

## Chapter 1: The Purpose and Role of Advocacy

### POLITICS, POWER, AND PEOPLE: LESSONS FROM GENDER ADVOCACY, ACTION, AND ANALYSIS

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Since the mid 1990s the combined programs on Women's Political Participation (WPP) and Global Women in Politics (GWIP) of the Asia Foundation have sought to broaden women's engagement in public life and overcome gender inequities through training, technical assistance, and action grants. Their initiatives have worked to strengthen the skills and advocacy of organizations focused on women's empowerment and to increase the effectiveness and awareness of individual women and men who are in strategic positions to advance gender equity. WPP and GWIP also have focused on developing and refining analytical frameworks that help clarify and expand thinking and actions designed to promote more equitable and productive relations of power.

By reviewing major lessons derived from these initiatives, I look to contribute to an improved understanding and practice of capacity building, empowerment, and political participation beyond individual countries and projects. Through specific frameworks, I explore issues of power, powerlessness, and subordination and related strategies of resistance, personal awareness, and action.

This paper examines key lessons and tools for advancing and assessing women's political participation. These lessons are intended to provide insights and raise questions for other marginalized populations and for donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) interested in supporting political change efforts. The experience presented suggests that only by designing and implementing programs incorporating these lessons will donors and excluded sectors of society be able to promote effective long-term transformational change.

This paper is based on efforts to promote women's empowerment and political participation. As a group, WPP and GWIP staff and partners confronted knotty problems of power and powerlessness, and the underlying web of values and norms that contribute to women's subordination and silence. We found that to be effective we had to identify and then grapple with multiple knots of twisted threads — understanding the pattern of snarls, untangling them, and reweaving the threads into a new design and fabric. In so doing, we drew on experience from our own work and analysis and that of others — our partners, gender specialists, and social scientists — in order to develop a practical way of understanding and combining these elements. The resulting matrix, while focusing on gender, can be applied to the experience of other marginalized populations as well, and serves as an analytical planning framework for examining the intersection of strategies and the dynamics of power, powerlessness, and culture (see

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1. Adapted from *Advancing and Assessing Power and Political Participation* written with Lisa VeneKlasen, The Asia Foundation, 2000, and *Desafios e Interrogantes*, a paper by Valerie Miller presented to the 1999 Conference for Latin American Human Rights Organizations in Lima, Peru.

Appendix A). Grappling with such a complex set of dynamics is never easy or complete so we look forward to expanding and deepening this analysis with colleagues and drawing on new interpretations and insights to better weave and reflect these relationships.

### **Culture, Subordination and Domination**

Through norms and processes of attitude formation, culture is a powerful force influencing people's understanding of what is considered natural, proper, and immutable in their lives. Culture involves "the particular ways in which a social group lives out and makes sense of its 'given' circumstances and conditions of life" (P. McLaren, cited in Kriesberg, 1988, p. 13). It is a "system through which ... a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored" (R. Williams, cited in Kriesberg, 1988, p. 15). In constant flux and change, culture is constructed and molded by specific factors of context, history, and power and is perpetuated by structures, norms, values, and institutions that tend to protect the status quo until challenged by processes of change. For example, invisible cultural mechanisms such as socialization interact with economic and political forces to shape important relations of power by helping determine women's and men's access to and control over resources. In addition, these factors help form men's and women's basic attitudes towards one another and the ways in which they interpret their respective roles and places in the world. They shape patterns of domination and subordination, as well as expectations about who should be submissive in a relationship and who should be the ultimate authority. Yet cultural mechanisms and institutions can also provide opportunities for resistance and action against oppressive practices and beliefs, as illustrated by the role black churches played in the civil rights movement in the United States.

While certain traditions and practices may change regarding gender, ideas about women's fundamental subordinate role in society are more difficult to overcome. Not only do these invisible processes conceal power relations and influence the way we think and see the world, often without our knowledge or awareness, the ideas they perpetuate are deeply rooted and internalized in the psyche. Development practitioners and partners from Oxfam Great Britain and Ireland (cited in Sweetman, 1995) spell out these relationships and processes, which are seen by many to be at the core of women's inferiority and subordination:

What does not change is the underlying ideology of female inferiority, which is disguised in an idealised image of woman as perfect wife and mother. This notion of the ideal woman rests on the need, within a patriarchal society, to enforce women's chastity outside marriage and fidelity within it, since paternity is the ultimate definer of the identity of children...[and therefore] critical to the survival of the family ... Women who challenge notions of female inferiority risk being ostracised by their communities, since such subordination goes unquestioned by the majority of men, as well as by many women ... The ultimate method of enforcing women's conformity to their traditional role is physical and mental violence ... Although the law can play a leading role in condemning such practices through criminalising them, cultural norms must also change if abuse of women is to be eradicated (pp. 2-3).

