other possibilities. Audur is sponsored by the business community (for example the main newspaper prints their ads without charge) and is housed at the University of Reykjavik. It works with paid staff to organise many awareness-raising projects about women in business. One of the most media-friendly aspects of the efforts has been the national Daughter's Day at Work where parents bring their daughters to see their work place. Companies have responded very positively, and receive good publicity. They organise a whole day of activities with special events for the daughters on Daughter's Day at Work informing the girls about the company, what it does and what they can do there. There was some opposition, as people thought there should also be a "sons at work day". It only took a few advertisements to get companies interested in doing this effort, and now the initiative will continue independently of Audur. The project is successful, as it will be taking off on its own and spreads to more companies every year.

Another important project whose success is harder to measure are the training camps organised for girls aged 13 to 16 who win an essay contest on "My dream company/job". Here girls are given an idea of what business jobs are really like and how they can accomplish their dreams (through for example networking) and think of themselves as leaders. They role play in their dream company and learn some concepts about finance and marketing. The project is extremely popular with parents, and has experienced no opposition as it builds the girls' self esteem. It is hard to evaluate the project until the first students start entering the labour market, but Audur is becoming quite well known. Interest from women in learning about the business world and higher functions is bigger than expected.

Mainstreaming gender equality into teaching (Latvia)

*"The main opposition came from teachers!
Our historical experience in Latvia
about gender equality creates obstacles to
openness and deeper understanding of these questions"*

A respect for gender balance has to be part of the everyday values of citizens, and one cannot begin too early to create awareness. European curricula are still weak in providing information about gender rights and equality issues. Nowhere is this more a problem than in central and eastern Europe where curricula have to be totally revamped to reflect new concerns with democracy. Gender issues are often left out. In Latvia a one-year effort to design teaching materials, including gender information, met some unexpected problems. First, the participants discovered that not much work had been done on equal opportunity material for schools in other countries, so they needed to design much of their own material from scratch, and second, it turned out that teachers needed to be convinced to use the material.

The project, supported by the Open Society Foundation (United States), began with research on how gender roles are presently represented in teaching and the preparation of sample good practices in gender sensitive materials. Authors, teachers, mass media and the Ministry of Education and Science met and began a publicity campaign. There will also be a conference for teachers with a self-test to evaluate their present practices. The final phase will be an evaluation of gender sensitive examples of educational materials. The project is already leading to new initiatives. For example, the Ministry of Education and Science is beginning to consider the need for indicators to show the extent of treatment of gender equality as part of the evaluation process of the general quality of educational curricula and materials.

Getting the men involved: gender sensitivity training for male administrators by men for men (Germany and the European Union)

The audience for gender awareness-raising is often other women or the general public. Yet there is a widespread general male support for a better situation for women which has been little mobilised. The Scandinavian countries began some ten years ago looking at the other side of gender equality, the need for men to become more equal in a number of areas where they were short-changed, such as care and the combination of work and family, and to become aware not of the threats of equality to their established positions, but rather of the mutual benefits to be gained by gender balance in decision-making. The problem is that given the years of aggressive, if necessary campaigning by women for better treatment, many men now turn a deaf ear. How to repackage the message to find a more willing audience has been the question. Training top male officials, supported by the top power holders is a novel technique in gender awareness, and most novel is that the message is carried by another man, preferably one exuding unquestionable masculinity and establishment power.

The European Parliament and several of the *Länder* in Germany have begun to echo a project initiated by a Swedish prime minister. They train public sector leaders in how to improve cross-sex communication and make the workplace friendlier to women, promoting a quicker advancement and more friendly organisational culture for women at the top. The European Parliament organised workshops led by a male professor in gender studies. The top level of the administration focused on identifying the barriers to women's advancement and led the men themselves to identify the best strategies for women's advancement. The male consultant identified the need for hard data in the organisation to profile the differentials in wages, hiring and promotion, which are hidden in present procedures.

In Germany and Sweden, the sessions also presented the objective position of women, destabilising the myth that "women have it all" with clear, rational statistics on the position of women in relation to women's educational and personal status.

Publications

Portable sources of information, facts and arguments have still not been replaced by the Internet, although the Internet certainly helps in widening their distribution. The process of making a publication, and the ultimate distribution of it remain important techniques of communication, and we highlight here three different types of effort.

