

GENDER EQUALITY, PROMISE TO PRACTICE:  
A STUDY OF THE PROGRESS TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY OF  
CCIC MEMBERS

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## Executive Summary

This study was undertaken for the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) to assess the organizational processes and practices of its members regarding work on gender equality. It was done as part of the sector strengthening work of the Council, which facilitates collaboration between members to improve organizational practices. The CCIC Code of Ethics, which is the guiding framework for this sector strengthening work, includes principles and standards that guide organizations' commitment to making progress on gender equality.

The authors of the study analyzed the web sites of a random sample of 35 CCIC member organizations and received further information from approximately 50 percent of CCIC members through questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. The authors also collaborated to carry out the action-research in Quebec with the Quebec Committee on Women and Development of l'Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI) and Rita Soares Pinto, a Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation fellow and author of a study on the integration of gender equality in Canadian international cooperation.

Respondents felt that there had been progress in the past 15 years, but that gender equality still is not an important part of the organizational practice of CCIC members. This low importance is indicated by the relative lack of prominence of gender equality issues on web sites and in mission statements, the percentages of women in senior management and boards of directors, the lack of attention to implementation of gender equality policies and, perhaps most importantly, organizational cultures which do not value work in this area.

There are differences between large organizations and small and mid-sized organizations. For example, the presence of women in management and on boards of directors is considerably less in large organizations. Overall, 53 percent of organizations do not have gender parity on their boards. This figure for large organizations is 87 percent.

Almost all organizations have gender policies but staff report there are insufficient resources to implement them.

A variety of forces were identified that blocked movement to better practice. These included:

- a Canadian context which does not recognize gender inequality as an important issue;
- organizational cultures and managerial mindsets which downplay the importance of work for gender equality and under-resource the work;
- the lack of tools, knowledge and skills among staff and boards; and
- disagreement over what constitutes work on gender equality.

There are also forces, beyond the commitment of advocates, that have encouraged progress on gender equality. These have included the support of some managers and encouragement from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The research results were analyzed using a multi-dimensional framework that looks at organizational change in terms of individual and systemic dimensions as well as formal and informal aspects. It appears that while some tools and policies exist, the deeper systemic change required for real progress on gender equality is not yet happening.

The study recommended the following options for the sector to consider in its development toward more gender-equitable organizations:

1. At a societal level, it may be possible to create a movement analogous to Make Poverty History to attempt to change Canadian attitudes toward gender equality.
2. Advocates could work with CIDA to develop ways in which CIDA could be of most influence.
3. Senior managers (particularly of larger CSOs) need to be able to see how considerations of gender equality are not only a question of justice but are required for the accomplishment of all the Millennium Development Goals.
4. Middle-level advocates need information, training, and opportunities to meet and strategize and to share best practices.
5. There needs to be more awareness of organizational politics and political strategy by gender equality advocates, and sharing of what works in what situations.

# Gender Equality, Promise to Practice: A study of the progress toward gender equality of CCIC members

David Kelleher and Rieky Stuart<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Over the past 15 years, the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) has collaborated with member organizations in a variety of ways to advance work on gender equality. In 1991, CCIC worked with members in a project, entitled “Two Halves Make a Whole”, that resulted in a gender manual and series of training opportunities. Work was also done with members on gender policy development. In 1992, a participatory research project called “Gender Work is Never Done: A Study of Canadian NGO Capacity in Gender and Development” was undertaken by CCIC and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

In 1995, the CCIC *Code of Ethics* was established. It included standards requiring organizations to have board policies “which work towards gender equity and participation of minorities”, and for the organization to “promote gender and minority equity in recruitment, hiring, training, and professional development and advancement”.

The present research focuses on gender equality in CCIC members’ own organizational policies and practices, including organizational policies and practices related to overseas partnerships. It was commissioned to provide a current overview of how CCIC’s members are dealing with gender equality issues, and also to assess what actions CCIC might initiate, if any, to support further progress in this area.

## Methodology

The study utilized a multi-method approach to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the current state of work on gender equality in Canadian civil society organizations (CSOs). We utilized the following data collection methods:

- An analysis of a random sample of 35 web sites of CCIC members and an analysis of 28 web sites of AQOCI members;
- Interviews with 25 staff from members of CCIC and l’Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI);
- Focus groups in Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa with over 40<sup>2</sup> participants in total;
- A web survey which was completed by members of 42 different CCIC member organizations;
- Interviews with consultants who work with Canadian CSOs on gender issues.