The context and experience of WPP and GWIP partners in Asia underscores this dynamic. In its final report on GWIP, the Asia Foundation's Indonesia Office (2000) wrote:

One of the legacies of Suharto's New Order is the successful *Ibnisation* of the female population, which emphasizes women's role in society as wives and mothers. The result is that Indonesian women have internalized the belief that they are not meant to be involved in politics and leadership. This belief results not only in very few women politicians in Indonesia, but also in the widespread practice of women voting according to the directions of their husbands and fathers.

There is no question that culture and its mechanisms of social influence and power, such as the media, family, advertising, and schooling, are both the densest and most elusive obstacle to women's equality and political participation. It is not just the externally enforced social roles and expectations that perpetuate women's subordination and male superiority, it is the insidious way that culture shapes a man's psyche about "proper" gender roles and the way it forms a woman's sense of self to ensure that she is often her best keeper. This is true in industrialized countries of the North, where the conflicting images of glamour and domestic nurturer set impossible standards for ordinary women to achieve, as much as it is true in nations of the South, where many women cannot dream of leaving their homes or participating in public life, let alone have aspirations for the future. The role that culture plays in perpetuating inferiority and the imbalance of power is profoundly political and, while oppressive, it is also subject to both resistance and change (VeneKlasen, 2000). In gestures large and small, women and other excluded groups find ways to counter these forces and produce change that helps reshape values and practices of subordination and domination.

### **Power and Powerlessness: An Overview**

When tackling power and powerlessness, scholars emphasize the importance of understanding women as having a complex range of identities and characteristics — such as those based on class, race, age, and sexual preference — that interface with gender to affect their scope of political participation. Cautioning that power interacts differently with these varied identities, gender theorists highlight four main forms of power relations — one more predominately coercive, the others more collaborative and synergistic. These include: *power over* others, *power with* others, *power within* a person, and *power to* do and act together. Here, I first examine the category of *power over*, bringing in added analysis from sociologists and practitioners beyond the gender field.

*Power over* others, as posited in gender studies, is the most common type of power exercised in society and is typical of patriarchal and hierarchical relationships. Essentially an expression of an authority over others, it serves to regulate relations between human beings and tends to be a controlling, top-down, coercive form of power that often is based on differences in gender, class, race, ethnicity, and religion (among others). Women face the brunt of this kind of power in family, community, business and state relationships, and in their attempts to participate in politics and decision-making. In the family, for example, they are conditioned by social and cultural norms to uphold male authority and pursue power only in an indirect fashion through

their influence on key men in their lives, often through manipulation. With no alternative models, these patterns, in turn, affect how they understand and exercise power in the public domain.

Batliwala (1995), among others, stresses the need for women's movements to reexamine and transform power relations by developing a new ethical framework and exercise of power. In the search for alternative practices of power, gender analysts describe three other types and relationships that open up the opportunity to increase the power available to individuals within a new ethical vision. These categories — *power with*, *power within*, and *power to* — expand the possibility to create more symmetrical, equitable relationships of power between and within people and groups, and to foster human agency — the ability to act and change the world.

*Power with* others relates to the collective power of people and groups working together. More than the sum of its parts, it is a power shared in the context of forming more equitable and synergistic relationships that allow people to increase their overall influence as a group. It is based on mutual support and produces synergy that multiplies and builds on individual strengths, talents, and knowledge.

*Power within* is the potential power and strength that resides within each person generated from the intimate relationship an individual has with her or his psyche or self. It is based on personal acceptance, esteem, and respect for self as a worthy, capable individual struggling to grow and improve. At its best and most effective, this power allows people to respect and accept not only themselves, but others as well — seeing individuals, whatever their identities or particular circumstances, as being joined together in a common human struggle and search for self-worth, growth, and fulfillment.

*Power to* is seen as the power to act and achieve something (agency), the power to make a difference. Built on the personal *power within* and the collective *power with* others, *power to* is a kind of generative, productive power. Based on sharing authority and mutual support, it is a creative power that opens up possibilities for joint action and reflects a new vision of ethics that challenges patriarchal patterns of *power over*.

These different expressions of coercive and collaborative power are embedded within the institutions, attitudes, and practices that not only shape the lives of excluded populations, but also their possibilities for political participation. How marginalized groups, their allies, and donors understand and engage these forces will affect their joint ability to transform the myriad of corrupt and inequitable practices that hamper the potential for democratic change, decision-making, and sustainable development.

## **Visible and Invisible Expressions and Mechanisms of Power**

### ***Overview and Challenge***

In this intricate web of culture and power, women's and donors' strategies often place more importance and legitimacy on responding to the visible expressions and mechanics of politics — challenging forms of *power over* by electing more women to office or changing laws — than on

the more invisible norms and culture of power which act to undermine their change efforts. Without a careful analysis of these less visible dynamics, change strategies only partially respond to the barriers of political participation, and ultimately fail to overcome the underlying causes of women's and other groups' political impotence. These less obvious forms of *power over* act to support elites and exclude marginalized populations such as women from the political process, internalizing and instilling attitudes in them of subordination, self-blame, and powerlessness.