European Women's Lobby: "Mobilising young women for equality in Europe" and The young women's guide to gender equality in Europe

Where do you go to find information to fight back against stereotypes? Young (feminist) women discovering discrimination wanted good arguments addressing their concerns to convince their peers about the need for gender equality. The European Women's Lobby (EWL) brought together fifteen women under 30 from the European Union member countries in 1999 to see what things young women wanted from European integration. Soon the need for information about Europe in terms and themes that interest younger people was clear. The network began to create a guide "to raise awareness and serve as a lobbying resource for young women in Europe" (EWL 2001: 2) using input from all the national co-ordinators who in their turn brought together national groups to discuss which themes should be included and how they should be treated. The guide describes the situation in Europe today on each theme, provides European statistics, and presents the legislative situation in layperson's terms, before adding a list of demands/recommendations made by the network. Ultimately work on the guide ended up in the "Young women's manifesto". One of the central demands is the promotion of more women in decision-making in all fields, including labour, media, education and health. These demands are backed up with the statistical information about the present balance in decision-making in each of the sectors. The feedback from young women made a guide that also has an eye for issues affecting non-European women, the disabled and lesbians.

The two European meetings between the national co-ordinators were sponsored by the European Commission, the Portuguese Minister for Equality and the Portuguese, Greek and Swedish EWL co-ordinators, but all the work except the design of the brochure was done by the young women volunteers, in a collaborative process. They also translated the work into their native languages for the national meetings. E-mail was the main mode of communication. Making the guide fun to read and look at required additional European Union funding, but everyone agreed that would be the only way to be sure the guide would be used.

The guide is now distributed to schools, equal opportunities offices, and women's organisations and has been translated into all the languages of the EU. Thanks to the guide, more and more younger women are getting involved in the EWL, and a gender aware network of young women now exists and their demand that gender

equality curricular material be included in school and teacher training may become a reality.

Booklet project – What is parity democracy after all? (Portugal)

“But what is parity? Why is it different from a quota?”

Here is a question everyone is asking. Having some simple and convincing answers at hand is a wonderful boon. The gist of the UN Platform for Action (Beijing 1995) is that power must be shared equally. That can only be read as parity. The non-governmental Aliança para a democracia paritária (Alliance for parity democracy) produced a small aggressive, controversial and useful guide with answers to all the “most frequently asked questions” about parity democracy and the need for gender equality in decision-making. Increasingly international organisations and women’s groups are working to achieve parity, but the concept may seem complicated, as well as the reasons for it. There was a real need for a clear guide with many arguments to persuade, and the alliance provided one in 1999. It was so popular that it was translated into English and French with the support of the Portuguese Commission for Equality and for Women’s Rights. Short booklets (fifty-five pages) like these are extremely useful for organisers, and this one could easily be adapted to the situations in many countries. It begins with the question “If men and women are different, why should they have equal rights?” and concludes with a summary of the national and international agreements on equality between men and women, and a few indicators of the present state of social equality between the sexes.

Femina Borealis/Kvinneuniversitetet Nord Book project: “Women in a northern landscape” (Finland, Norway)

Making a publication together has the obvious advantage of a useful educational and promotional project, as well as the hidden advantage of bringing people together around a concrete project, and creating lasting ties and networks. With the changed political context of post-socialist Europe, new regions have been created where possibilities for networks did not exist before. In rural areas and the far north, women fight against under development and for recognition of their specific contributions, under conditions that cross national borders.

The Northern Feminist University (Kvinneuniversitetet Nord) founded in 1991, has found its major mission in raising consciousness about the role of women and women’s ways in preserving the ecological stability of the rural north across the Barents region of Finland, Sweden, Norway and the Russian Federation. Although they have numerous interesting awareness projects including those dedicated to increasing participation of women in planning issues, one of the most notable projects was a book that aimed to raise consciousness about the place of women in leading this development. The book project was dedicated to documenting women’s potential in the north, from Canada to the Russian Federation, a northern global undertaking to create new images of northern women. The initiative came

from the network Femina Borealis founded in 1993 (100 researchers and others dedicated to gender issues in the region). It was supported by the Barents Secretariat and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which paid for the interviews, professional writing, travel, translation and costs of the publication (around 250 000 Norwegian kroner).

The editor travelled across the region and presents the contrasts in twenty-five women's lives in the region, to help illustrate the necessity of women's presence and contributions to the survival of the region. The women in the north have been able to distribute the book to a wide circle of global feminists thanks to the World Women's Conference in Tromsø.

The problem with publications done outside the normal publication circle is distribution. Although the reception of the book was very positive and it has been translated into English, reaching out to academic libraries and others interested in aiding the empowerment of rural northern women has been difficult, as the women's organisations are not in a commercial media circuit. The book is primarily available from the university and does not reach the correct wider international channels that needed to become aware of the potential of women in rural regions.

Media sensitisation campaigns

Cultivating gender awareness and sympathy for feminist goals is essential to achieving sensitive representation in the press. The following campaigns were designed to persuade journalists and editors that their coverage of gender issues is sometimes less than neutral, or even biased, by using empirical observation. They hoped to show the importance of journalists in bringing new and important information about democracy to the general public.