Across all the methods, we heard from just under 50% of CCIC members, which is a little higher than one would expect. We heard primarily from program delivery organizations (65%) followed by funders (25%) and volunteer senders (13%) and finally two policy organizations. While these methods yielded rich information, it is important to mention that participation in interviews, focus groups and the survey was voluntary, so we have been talking to people who cared enough about this issue to participate. It is also important to emphasize that these people were not necessarily speaking for their organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> David Kelleher and Rieky Stuart are Senior Associates of Gender at Work. The research in Quebec was undertaken in collaboration with Rita Soares Pinto (Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation Fellow) and the Quebec Committee on Women and Development of AQOCI.

<sup>2</sup> The Montreal focus group was held in conjunction with AQOCI. Participants included members from both councils.

This report will look first at the current organizational practices of CCIC members regarding gender equality, analyze what is blocking and helping movement on these issues and then propose ways that the sector might contribute to member organizations' development on this issue.

### What is the organizational practice of CCIC members?

We begin with the most observable practices. First of all, **gender equality is still women's work**. All 18 participants in the Ontario focus groups were women (three of the Montreal participants were men); all but one of 15 interviewees were women. The bulk of these were middle-level program staff, often with either formal or informal responsibility for gender equality. The majority of the survey respondents (72%) were women, and when asked who cares about gender in their organizations, 87.5% of respondents saw women as concerned about gender equality.

When you think of your organization, who is concerned about gender equality?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male staff	57.5%	23
Female staff	87.5%	35
Management	77.5%	31
Board	67.5%	27
Partners	57.5%	23
Donors/funders	65.0%	26
<i>answered question</i>		<b>40</b>

Another measure of interest in gender equality is the prominence of the issue in public documents such as web sites and mission statements. In a random sample of 35 members' web sites, approximately 30% mentioned gender equality or women's rights on the front page. This was generally a mention that gender equality or women's rights was part of their programming. In two cases there were links to substantive descriptions of work or recent news. The number of "mentions" was lower in a sample of AQOCI members.

The web survey also looked at mission statements and program descriptions. **Fewer than 50% of the organizations mentioned gender equality or women's rights or women's empowerment or girls' rights in the mission statement.** About 50% mentioned gender in their program description. Similar numbers were found in the AQOCI sample.

Often the number of women in management or on the board is seen as a measure of an organization's interest in gender equality. According to the survey, 46% of organizations have more than 50% of women on the board. It is also true that 53% of organizations do not have gender parity on the board.

What percentage of your board is female?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 25%	12.8%	5
25-50%	41.0%	16
More than 50%	46.2%	18
<i>answered question</i>		<b>39</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>1</b>

However, when we look at the largest organizations (annual budgets of \$15 million +) the numbers are quite different.

What percentage of your board is female? (Large organizations only)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 25%	50.0%	4
25-50%	37.5%	3
More than 50%	12.5%	1
<i>answered question</i>		<b>8</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>

When asked if gender balance has been changing, 62% of the large organizations reported that it had stayed the same over the last five years. Looking again at the total sample, a similar number report it staying the same but 37% reported more women. Two organizations reported having fewer women on the board.

In the past 5 years has gender balance on the board been changing?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, to more women	37.5%	15
Yes, to fewer women	5.0%	2
No, is about the same.	57.5%	23
<i>answered question</i>		<b>40</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>2</b>

Looking at management, in the total sample, 62% report having more than 50% of women in management. This number shrinks to 37% in the large organizations, although they report that 50% of them have between 25 and 50% of management positions filled by women. 60% of large organizations say the percentage of women in management hasn't changed in the past five years; 37% report more women in management in the past five years.

When asked about **gender policies, 88% of organizations report having one.** We also heard of some organizations for whom gender work was central and who didn't feel they needed a

policy. When we look at the members of AQOCI, the numbers are lower. Of the 25 organizations analyzed approximately 50% had a gender policy. This can be explained in part by the diversity of AQOCI membership. Interestingly, in the AQOCI sample, it was quite often the organizations working with reduced finances that didn't have a gender policy.

When asked whether the policy is used in organizational or programmatic decisions, 77% said yes. Looking at the comments though, we would surmise that in most cases, the policies are related to programmatic work and funding concerns as opposed to organizational process.

When asked who is accountable for the policy, the largest number said management (75%). Interestingly only 55% held program staff accountable and only 15% thought partners should be accountable. When asked whether relationships with Southern partners had been discontinued because of their lack of commitment to work on gender, 14% said yes.

Finally when asked to rate the commitment of their organization to work on gender equality, 57% rated it high.