Practitioners and sociologists such as John Gaventa (1980, 1997) and Steven Lukes (1974) have further broken down the concept of coercive power (i.e., *power over*) into interacting dimensions or mechanisms that shape people's ability to participate in politics. Building on aspects of their thinking and the analysis and experience of WPP and GWIP and other gender initiatives, Lisa VeneKlasen and I (see VeneKlasen & Miller, 1999) propose two broad categories of *power over* and relate them to distinct yet intersecting political action strategies which reflect alternative forms of power as posited by gender theorists— *power with*, *power within*, and *power to*. In Appendix A we include a matrix that weaves these different forms of power together and synthesizes this analysis.

What are these two general dimensions of *power over*? At their most basic they can be described as expressions of (i) *visible power*, where protagonists, issues, and political structures are clear, and (ii) *invisible power*, where affected populations, issues, and political mechanisms are not obviously apparent and often are concealed, obscured or rendered completely invisible. Underscoring the presence of this latter form of power, WPP and GWIP partners frequently have referred to women's concerns and women's role and voice in politics as being invisible or silenced, common metaphors used over and over again by women around the world to describe their place and participation in society. Political analysts use similar language when describing the participation and role of other marginalized groups in politics as that of invisible citizens.

### ***Visible Expressions of Power***

The first category of *power over* that I want to explore here has to do with clearly visible structures of political authority such as the parliament, the presidency, the courts, city councils, government ministries, the United Nations system, the World Bank, or (in some cases) private sector corporations, and commercial banks. For example, a congress or national assembly considering legislation on education issues corresponds to this manifestation of power — situations where there is a visible institution of authority and an obvious issue or conflict involving public concerns. Participation in public decision-making in these circumstances seems deceptively straightforward, dependent on particular political contexts, and the clout, resources, and expertise of different political actors. This surface appearance, however, does not take into account less obvious forms of *power over* that also influence people's political participation and, therefore, can be misleading and result in ineffectual programs and strategies. Despite the visible nature of these institutions and their personnel, government officials often act in secret behind closed doors making access and transparency difficult.

### *Invisible Expressions of Power*

The second general category of *power over* refers to less visible and often hidden expressions of power which function in a variety of ways to render certain populations and their issues both invisible and illegitimate, thus eliminating them from public attention and potential action. Interacting with other societal forces, these include political and economic mechanisms of exclusion, delegitimization, and information control, as well as cultural and psychological processes such as socialization and internalization. For the purposes of this discussion we will cluster our discussion around two subsets of invisible power: (i) exclusion and delegitimization, and (ii) socialization and information control.

*Mechanisms of exclusion and delegitimization* operate through the rules, practices, and institutions of society including the government and market. They interact to enhance the authority of certain elites while preventing other population groups and their issues from reaching the decision-making table. Often discriminated against on the basis of class, race, gender, ethnicity, age, or religion, these groups and their concerns are made invisible and discredited by practices such as intimidation and misinformation. Since such populations and their grievances are not considered legitimate, they are organized out of the public debate and, as a result, out of possibilities for action and redress. Leaders are labeled troublemakers. Issues such as domestic violence and women's right to inheritance are relegated to the realm of private family matters, thus excluded from public consideration. Rendered invisible, women have had to fight for recognition, legitimacy, and a voice at the decision-making table as credible political players, and in the process, have frequently suffered ridicule, marginalization, attempts at co-optation, and at times violence. Although these processes and practices of exclusion and delegitimization are often evident to those affected, they are usually not visible to society at large nor understood in a comprehensive way as part of a variety of interacting mechanisms of power that shape and often deter political participation.

*Mechanisms of socialization and information control* are yet another aspect of "invisibilizing" *power over* that require still a different set of strategies and capacities. Interacting with political, economic, and cultural forces of power, society conditions the way people think about themselves and their world. Through these multiple processes, practices, and norms, people's understanding of their needs, roles, possibilities, and actions are shaped in ways that can deter effective political participation. In many societies, for example, women and men are conditioned to believe that women's only legitimate role relates to the private domain of the family — being a mother and a wife — thus discouraging them from participating in public life. If there are problems in the home, often the man not only blames his spouse, but the woman blames herself, having internalized feelings of unworthiness, submissiveness, apathy, and ignorance thus reinforcing her powerlessness and subordination.