“Protagonists in local power” (Portugal)

Making local women politicians visible to citizens turned out to be a major task for Regimprensa, which publishes the local newspaper *Noticias da Amadora* in suburban Lisbon. Suspecting there were few women, and then actually finding them and letting the public know about it turned out to be a hard job which led to the publication of eight little descriptive monographs on the different municipalities in the Lisbon area and a longer monitoring of the evolution of representation in local elections between 1997 and 2001. Especially noteworthy was the insertion of a monthly newsletter in the newspaper called *Igualdeza* with a cartoon heroine named Eugénia, a kind of Everywoman in local politics. The newsletter appeared throughout 1997. The newsletter acted as a kind of an alarm bell for the low state of representation, and led to checking up the situation in other towns. It was some eight pages long each time and presented the female candidates running for office plus the plans for equal opportunities initiatives and sources for more information. It was the first such newsletter in Portugal, and acted as media sensitisation since

it provided coverage for the local less media-genic women who were usually rendered invisible in the political press.

Importantly, the project ended up having wider democratic implications, as the editors discovered how difficult it was to obtain data on who actually was holding local office, as well as presenting the functions and operations of different local government offices in an accessible manner. The project was financed by a number of sources including the European Programme for Equal Opportunities (IV 1996-2000), Regimpresa and the mayoralties involved in the survey as well as a bank and a non-profit organisation. Out of it came a small handbook as well, *Protagonists in local power: when the cause of women is the main issue*. This groups all the results from the greater Lisbon municipalities, as well as statistics over representation in the different levels of local government. This was so popular that it went into a second updated printing in 2000 and is available in English, French and Spanish.

Media, politics and parity (Switzerland)

“We used to get reactions like ‘it’s not our job to think about the equality of women and men, media are strictly neutral, media are not allowed to promote women or gender equality’...”

Media professionals are open to social justice causes, but there is nothing like speaking their language to get the point across. When women complain about insufficient coverage, journalists defend themselves by saying they do not want to falsify reality. But with facts and figures, the hardest nosed newsperson may be convinced that they are not always objective when it comes to covering women in decision-making. Swiss National TV (SRG-SSR idée suisse) in equal participation with the Federal Commission on Women’s Issues commissioned a study on the coverage of women candidates before the federal election in autumn 1999. The goal was to sensitise the media and political parties about the continuing biased treatment of female candidates and to further promote equal opportunities. The results demonstrated the point. While women made up 35% of the candidates, they made up only 18% of the speaking time offered candidates, with one channel only giving 8% of the time to women. Radio did slightly better than television, with the national radio chains performing the most adequately. There was wide variation in fairness both between the different channels and in the different linguistic regions of Switzerland, further demonstrating the need to tailor awareness messages to different publics. This was a useful awareness-raising technique, as the SRG-SSR idée suisse channels will definitely review their electoral coverage before the next elections. It also demonstrates the long-term nature of sensitisation efforts. This was the second time such a study was done, and the results were not surprising, but now the stations accept that they have to do something.

Protest and petition actions

Although getting people onto the streets is more difficult than in the 1970s, another tactic does seem to have increasing success, and that is the use of post-card and petition actions. The latest twist on this is the provision of postcards on the World Wide Web, which protesters can print out and send. And of course petition actions have also taken on new scope thanks to electronic communication. These techniques mobilise younger women, and interest organisations such as the US Third Wave Foundation for 15-30 year-old women (<http://www.thirdwave-foundation.org>), and the Fawcett Society case are among the more colourful pioneers of trying to keep gender balance goals alive by spreading clever graphics through the mail.

The Fawcett Society “Where are the women?” (United Kingdom)

“The biggest myth about women’s equality is that we don’t need to fight for it any more”

Fawcett Society

The Fawcett Society is the fastest growing national campaign organisation hoping to create more gender equality in Great Britain. It has worked for women’s rights for more than 130 years. It survives on donations and money from the Fawcett Trust to pay the small staff of five to seven which works across parties to raise awareness. The problem it identifies with awareness these days is the “myth” that “women have it all” which is especially prevalent among the young.

The campaign “Where are the women?” aimed to highlight women’s real position in politics, media, health and education looking at many issues including the under-representation of women. The colours were bright and glossy, fuchsia pink and campy. Packages were available to everyone through ordering on the Internet. In terms of new gimmick, a credit-card sized protest card and a postcard were produced to send to the media, organisations and business that restricted women, such a men-only golf clubs, restrictive bars and companies that do not promote women. Especially important targets were the top companies who have only one or two women on their boards. Quizzes such as “Where are the women? Do you know?” were organised locally. The campaigns work not only at the local level through networks of activists with creative ideas, but also lobbies business and parliament, and continues national campaigns especially at election time. Another interesting continuing awareness tactic was the “Selection watch” that published figures on the gender composition of electoral lists by parties, and provided regional statistics for local activists on the website.