<b>How would you rate the commitment of your organization regarding gender equality?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
High—We include gender equality in all our work	57.1%	24
Medium—It's important but we don't always include it	33.3%	14
Low—It is not a priority for us	9.5%	4
<i>answered question</i>		<b>42</b>

The numbers are lower in the larger organizations.

<b>How would you rate the commitment of your organization regarding gender equality? (Organizations with annual budgets of \$15M+ only)</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
High—We include gender equality in all our work	37.5%	3
Medium—It's important but we don't always include it	50.0%	4
Low—It is not a priority for us	12.5%	1

When asked about best practices, members cited a variety of approaches to increasing equity within their organizations and their programs.

One of the most frequently mentioned priorities was that of ensuring gender balance:

- *Our governing committee strives for balance in gender and regional representation.*
- *When organizing meetings or trainings with our partners, we formally request equal numbers of men and women.*
- *We don't hold meetings unless 50% of the participants are women.*

A number mentioned human resource policies that ensure women's participation in the workplace:

- *Allowing staff to work the hours that suit them either in the office or from home.*
- *Comprehensive tools for compensation, job classification and HR policies that standardize processes regardless of gender.*
- *Child care subsidies.*
- *Gender is taken into account when hiring.*

Three organizations mentioned the importance of women's leadership:

- *Two of three Executive Committee members are women.*
- *Inviting women to step into new experiences in leadership.*
- *Supporting organizations that are led by women.*

A number mentioned programmatic tools:

- *[We use] gender-sensitive results based indicators.*
- *Tracking tools that allow us to report disaggregated data*
- *A gender strategy for one of our programs that wasn't achieving equitable results*
- *Program guidelines for GAD [Gender and Development] dialogue with partners.*

In the interviews and the focus groups, **most participants agreed that there had been progress but that there is still a long way to go.** The next section discusses the blocks that organizations identified.

## What is blocking progress, what is moving us forward?

After years of UN conferences, numerous workshops, books, tools, studies, checklists, policies and exhortations, why has there not been more change? Why is gender equality such an

afterthought? Why is it that, after all this effort, a 2005 study of the Canadian development community could state:

Gender practitioners face many constraints and challenges in working to advance women's interests within ... development organizations. They may face antagonism, disrespect, derision, and sometimes even outright resistance by colleagues or managers who consider the integration of gender concerns to be peripheral, or possibly even irrelevant, to development policies and programming... Gender practitioners attempt to accomplish their work in spite of formidable resource constraints of staff, money, and time. This institutional social space provides gender practitioners with little respect or legitimacy, leaving them politically marginalized and often isolated.<sup>3</sup>

This comment, which was echoed by a number of our respondents, points to the depth of the organizational and personal changes that are required but that we have been unable to achieve in almost 30 years of effort in the Canadian development community. It also points to the less than tangible aspects of organizational life—attitudes, habits and organizational culture that prevent organizations from making real progress.

What did our respondents have to say about these issues?

First, it is important to realize that although there has been progress in some respects (post-secondary education, employment opportunities), Canada is far from a gender-equitable society—women are not equally represented in positions of either government or corporate leadership, women's salaries for the same work are still 20% or more less than men's, and women are much more likely to suffer from violence from an intimate partner. Moreover, there is not a societal sense that gender inequality is a problem. Our respondents told us that both men and women with whom they work don't see gender equality as an issue here in Canada. Canadian CSOs exist in an environment in which inequality is largely taken for granted.

Perhaps part of the reason gender equality doesn't have more visibility in Canada is that the Canadian women's movement has been in some decline and has not been able to speak with a unified, clear voice. Moreover, gender advocates in international CSOs feel unable to be part of the women's movement in Canada as they struggle to find time to manage the internal bureaucratic politics required to keep their program afloat. Srilatha Batliwala, a Harvard-based analyst, has recently written about the "NGOization" of movements and how this prevents women and their allies from enunciating a coherent political agenda.<sup>4</sup>

Although our study was not focused on societal dynamics, it is clear that these dynamics are the context which shapes what is possible within organizations. Within that larger context, respondents identified six factors that are hindering and in some ways helping movement.

These were:

- We have a policy but...
- Mindset
- Lack of knowledge, expertise and tools
- CIDA
- What does gender equality entail? (There is significant diversity in how people understand what gender inequality is, much less how to address it.)
- Organizational culture

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<sup>3</sup> Sarah Hendricks, "Advocates, Adversaries, and Anomalies: The Politics of Feminist Spaces in Gender and Development", *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, volume xxvi, special issue, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Srilatha Batliwala, Building Feminist Movements and Organizations: Clarifying our Concepts, [www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org), forthcoming.