Operating invisibly, this form of *power over* acts to conceal conflict and render women and marginalized populations impotent through the formation and internalization of attitudes of self-blame and inferiority which perversely make them the enforcers of their own oppression. For even if people are aware of their rights, believing themselves unworthy, many tend to feel that such rights do not apply to them and, therefore, do not engage politically either as individual citizens or as members or leaders of grassroots organizations. Interacting with other forms of

*power over*, this pervasive invisible expression of power results in passivity, low self-esteem, acceptance of subordination, and paralysis on the part of many women, and a sense of entitlement, privilege, and superiority on the part of most men. This dynamic profoundly affects the prospects for building accountable democracies, active citizens, and vibrant civil societies. Unaware of how it operates, most people have little defense against its force. Yet, in the face of this kind of power, many people find ways to resist it and carve out spaces of personal dignity that form the building blocks of effective change. However, without understanding its scope and dimensions, groups cannot design the kinds of strategies that best address its impact, nor can donors recognize the need to support them.

Another form of *power over* occurs when crucial information is concealed from the public or made inaccessible, thus rendering the related problems invisible, and therefore unavailable for public discussion and action. This can be seen, for example, when governments deny the scope of practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting, state-sanctioned political assassination, or do not gather data according to gender. It is also found when corporate institutions control or conceal information about cancer-causing or other dangerous or illegal practices or products.

### **Comprehensive Strategies: Alternative Approaches to Power**

What does this analysis of power mean for developing strategies that enhance women's political participation and advocacy and those of other excluded sectors? Above all it means that strategies need to be multifaceted and comprehensive, incorporating activities that address both visible and invisible mechanisms of power and the specific ways those mechanisms affect particular groups of women. Strategies need to run the gamut from formal lobbying and media work to constituency-building, community organizing, and consciousness-raising. Although a holistic approach to change may seem obvious, the reality is often quite the opposite. Frequently action campaigns focus on one or two aspects of power and strategy, but overlook others, thus limiting their long-term impact. It is important to note that groups bring different strengths and resources to a given advocacy initiative or coalition. Most do not have the capacity to undertake the full range of activities necessary for addressing the different aspects of power and long-term needs of a campaign, so they must join with colleague groups who complement their strengths in order to provide a more effective holistic response.

### ***Approaches to Counter Visible Power***

When civic groups understand *power over* rather narrowly, they tend to focus on engaging and influencing the visible mechanisms and institutions of power. With solid information and advocacy strategies — such as lobbying, media campaigns, policy research, and litigation — groups try to get their issues to the table and their voices heard. Although sound data and arguments are crucial to any advocacy initiative, most initiatives implicitly assume that sound data and arguments alone will result in favorable policy change. By strengthening the capacities and resources of public interest groups, researchers, and articulate elite lobbyists, it is believed that effective political participation and impact can be ensured. Yet, as seen in the Nepal experience on inheritance laws — where elite groups did not engage those most affected by the

problem — this view overlooks the need to confront social and cultural barriers. They did not factor in less obvious forms of power that affect who sets the agenda, how elites and affected groups see a problem and, consequently, the buy-in and commitment to reform and, ultimately, the chances for long-term success. This rather one-dimensional understanding of how *power over* operates usually places great faith in the authority and skills of sophisticated advocates or elite organizations to influence officials and speak on behalf of the “public.” As such, this view does not take into account other mechanisms of invisible power and the need to develop local leadership, strong constituency groups, individual political awareness and commitment. While policy victories may be won in the short-term using this approach, they do not have the elements to guarantee sustainability over time, or to promote individual skills, structures, and attitudes of citizenship.

### ***Approaches to Counter Invisible Power***

Countering invisible mechanisms of power that marginalize certain sectors of society and exclude their grievances from the table requires more than lobbying or message development skills. Broader organizational and educational strategies focused on building constituencies and grassroots leadership around common agendas become crucial. Increasing the capacity for action, joint agenda-setting, and strategic planning by membership groups, NGOs, and coalitions is essential for establishing a long-term base of support and legitimacy. For traditionally marginalized populations, such a power base is necessary not only for getting a place at the table, but for holding government accountable so that advances gained by lobbying and media campaigns can be sustained. Strengthening such organizations and their memberships is also fundamental to building more accountable democratic practices of citizenship and civil society. To combat forms of exclusionary control, capacities need to be honed for analyzing the mechanisms and forces of power, joint agenda-setting, developing appropriate action strategies, respecting and negotiating differences, and working co-operatively with each other, as well as other excluded groups. Additional capacities are required for generating and disseminating information that can provide legitimacy and credibility for a group’s issues and their right to participate. To be effective these kinds of strategies combine the different elements of alternative power as presented by gender theorists — *power within*, *power with*, and *power to*.