“Go out and be active”, “More women in parliament” and “Equal” media initiatives (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)

“Doing door-to-door activities was not easy, women were put in danger, the posters were taken down, and materials taken away ... it was the period of power cuts and New Year’s commotion and we managed in different ways, very often around tables with only candle light.”

A wide variety of actions including almost all of the tactics possible in campaign awareness-building were engaged to raise the participation of women in public life and awareness during the year 2000 leading up to the elections in September and December in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The initiatives were supported by a wide variety of international donors.¹

“Go out and be active” (Goba) aimed to address women as a specific group and empower women to go beyond the dominant political apathy. Thus it was not just a “go out and vote” campaign but the beginning of promotion of long-term social change beginning with the elections. The elections were the spark plug, and since the notice of elections was at the last minute, speed in campaigning was an issue, and this influenced the choice of a blitz of tactics, including billboards, stickers, leaflets buttons, promotional gadgets such as hats, bags and T-shirts, and radio jingles, direct action, press releases and a website. It lasted five months and was driven by a wide coalition of existing networks of women’s groups, and other NGOs, but it was not connected to any of the political parties at all. Especially the direct actions are inspirational, based in the big cities for maximal media attention, and combining concerts with for example a laundry line crossing the main square of Belgrade with posters and leaflets from all the participating women’s groups, co-operating under the same logo. Happenings and performances were also organised in other cities, and the campaign was among the first to get their poster up after elections were announced. The female turnout was increased to equal that of men, but the first round of elections only led to 5% of seats in the federal parliament for women.

The campaigns continued with a more narrow focus on raising the percentage of women in the of the Serbian Parliament to at least 30%, in a second phase called “More women in parliament” aimed at the political parties themselves. Only a few of the democratic opposition fulfilled their commitment to present lists with a high number of women, but this group did well, so that the final percentage of the Republic parliament was 11%. One-third of the strategies focused on the low cov-

1. This case description incorporates material from a number of different initiatives carried out during 2000-01 in the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, although not all, as other groups were also active including “Voice of difference” in Belgrade carried out by the “Group for the promotion of women’s political rights”. It is impossible to do justice to the surge of women’s activity during this period. Among the donors involved include Swedish Kvinna till Kvinna, the Stability Pact Gender Task Force, the Swiss Foreign Ministry, the Canadian Embassy, but given the widespread network of associations, many other donors may have supported the volunteers to pay for production costs of promotional materials, electronic consultancy, etc.

erage of women in electronic and print media, where women candidates were invisible in the federal elections. "Equal" mobilised professional women journalists in regional centres to achieve a higher visibility of women through synchronised actions. Professional journalists in each town helped organise activities so that women could be clearly presented in the December-February 2001 period leading up to the election and formation of the government. The three regional coordinators all had professional journalistic experience which allowed them to conclude direct agreements with editors, and they could serve as consultants to get women guests onto radio and TV. The Novi Sad group interviewed people on markets asking, "why aren't there enough women in politics" and made a short documentary aired on several of the local TV stations.

Conferences, networks and other initiatives

Organising a conference provides a focus for media coverage as well as important face-to-face interchange, which can later be maintained by other means of communication. Thematic conferences on women and leadership issues can showcase and remind people that there are interesting women leaders, as well as providing peak moments for organisations to bring their products and ideas to a larger forum and share good practice. Formal networks with a public face are also important in awareness-raising, as they can bring the message further afield, and are easily expandable. They also provide a framework in which groups with differing agendas can meet around common cause, as in the case of the Nytkis organisation of Finnish women's associations for joint action or the Vrouwen Overleg Committee in Flanders. However, keeping a formal network in the public eye is a difficult job, as it requires personnel or funding. For example, The Network of East-West Women has a promising website providing addresses to women's movements in many of the countries in eastern Europe (<http://www.neww.org>) but does not always have the means to keep it up to date.