To address those forms of invisible power that shape people’s attitudes and beliefs and perpetuate subordination, groups also rely on a mix of alternative sources of power, but most specifically focus on approaches that build *power within*. Education and action strategies are designed to affirm individuals’ self-esteem, critical analysis, sense of citizenship and rights, and ability to work collaboratively. Varying according to context and group, these include practical experiences and activities such as sharing personal histories, voicing individual concerns, identifying common problems, speaking out, and connecting and working with others. In particular, they involve engaging both grassroots and elite groups in understanding their patterns of domination and subordination in relation to one another. As demonstrated by the Nepal case, NGO and professional staff need to understand how their attitudes, values, and sense of power can affect their actions and relations just as grassroots groups do. Strategies at this level related to gender also involve working on structural change to reshape the way attitudes and norms are



constructed through such mechanisms as school curricula, advertising images and religion. At still another level, they include work with men on similar issues of identity and awareness.

Countering invisible mechanisms of power that conceal critical information from the public usually requires a variety of actors and actions. Grassroots groups, NGOs and state agencies undertake careful investigations that uncover and disseminate facts and information hidden from public view. Such strategies mainly tap sources of *power with* and *power to* and require multiple research, media, and communication skills.

Without these kinds of skills, critical information, political awareness, and sense of citizenship and self-worth, women and other disenfranchised groups will not be able to participate in the political process effectively, thus weakening the practice and prospects of democracy in their respective societies.

### **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF POWER**

INFLUENCING and LOBBYING visible structures of power to resolve issues and conflicts through such measures as specific legislation, policy, elections, budgets, litigation;

BUILDING, STRENGTHENING, MOBILIZING constituency groups, their leadership and alliances to gain: (i) visibility and legitimacy for their grievances and demands, (ii) participation in decision-making structures, and (iii) power to hold government accountable;

FORTIFYING other civil society organizations to join in alliances and coalitions;

EDUCATING and ACTIVATING media and public opinion;

INVESTIGATING and DISSEMINATING relevant data, as well as uncovering and publicizing concealed information such as the scope of a country's human rights violations, domestic abuse, cancer causing products, or practices by corporations, etc;

STRENGTHENING people's self-worth, analytical capacities, collaboration skills, awareness of rights, and identity as citizens and protagonists.

### **Gender, Political Participation, and Impact: A Comprehensive Framework**

How do different experiences of power, subordination, and political participation inform a more comprehensive and long-term view of program impact and what are some of the essential program arenas that women's and other marginalized groups promoting civic participation have discovered to be important for success?

Both practical and theoretical knowledge suggest five arenas in which women's organizations, grassroots groups, and NGOs need to concentrate their political participation and advocacy efforts to gain long-term maximum impact. WPP and GWIP partners and staff have been highly influential in the clarification and analysis of some of these areas. We will examine their contributions after first laying out the five specific arenas found to be necessary for lasting success. These include: the government/state arena, private sector, civil society, culture (political and social), and the individual. Over the course of any initiative or campaign, different emphasis on results in each of these arenas will be needed depending on the particular circumstances and context. For example, at one moment, more work may be done in the civil society arena to build alliances and strengthen organizational capacities so that constituency groups can gain enough power to get a seat at the table and influence the state or business sector. At other times, more focus will be given to policy impacts gained through direct lobbying of public officials in the government/state arena. At still other moments, attention may be concentrated on the individual — expanding people's political awareness and sense of self-esteem and citizenship to overcome socialization processes that undermine women and marginalized groups from participating in politics and public life.

The following provides a description of the five arenas where impact is crucial for long-term success (see Appendix B).

The *government/state arena*, usually considered the most common arena for success in politics and political participation, refers to impacts on policies, programs, officials, elections, laws, and regulations of public institutions, including international organizations composed of states, such as the UN system, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Mechanisms and institutions of visible and invisible power must be addressed in this arena.

The second arena is the *private sector*, which may be less familiar to some NGOs and grassroots groups, but where using various influence and action strategies can result in more responsible behavior by certain powerful actors such as multinational corporations or private banks. This arena includes mechanisms of power that act both visibly and invisibly to shape political participation, the distribution of wealth in society, and the availability and accessibility of critical information. It involves impacts and changes regarding business policies, practices, behaviors and products.

The third arena for action and impact involves fortifying *civil society*. In the face of processes and practices that exclude and delegitimize certain groups, this arena focuses on overcoming more invisible expressions and forces of power. Strengthening the authority, voice, agenda-setting, and planning capacities of NGOs and popular organizations is critical to increasing their legitimacy and participation in public decision-making. Along with generating *power with* and *power to*, these impacts result in making grassroots leadership, constituency organizations, and their alliances

more accountable and able to mobilize and act more strategically. Among the range of impacts is an increase in civil society's ability to hold government accountable so that beneficial policy gains and political changes can be both achieved and sustained.

A fourth arena of potential impact entails changes in *culture* (political and social) that help create an atmosphere in which political participation by disenfranchised populations is not only possible, but can be effective and carried out, at a minimum, without fear of violence or repression. Such changes respond, in part, to invisible mechanisms of socialization and attitude formation. Possible impacts on political culture include, for example, increased governmental respect for the right of the population to participate in decision-making, as well as increased transparency and accountability on the part of institutions of the state and the media. Specifically related to gender, changes involve shifts in the way society views women's and men's roles and responsibilities, and accepting women as legitimate and credible political actors and civic protagonists. These imply, for example, changes in the way the media portray women and their grievances, and the way school texts portray family relationships and roles.

The fifth and final arena for political impact involves changes at the *individual* level of the person and refers to results especially related to *power within*. These changes not only refer to improvements in physical living conditions such as better access to water or wages, but also to changes within the person that are necessary for the development of a sense of citizenship, personal worth and solidarity. Such changes occur when passive and paralyzing attitudes of self-blame and ignorance, so common to many powerless and disenfranchised groups, are transformed into proactive attitudes and concrete capabilities that allow people to become active protagonists in the defense and advancement of their own rights.

The original framework — developed from Southern research on advocacy campaigns (Miller, 1994) — included three arenas: government/state, civil society, and political culture. Subsequent NGO consultations revealed two other arenas of program impact necessary for long-term success: the *individual*, focused on impacts benefiting the material living conditions of people, and the *private sector*, focused on changes leading to improved corporate practices (Institute for Development Research [IDR], 1999). However, this thinking did not incorporate the specific knowledge of women's organizations working on political participation, nor the ideas of gender theorists. In this regard, the experience and analysis of WPP and GWIP partners and staff (VeneKlasen 2000; Miller and VeneKlasen, 2000) led to an expansion and deepening of the framework. The idea of political culture was amplified to include social aspects of culture, specifically changes in gender and family relations. Similarly changes at the individual level were expanded beyond material benefits to psychological and attitudinal changes, especially those related to political awareness, analysis, and personal self-worth (IDR, 1999; Miller, 1999).

Related research and program experience has underscored this analysis — that to be effective over the long-term, participation and advocacy efforts need to produce impacts across a wide range of areas. Illustrating this position are experiences of WPP and GWIP partners such as DWSP, a women's political group in the Philippines working on strengthening women's grassroots organizations, voter turnout, and the number of elected officials committed to gender issues. DWSP has stressed the multi-dimensional nature of success, specifically the fundamental importance of producing results in multiple arenas: in election laws and practices, grassroots

groups, culture and operations of political parties, and individual consciousness and political awareness.

These kinds of experiences emphasize the need for civic organizations and donors to pay attention not only to fostering change in the government/state arena and, where applicable, in the private sector, but also to strengthening civil society, culture, and people's sense of citizenship and worth. Strategies and impacts need to be assessed across the gamut of program arenas demonstrated as necessary for long-term success. Risk factors present in each political moment also need to be taken into consideration in the design of strategies and assessment of their impact. When systems become more repressive and dangerous, strategies need to be reassessed and modified accordingly to produce appropriate results.

In evaluating political participation and advocacy initiatives, this framework provides one way to understand, organize, and analyze key impacts across different arenas that initial research indicates are most related to determining long-term political success and sustainability. The framework allows groups to reflect on the relative emphasis of their program activities and impacts at different moments. At certain times in the life of an advocacy campaign or initiative, for example, a focus on impacts and actions in the civil society and individual arena may be more appropriate than direct work in the government/state arena. Some political moments may be too dangerous or not appropriate or promising for interactions with government; at other times the situation may offer the potential for high impact and success.

#### **Summary of Political Participation Impact Arenas**

1. Government/State
2. Private Sector
3. Civil Society
4. Culture (Political and Social)
5. Individual (Consciousness/Material Benefits)

#### **Conclusions: Expanded Vision of Politics, Citizenship, and Democracy**

WPP and GWIP counterparts have challenged the program to expand its vision of politics and democracy from more narrow traditional definitions to meanings that are more comprehensive and integrated. This perspective goes beyond the institutional or procedural view of democracy

as simply a model of public decision-making and governance to one that emphasizes substance, value and justice issues. It is a vision clearly grounded in a set of principles and ethics, most particularly in human rights and an emancipatory vision of individual and collective empowerment — what some have called the *content* or *value-base* of democracy. This view underscores the need for democracy and governance initiatives to go beyond building or improving the effectiveness of formal state institutions and procedures. Initiatives must also include a focus on strengthening values, behaviors, and structures that allow people to participate equally in the system and to change the norms and practices that perpetuate subordination and discrimination. They involve increasing the quality and reach of organizations of civil society that support and represent marginalized populations — from NGOs to membership organizations and social movements. While this may seem self-evident and already addressed by programs such as those of human rights/civic education and institutional development, our work has revealed that to be effective complex dynamics of power, culture, and psychology need to be factored into efforts — dynamics which are often overlooked or ignored.