Women's Information Network – promoting women in politics (Russian Federation)

"One of the main problems in Russia is that women do not vote for other women"

Five regions,¹ five teams of representatives for different women's organisations have been working intensively using most of the tactics of awareness-raising since 1999. There were flyers, public demonstrations, and the "From door to door" seminar series. They have worked with the electorate, trained candidates and brought them together for conferences to make them aware of women's interests and the gender problems that need to be put on the agenda, and finally especially focused on political parties to get women better places on electoral lists. The network also

1. Irktysk (big city), Petrozovodsk (capital of Karelia), St Petersburg, Dubna (small city), and Pskov, a city deep in the Russian Federation. The cities will be expanded to fifteen in the final year of the project 2001-02.

publishes a magazine called *Women's Rights in Russia: Law and Practice*, which presents news from the project. The British Council initially financed their work, and it is now being supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom. The network has mobilised well-known people, so there is very little open opposition to the project, and the informant feels that there is public understanding that the lack of women in decision-making may be a reason for bad solutions for social problems. The initiative needs to spread to more regions, and hopes to find additional financing. Many women who have worked in the teams have become candidates themselves, and some now work in organising and observing election procedures. There is a gradual shift in public awareness and appreciation about women in man's spheres, but dramatic electoral results will take a long time.

WoMen in democracy conferences (Lithuania and Iceland)

"How to improve both life of the state and life in the state and strengthen a multi-stranded and comprehensive participation of women ..."

2nd Conference on WoMen and Democracy

The dawn of a new millennium saw societies in transition with deep problems in the representation of women. Under the stimulation of international organisations and the United States, together with the Nordic Council, women from the Baltic states and the Nordic states were invited to present projects that would increase gender balance in decision-making and the participation of women in democratic processes.

The conference held in Reykjavik in 1999 stimulated an outburst of energy and brought the smaller countries together in joint projects. The synergy from the conference was so positive that a second conference was organised in June 2001 in Vilnius, Lithuania, with 500 participants from the countries around the Baltic, Scandinavia and guests from the United States, Russian Federation, Germany and Poland. The face-to-face interaction and thematic workshops were intended to encourage more synergy and creativity and bring people together to learn about the positive experiences and lessons from activities in the last years as well as stimulating new efforts and joint projects. An important new direction in the second conference was the inclusion of men. Workshops on the most important issues in gender balance in democracy including women and entrepreneurship, leadership skills, the role of governments, NGOs and media, men, the social partners and youth and minorities all worked towards both recommendations for the future and new projects. The conference was supported by the governments of Lithuania and the richer countries, as well as the Nordic Council, LNK TV, Ziniu Radio and others, and full information on the themes of workshops and participants is available on a very complete website (see at the back of the book) which can serve to inform those who were not present and provide names and information points.

Total parity movement – “Tomorrow parity” (France)

“If parity has become a household word in France in such a short time, it is because it captures the sense of French women’s renewed determination to participate in public life and decision making”.

Haase-Dubosc 1999

One of the most successful transformations of attitudes about gender equality in Europe in the last ten years is definitely the campaign to require parity in elected government in France, which began in the early 1990s. The power of social movements to transform public discourse has seldom been so convincingly demonstrated. And this transformation led to a constitutional reform in 1999, which enables the French Parliament to pass legislation providing for positive action measures.

The reform was embodied in the law of 6 June 2000 under which, in list-based elections, the difference between the number of female and male candidates on each list must be no more than one. For single-ballot elections, women and men must be presented alternately all the way down the list, while in elections held over two rounds, each group of six candidates in order of presentation on the list must contain an equal number of women and men. In legislative elections (which are single-member majority elections held over two rounds), there will be financial penalties for parties that do not present 50% of female candidates.

The municipal elections of March 2001, which provided the first test of the law, showed that it is an effective means of producing equality. Over 38 000 women gained seats on the municipal councils of towns with more than 3 500 inhabitants (which were the only ones concerned by the law), representing 47.5% of the elected representatives. This was a significant leap forward, almost doubling the equivalent figure for 1995 (27.5%) (Sineau 2001:194).

The movement for parity was based on a network of associations including the grouping “Tomorrow parity” of more than 2 million affiliated women and the women in parties and trade unions that worked in many different ways to move the debate on the representation of women in politics to a consideration of the logic of parity. They were needed to federate groups of many different origins to organise colloquies, meetings and informal pressure on candidates in connection with important elections such as that to the presidency (1995).

Although grounded in many years of feminist debate, the movement began with a manifesto signed by equally many men and women,¹ a demand which seemed in French political reality utopian (when the representation of women was second to bottom in the European Union). Nonetheless, a population which was already warm for parity in 1994 was two years later overwhelmingly in favour of the parity law in 1996 (86% Haase-Dubosc 1999: 188). This was surely due to the concerted

1. The figure is 289 women and 288 men, symbolically the same number as deputies in the National Assembly Manifesto of the 577 for a Parity Democracy 1993, Haase-Dubosc, 1999: p. 185.

debate in which intellectuals wrote books, the feminist movement itself took on new life in exploring the implications of parity for notions of gender equality, and meetings and political mobilisation of party militants into parity militants took place. The French example is multi-stranded, but indicates first that in western Europe, years of feminist action have made the general population sympathetic to equality issues, and second, that with an important project, large numbers of people can still be mobilised to use the old tactics of awareness for new issues.

Eva's Ark – Women's intercultural forum: bringing the new Europeans into decision-making (Denmark)

"It is so annoying that every time they need an opinion about an intercultural issue they go to a male representative of the community ... This is the third stage, for women who have been here and taken the first steps of learning the language ... how can we make sure that the new women get their place in society and political life?"

Providing a place where women from all cultures can meet, and making contacts with Danish women politicians willing to mentor and provide advice is one of the things that the non-profit association Eva's Ark does to strengthen women and get them ready for fuller participation in society. In many parts of Europe, women's organisations are now reaching out to the "new" women, to help them raise their voice in society, and this is just one example which points to the need of working on the importance of gender balance for broader publics than national citizens. Eva's Ark has been working for three years, and recently got a grant from the Danish Ministry of the Interior (four years) to support their activities of providing meeting space ("a grass roots women-friendly centre on a women's premises"), training and regular informal sessions on themes such as preparing a curriculum vitae, getting job interviews and political decision-making for women from all the different cultures, now living in Denmark. Centrally located, it provides a safe ground for women who could not speak in public before. It takes up themes such as globalisation and democracy, and the question of gender in European migration in training courses and in larger conferences.

Longer-range projects include building up a database of knowledgeable women from all cultures who can provide advice to policy makers. It works along the model of people's education found in much of Scandinavia, a kind of life-long learning to build up skills for the varying clientele (from Somalian refugees to second generation eastern European economic migrants).

Best company award scheme (Sweden/Euromarket) and Ericsson European equal opportunity awards (Telecom/Ericsson)

"Everybody in Sweden is tired of equal opportunities – it's important to have something positive, fresh and new..."

As European companies merge and form multinational units, the issue of diversity and using the best talent becomes more pressing. The new leadership of the global

Swedish company Ericsson felt embarrassed by a continuing lack of women in leadership roles. A Spanish idea to generate creativity to solve the problem was launched.¹ In 1999 the company began to offer an award for the best initiatives to use the talents of women in the company. In the first year, there were very few suggestions, so just starting up the programme was not enough. However, the new leadership of Ericsson pushed the idea that it was time for a change, and by the next year the number of nominations for awards had almost tripled, and now the company is pursuing the project from within. To carry out the communication about the award and the kinds of ideas that might be suitable, ranging from mentoring to flexible arrangements, a consultant was hired, who played a crucial role in contacting managers as well as human resource managers to spread the idea, using newsletters, but also personal interviews with key figures. "I just went around and talked to all the ones that people said were 'the stoppers' to get them on board!" Last year the winner was Croatia, and when other managers saw the press attention as well as the kudos donated by the top brass, they saw there was something in it for them.

Offering awards is a positive and inexpensive way to recognise achievers and perhaps motivate others to join in as well. The strategy has been used to reward city councils with balanced representation in their government, and units within organisations and firms that come close to reaching targets of gender balance. This project is interesting because it also worked on getting input from women workers about what makes a good company and using internal channels (the intra- and internets, company newsletters with regular articles, and personalised letters) to get this information to influence policy.

1. The Spanish equal opportunities office has been recognising good practising companies with a seal of approval.

CONCLUSIONS

This little booklet suggests that the story of working together to change gender balance is not concluded. Countries progress at different speeds. Different types of organisations vary in their ability to change the composition of decision makers. While the Nordic countries may take the lead in both results and initiatives, it is exciting to see that all over Europe, the right combination of inspiration and individuals can still make a difference. Further, it is increasingly clear there is no turning back from the inclusion of women, even if the way ahead is bumpy.

We first reviewed the progress in attempting to influence gender balance in different types of organisations in society, and saw that while there has been considerable progress in politics and in public administration, other sectors of society still have much to do. To reach this goal, many approaches are necessary. A major conclusion is that awareness-raising has not gone out of fashion. Projects to convince leaders and the general public of the need for balanced representation in political and public decision-making are to be found in all areas of Europe, for nowhere has the goal of parity at the top been reached. The cases here provide a small sample of the variety of activity today. It would be unfair to generalise or conclude too much about the state of affairs across Europe on the basis of this information. In the process of interviewing women from all over Europe, however, a few considerations and trends did appear that show that working for gender balance today is different than in the women's movement of the last century.

Classifying a project as one or another type is increasingly difficult, as those working on the problem are more sophisticated in their analysis of the roots of the problem and try to address the issue with combinations of approaches. Isolated strategies seemed to be the exception today, and most of the examples were part of a string of initiatives.