In promoting citizen political participation, we have found that the analysis of Thomas Carothers (1999) raises certain questions similar to our own in relation to power and democracy building. He points out the need to be clear about the nature of power and conflict inherent in political systems, including democracies. He emphasizes that many democracy and governance initiatives sponsored by Northern donors and NGOs have been based on a romanticized version of democracy devoid of an understanding of the complex dynamics of politics and power. Democracies, he underscores, are not sterile, harmonious, linear nor mechanical systems, but rather are marked by struggle, dynamism, conflict, and compromise. Often they involve messy clashes over power and resources, sometimes very overt and sometimes not.

When programs promote the participation of marginalized populations, as we have seen in our work with women, shifts of resources and opportunities are required that, in turn, involve a negotiation of power that inevitably causes conflicts and tensions — conflicts in and with the family, society, community, and government. In whatever political system, groups need to be very clear about the nature of power and conflict, and to operate in ways that lessen backlash. By so doing they can help minimize the destructive and debilitating tendencies of these kinds of inescapable conflicts. When they don't incorporate these factors and risks into their strategies, the harm to individuals and to possibilities for further action can be costly.<sup>2</sup> This tension and dynamic is a constant one. Challenging entrenched power relationships provokes confrontation. The idea is not to ignore or withdraw from these challenges, but to engage the system in the most effective and responsible way possible, recognizing that those in power rarely cede their privilege without pressure.

The experience of WPP and GWIP underscores a view of politics that goes beyond a focus on the art of government or activities occurring in the public realm. Politics, the exercise of power as some have described it, takes shape, manifests itself and is defined in all arenas of life because

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<sup>2</sup> For example, advocacy and education initiatives energized and organized Nepalese women to march enthusiastically in the streets and demand their rights but when women returned home, many got beaten up by their husbands.

it is fundamentally about people's lives, values, and beliefs. Politics occurs in multiple locations from the private to the public: the family, the community, civil society, business, the state, and in international arenas as well. To plan effective strategies, advocacy initiatives need to include these different arenas, and not focus solely on changes in policy or government programs.

This expanded view of politics has taken us, as advocates, from a preoccupation with promoting technical and analytical capacities for designing advocacy strategies to a deep concern for redefining the concept and practice of citizenship. It has moved us from a focus on policy influence, constituency building and community organizing to an additional emphasis on personal development of individuals within these organizations and the conceptualization of a more critical form of citizenship. This vision of citizenship goes beyond the citizen as voter and soldier to citizen as activist and change agent, strongly rooted in a sense of rights and responsibilities and committed to transforming the current practice of politics and exclusion. Built on self-awareness, critical thinking, solidarity, and collective action, it underscores the crucial importance of grounding citizenship in people's personal lives, needs, aspirations, and experiences with power and subordination. Becoming citizens involves the development of individual *agency* and empowerment — affirming people's sense of being capable protagonists able to shape their own lives and circumstances. Our work on gender has led us to understand that although a critical piece of political change and advocacy involves both influencing and engaging the state and building solid constituencies, another fundamental piece involves developing individual citizenship, which implies tackling the difficult questions of power, subordination, culture, consciousness, and values.

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**Appendix A: Power, Advocacy, and Political Participation: Lessons from Gender Analysis and Action\***