Since the problem of the low representation of women is complicated and recalcitrant, and seems to require a combined strategy going beyond awareness alone, more and more of the activists are joined together in informal and more formalised networks to increase their impact and resources. These networks can include public organisations and government working together with non-governmental associations, educators and even the private sector. One of the most optimistic signs is the proliferation of cross-national and regional initiatives so that the front end costs of developing a project or teaching material can be shared across a wider public.

Given the more sophisticated analysis of the problem, and the larger-scale ambitions in terms of target publics, as well as the more cosmopolitan nature of political communication today, projects have become more expensive than in the early

days of feminism. Movement communicators have professionalised and charge fees for their work. While this means that campaigns can compete with other polished offerings in the media landscape, it presents significant problems for grass roots activists.

Although we seldom had details about the actual total cost of initiatives (in part, because as noted above, they were frequently embedded in larger more complex and long-term endeavours) two trends are clear. Initiatives are more expensive than in the past, and seldom rest on the efforts of volunteers alone. Secondly, combinations of sponsors are necessary. Seldom was a project totally financed by one sponsor. This was especially the case for election initiatives in eastern Europe, but even the Nordic countries relied on consortiums of international finance and local contributions to support some of the costs of their efforts.

Targets

Blanket projects for a general public seem to be becoming rarer. A number of specific target groups are receiving increasing attention, depending on the country. Older women are sometimes targets in the new democracies, while across Europe young women and their attitudes are a cause for concern. Finally, men are being approached with new techniques, and sympathetic supporters identified to carry the message to other men.

All of the activists hope that ultimately, the increased professionalism in awareness-raising and the variety of techniques that bloom in Europe today may lead to their own obsolescence. The task of changing norms and understandings is a daunting one, but the progress over the last century shows that it is not a “mission impossible”. From suffragettes chained to fences to bare-bellied pro-choice protestors to the cyber-babes of Zagreb, the techniques have changed, and luckily the distance to the goal seems to be shrinking.

In some places the tipping point has been reached in terms of increased awareness of the importance of gender balance and vigilance to see that it is maintained. Today, there are more resources than ever before to help people understand the context of gender inequality, its history and its specificities. This knowledge helps us generate better and more appropriate methods to challenge it. The range of instruments and pathways is considerable. There is no lack of good ideas, smart practices and enthusiastic, experienced people to provide advice. This guide is just one of the available tools to help concerned organisation members find each other to share experiences on strategies that work. People who want to make decision-making better will find more allies than ever. We hope this guide can be an extra help in winning support and that it stimulates both analysis and action.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following is a list of sources, contact information, websites, publications and so forth, for those interested in learning more about the women's initiatives covered in this guide. For some of them, very little information was available. For further information or help in contacting people involved in these initiatives, contact Karen Palisser, Division Equality between Women and Men, Directorate General of Human Rights, Council of Europe, F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, e-mail: karen.palisser@coe.int.

Chapter 2 – Reaching gender balance in political parties, p. 29

The parity parliament (Portugal)

Council of Europe expert Isabel Romão.

Parties working together (Iceland)

Council of Europe document “An increased share for women in politics”; Office for Gender Equality, Pósthússtraeti 13 101 Reykjavik, Iceland, (tel.: 354 552 7420/fax 354 562 7424; the Minister Appointed Committee on an Increased Share for Women in Politics, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Hafnarhus v/ Tryggvagotu/150 Reykjavik, Iceland (tel.: 354 545 81 00, fleirikonuristjornmal@fel.stjr.is / www.fleirikonuristjornmal.is.

Independent women: women's parties initiatives as a shock tactic – the Lithuanian Women's Party and the Swedish Stödstrumpor

Based on presentation at the conference “Women and democracy at the dawn of the new millennium” (Reykjavik, 8-10 October 1999).

Sharing good ideas across party lines: training material – The power book (Swedish Social Democrats)

Power book, S-kvinnor Sveavägen 68, P.O. Box 70458, S-107 26 Stockholm. A video presenting this theme is available from the Equality Council in Vaxsjö municipality in Sweden.

Target 50:50 – it takes cash, confidence and culture to get ahead in politics! (Liberal Democrats, United Kingdom)

Council of Europe Positive Action Survey, 1998; Liberal Democratic Administration, London (tel.: 44 20 7227-1208).

Chapter 3 – Decision-making in public administration and government – is change a matter of political will?, p. 43

Learning to work together to make decision-making more effective (Sweden)

Statistics Sweden, Stockholm (tel.: 46 8 506 943)

The JAM-KOM project and governance initiatives of the Swedish Landstingsförbundet (Union of County Councils) Sweden)

Landstingsförbundet ongoing equality projects based on the theme of “democracy” are the projects “Democratic techniques and democratic dialogue” and “Gender equality in boards and steering committees”. See publications: Sen då-uppföljning av projektet Politikerroll i förändring i Östergötland and Den Demokratiska Dialogen: Arbetsformer för kvinnor och män i politiken plus video. See also <http://www.lf.se>.