MECHANISMS/STRATEGIES	INVISIBLE POWER		VISIBLE POWER
<p><b>Different Expressions and Mechanisms of “power over”**:</b></p> <p>** (Forms of power that tend to be coercive and controlling; some are visible and some are not often operating without general public awareness of their impact; mechanisms of <i>power over</i> shape the scope and effectiveness of citizen participation in society and provoke resistance that can be tapped for political change; different action strategies are required to counter these different mechanisms so that political participation and the practice of power can be more equitable and democratic.)</p> <p>The arrows indicate that these diverse expressions of power are relational, dynamic and interactive.</p>	<p><b>Socialization/Control of Information:</b> Processes, practices and cultural norms shape people’s understanding of their needs, roles, possibilities and actions in ways that deter effective participation. Among marginal groups, socialization internalizes feelings and attitudes of subordination, apathy, self-blame, powerlessness, unworthiness, (e.g. women blame themselves for domestic violence, men and women see women only as wives and mothers); Crucial information is concealed or inaccessible (e.g. scope of gov’t human rights violations, rates of female genital mutilation/cutting; data on gender, corporate practices that cause cancer etc).</p>	<p><b>Exclusion/Delegitimation:</b> Certain populations are excluded from decision-making by society’s and government’s rules, practices, and institutions. They and their grievances are delegitimized and made invisible by such practices as intimidation, misinformation co-optation. Leaders are labeled troublemakers or unrepresentative; issues such as domestic violence are relegated to the realm of the private/family and therefore not subject to public or state action. (While processes and practices of delegitimization/invisibility are often clear to those excluded, they are not visible to society at large.)</p>	<p><b>Formal Institutions/Officials:</b> President, Prime Minister, legislature/parliament/assembly, city council, courts, ministries, police, military, etc. United Nations, IMF, World Bank, multinational corporations etc.</p> <p>Participation in public decision making seems relatively straight forward and open on the surface, determined in larger part by the political context and clout, resources and expertise of different political actors yet the invisible mechanisms of power deter citizen participation in unseen ways.</p>
<p><b>Principal advocacy/empowerment strategies to counter “power over”:</b></p> <p>(Effective participation and advocacy requires comprehensive action plans that utilize multiple strategies addressing each of the different mechanisms of both visible and invisible power)</p> <p><b>Type of alternative power used:</b> (Power within a person; with others; and power to act and achieve — agency.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Education for self-esteem, confidence, political awareness and analysis, citizenship (rights and responsibilities), working collaboratively etc.;</li> <li>. Activities/experiences that reinforce the above such as sharing stories and problems, speaking out and connecting with others;</li> <li>. Investigation, action research and dissemination of concealed information</li> </ul> <p>Power within a person and with others, power to act and achieve (agency)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Build active constituencies around common problems and concerns;</li> <li>. Strengthen constituency organizations, coalitions, and democratic accountable leaders and structures;</li> <li>. Act/ mobilize around shared agendas; demonstrate clout—protest/direct action;</li> <li>. Participatory research and dissemination of information that legitimizes excluded groups and their issues</li> </ul> <p>Power with others; power to act and achieve (agency)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. <i>Public Interest</i> groups/expert lobbyists</li> <li>. Lobbying/Monitoring</li> <li>. Negotiation/Litigation</li> <li>. Public education/Media</li> <li>. Policy research/Policy alternatives</li> <li>. Marches/Demonstrations</li> <li>. Voting/Running for office, etc.</li> </ul> <p>(Most of these actions implicitly assume that solid information and arguments will result in favorable policy change)</p> <p>Power with others; power to act and achieve (agency)</p>

\* Developed by Lisa VeneKlasen and Valerie Miller, *Global Women in Politics* (1999); See also Gaventa (1998, 1980), Kreisberg (1992), and Lukes (1974).



## Appendix B: Charting Impact: A People/Planet-Centered Approach

ARENA	IMPACT
<b>1. STATE/GOVERNMENT SECTOR</b>	<b>Support for, change in, and/or implementation of a law, public policy, constitution, regulation, programs, practices, decision making process, budget, behavior, enforcement, access, official etc.</b>
NATIONAL > Executive > Agencies/Ministries > Legislative/Parliament > Military/Police > Courts > Other PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT > LOCAL GOVERNMENT > INTERNATIONAL BODIES > UN > IMF > World Bank > Multilateral Development Banks > Other OTHER	<i>Impacts, for example, that defend and advance human rights, foster more equitable sustainable development and promote greater voice and power of excluded populations in access to justice and public decision making — populations such as women, indigenous groups, the poor, and religious, racial or ethnic minorities among others</i>
<b>2. PRIVATE SECTOR</b>	<b>Support for or change in policy, program, practices, behavior etc.</b>
NATIONAL / LOCAL / MULTINATIONAL > OTHER	<i>See impacts under State/Government sector</i>
<b>3. CIVIL SOCIETY:</b>	<b>Strengthen and expand civil society's capacity, organization, accountability clout, and power; expand members' skills, capacities, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs; and increase overall social reciprocity, trust and tolerance</b>
> NGOs > Membership Organizations > Community-Based Organizations > Ally Organizations/Coalitions > Social Movements etc.	<i>Impacts that fortify groups, organizations, social movements and alliances working to advance the rights and living conditions of excluded and marginalized peoples as well as those working to protect the health of the planet</i>
<b>4. CULTURE (Political/Social)</b>	<b>Increase democratic space, expand participation and political legitimacy of civil society and accountability/transparency of public institutions and media; transform social institutions, norms, customs and values that lead to intolerance, subordination, exclusion and powerlessness</b>
> Political > > Social > > Other	<i>Impacts that enhance the political and social dimensions of culture in ways that promote the voice and vote of the marginalized in decision making and encourage behaviors and values of cooperation, collaboration, trust, inclusion, reciprocity and equity</i>
<b>5. INDIVIDUAL</b>	<b>Improve concrete living conditions and opportunities for health, education and decent livelihood; expand attitudes, beliefs and awareness of self as protagonist /citizen with rights and responsibilities to participate in change</b>
> Living Conditions/Opportunities > Attitudes/Awareness > Personal relationships, etc.	<i>Impacts that improve the lives and expand the intelligence, political analysis, consciousness, confidence, solidarity, general skills and vision of marginalized populations and their allies; impacts that challenge discrimination /subordination in personal and family relations</i>