Bringing diversity into public service and public service week (United Kingdom)

Information provided by Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (tel.: 44 020 7276 2628, London). Other information on gender specific initiatives available from the Women’s Unit (tel.: 44 020 7273 8832, London). For information on “National public service awareness week” and the efforts of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments see the website <http://www.ocpa.gov.uk>.

A holistic approach to the higher public administration (France)

Secrétariat d’Etat aux droits des femmes et à la formation professionnelle 2000; *Conférence de Pékin cinq ans après la mise en oeuvre par la France des recommandations de la 4^e conférence mondiale sur les femmes*, Paris, La Documentation française, p. 98-99.

Language and anchoring techniques to overcome resistance – “Gender in balance” and “Steering numbers initiatives” (Belgium and Flanders)

Benschop, Yvonne, and Mieke Verloo, 1999, *Gender in balance: mainstreaming in human resource management*. Brussels: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap and Hondeghem, Annie and Sarah Nelen, 1999, *Ken- en stuurgetallen: instrument voor een evenredige vertegenwoordiging van mannen en vrouwen in de federale ministeries*, Brussels: Kabinet van tewerkstelling en arbeid en gelijke-kansenbeleid.

Chapter 4 – Socio-economic decision-making and the role of trade unions, p. 53

Gender awareness days for trade union negotiators (Spain)

European Relations Officer, Instituto de la Mujer, c/Condesa de Venadito, 34, 28027 Madrid (tel.: 34 91 347 78 83/fax: 34 91 347 8076).

From fairy tales to fair deals (Finland)

Equality Secretary SAK-Finland.

Site <http://www.sak.fi/fin/english/articles/paju.htm> describes the projects in more detail.

The starlet initiative – LO and KAD and international gender training(Denmark)

KAD (www.kad.dk) and “equality” pages of the Danish Trade Union Congress (www.lo.dk)

ILO pilot projects – building networks of women’s organisations for community economic development (Estonia)

ILO Gender Promotion Programme Employment Sector. Further information from National Project Co-ordinator, Bureau of Equality of Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs (tel.: 372 626 9878).

Chapter 5 – Women’s non-governmental organisations, p. 61

Putting women in the picture with gender audits (United Kingdom – Scotland)
Engender 2000. *Gender audit 2000: putting Scottish women in the picture*.
Edinburgh: Engender and Governance of Scotland Forum.

New tactics in transition countries –a consortium of NGOs (Russian Federation)
The Consortium of Women’s Nongovernmental Associations, (e-mail: wcons@com2com.ru).

Cybergirls – using the net, gimmicks and empowerment training to put women back into politics (Croatia)

Centre for Women’s Studies, Zagreb (tel.: 385 1 487 2406). For information on BaBe in English, see <http://www.interlog.com/~moyra/projects.html>.

Mobilising young women for equality (European Women’s Lobby)

European Women’s Lobby: see <http://www.womenlobby.org>, which includes the text of the gender guide.

Kader – women help women to get into parliament (Turkey)

Council of Europe expert Yesim Arat.

Chapter 6 – Non-governmental organisations, p. 69

Woman to woman – a mentoring programme (Switzerland)

Conseil Suisse des Activités de Jeunesse/ Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Jugendverbände (CSAJ/SAJV), Postgasse 21, 3011 Bern, Switzerland (tel: 41(0)31-326 29 35/fax: 41(0)31-326 29 30).

Chapter 8 – Examples of European gender-awareness campaigns, p. 91

Pari è di più/Equality is more – pre-election campaign 2001 (Italy)

Commissione Nazionale per la Parità e le Pari Opportunità tra uomo e donna, www.palazzochigi.it/cmparita.

Stability Pact Gender Task Force in seven South-East European countries, “Women can do it” projects

Stability Pact for South-East Europe Gender Task Force, “A continuum of empowerment: the ‘Women can do it’ programme in South-East Europe” Sarajevo: ARKA Press 2001, and <http://www.spgtf.org>.

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The Fawcett Society “Where are the women?” (United Kingdom)

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“Go out and be active”, “More women in parliament” and “Equal” media initiatives (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)

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Eurotouch, 6 rue de Monastère, B-1000 Brussels. See www.ericsson.com/careers/eeea/.

Other Council of Europe publications on equality between women and men

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Going for gender balance was commissioned by the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men as part of its task of preparing methodologies for mainstreaming equality and proposing recommendations and examples of good practice to member states. It is published as a contribution to the integrated project “Making democratic institutions work”.



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