## **We have a policy but...**

The overwhelming majority<sup>5</sup> of organizations report having a gender policy, but how it is used and what else is needed was the subject of considerable discussion. As well, some organizations said that they were well focused on equality issues and didn't need a gender policy. A number of respondents commented on how a policy allowed them to raise the issue in their organizations. Perhaps more importantly, the process of developing a policy (when done collaboratively) was seen as method of establishing a dialogue on gender issues within the organization. It was also seen as a tool for dialogue with partners.

But, many comments in the questionnaire and in the focus groups pointed out how the policy wasn't enough.

- *There is no one to accomplish it.*
- *There is a need to help staff translate ideas to their day-to-day work.*
- *It is not in a work plan.*
- *There are problems getting the various organizational levels (programming team, management, field, etc.) to commit to establishing a gender policy.*
- *There is a lack of tools for making these gender policies a reality. In certain cases where there have been institutional breakthroughs, through the implementation of a policy for example, this has brought about the development of monitoring tools and a systematization of procedures.*
- *Policy but, a lack of human resources assigned to the gender issue...*
- *The issue is accountability—it doesn't apply to all the departments.*
- *We have no tools or implementation plan—we need tools that move beyond the conventional stuff to actually look at the division of power in institutions.*
- *I didn't know we had a gender policy until just recently.*
- *The policy was adopted in 2006. The organization has not created an implementation strategy to complement the strategy nor do managers and others make decisions based on the commitments in the gender policy.*

A number of organizations are revising their policies.

- *We are revising it—it has to be a process, we are building consensus first then we will write it down.*

A small group of organizations didn't feel that a policy was particularly important

- *It is the practice that matters and that is because the ED [Executive Director] cares.*
- *While we do not have a written policy, gender and other equity concerns are at the forefront of our minds when planning and implementing projects or programmes.*
- *We are an organization that calls itself feminist; the questions of equality between men and women are at the heart of our mandate.*

Finally, a number of organizations commented that the policy was about work overseas but not about the organization itself.

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<sup>5</sup> 87% of survey respondents

- *The policy doesn't extend to our organization—its about the field but zilch about the organization itself.*
- *Our gender policy relates mostly to programs rather than our organizational life. The board has recently made a decision to take proactive steps to significantly increase the number of women serving on our Board.*

### **Mind set...**

An important theme in many of our discussions was the lack of time apportioned for work on gender equality. Although we met with some full-time gender specialists, generally, the work was done on a volunteer basis, not part of job descriptions or work plans. Furthermore, employee turnover, lack of expertise, lack of time, and lack of recognition for doing work that is not usually officially required, are all factors that make gender integration more complex.

We heard:

- *Job descriptions and levels of effort do not set aside the time or resources for those with expertise in the area to devote to gender equality work. This barrier goes hand-in-hand with the lack of knowledge and reticence at senior levels.*
- *We have sectoral networks in which each network has a full-time person but the gender network has no one.*
- *Even the board committee on gender has gone from 3 to 1. Gender is not a priority for the board to sign up for.*
- *Work on gender equality, and membership on the task force are volunteer jobs.*
- *Our organization had to choose between an environmental advisor and a gender advisor—they chose the environmental advisor because there is more money for environmental programs.*
- *There is no one working on this either regionally or at home.*
- *No understanding of how long a job it is to mainstream gender and you can't contract it out.*
- *It's an on-going struggle, people take stuff on.*

### **Lack of knowledge, expertise and tools**

Knowledge of gender equality, gender analysis and the gendered aspects of various sectors is not prevalent in most organizations. Participants stated:

- *If people are going to do it, they need to know how.*
- *When there is lots of turnover of staff, how do we ensure that the knowledge stays in the organization?*
- *We do a basic training (in gender) but if there are no tools to offer, then people can't apply it to their jobs.*
- *We need to regularly make sure we share a vision between ourselves and our partners.*
- *We need continuous training to apply the ideas to concrete situations.*

## CIDA

Many of our respondents emphasized CIDA's importance in getting their organizations' attention focused on gender equality:

- *CIDA has been key, we started because CIDA required it.*
- *It was a real change—CIDA required a gender analysis.*
- *CIDA has had a big impact.*
- *Their gender results framework was very important for us.*
- *The evaluations helped the leadership to see this is a problem.*
- *Their tools are useful—the policy and other tools.*
- *They pushed us to put it into words.*
- *Their pushing has been good for us.*
- *They recognized what we had done but asked for more: benchmarks beyond women beneficiaries.*
- *[CIDA pressure] has really worked with older men who don't really care but they do it.*
- *Progress in bilateral projects depends on donor leadership, intentional monitoring design and implementation indicators.*
- *Helped the leadership see that this was an overall justice question.*

Others have seen CIDA as a bit of a mixed blessing:

- *CIDA has been very influential but sometimes they have forced our partners to do what they didn't want to do. Partners' gender objectives were different.*
- *Their results framework is not helpful for work on gender—transformative change is not reducible to 3-year outcomes. It actually violates feminist process to think this way.*
- *They don't understand what is really required—transformative change can take 10 years but CIDA requires results now.*
- *Where is world view, culture in CIDA frameworks?*
- *We have gotten less than good feedback from CIDA. [Overall] we think we are doing good work but there is no mechanism for them to look at a volume of work.*

Some noticed how CIDA attention varies at different stages of the project cycle:

- *CIDA front ends their interest in gender—lots of emphasis at the beginning but then their attention gets less and so does ours.*
- *CIDA gender officers have influence at project development but not implementation.*

## More than women as beneficiaries

For many agencies there is considerable confusion about what is meant by “gender equality”.

One of the key distinctions is between women as victims/beneficiaries or as potential actors seeking empowerment. For some, ensuring that women benefit constitutes work on gender equality. Others would say that providing women with increased resources is a necessary but not sufficient condition for equality. It is also important to think about women’s role as actors in development. As some respondents said,

- *We have to figure out how to go beyond the numbers.*
- *Our work with women comes from compassion, humanitarianism, helping the weakest members of society. We are trying to move to an empowerment approach—that women add value to development and that they need to be more active in development.*
- *There is confusion between women benefiting and changing the dynamics of power. It might help to ask, how does this intervention affect a woman’s place in this society?*

Other organizations are concerned about pursuing “gender equality” (which implies a concern with the relationship between men and women) rather than women’s rights, which implies a focus on women and their needs for resources, voice and rights.

- *CIDA tells us to work on gender, not just women’s rights.*
- *Where is male participation, men have to change in order for the society to change.*

Finally for some organizations there is an effort to push the work beyond beneficiaries and rights to the basics of the culture itself.

- This work must touch world views.
- Trying to move from make-work projects and handicrafts to capacity development for income generation

Although, a number of organizations stressed the importance of practical needs as a place to start.

- We have to be careful—focus on the practical not the rights associated with feminism. The “feminism” word gets people’s backs up.

## Organizational culture

Organizational culture was pointed to as a major block to progress on gender equality (in one case, as the primary block). The descriptions we heard ran from an outright rejection of women in positions of influence and decision-making to more subtle exclusions of women and/or women’s issues.

Some of the descriptions of cultures included:

- *This is a patronizing, older male kind of place.*
- *Not part of our culture to have gender equity as part of our decision-making process; we let things happen and “hope for the best”; no focus.*

- *There has been a massive amount of progress in 15 years but making policy come true is a challenge in our organizational culture.*

Often, a male culture is kept in place by men in senior roles:

- *Lots of women at lower levels but board and executive are largely male.*
- *Culture not there even though there is 80% women staff.*

In some cases, the culture was very amenable to women's issues and gender equality:

- *It's not male dominated, there are traditional female values—caring, democratic, not patriarchal.*
- *We self describe as feminist, there is a co-management structure.*
- *We are struggling with the remnants of old boy culture, particularly in leadership but there are pockets of strong feminist leadership that push for women's issues.*
- *Gender is at a peak in our organization right now—people are getting excited, 15 years ago we were nowhere, there is a lot of desire to learn now.*
- *There is an acknowledgement of the time spent away from home. There is flex time.*

Of course, organizations are not monolithic:

- *There are sub cultures—different parts of the organization feel differently about this issue.*
- *What helps is that we share a Christian value system—this makes it possible to have dialogue within a shared set of values.*
- *The organization is generally amenable to working towards gender equality, but takes an ad hoc approach to this, with the driving motivation being funders' requirements rather than poverty reduction. While junior program and mid-level management are generally committed to gender equality at the program if not also the organizational level, senior management, still male, is not committed to working towards gender equality either at the programming or organization level. On one hand this is because senior management does not know what working towards gender equality entails. On the other it is because it is not considered to be a high priority.*

Often, societal expectations of women to be the primary child care provider make it difficult for women to be full members of organizations which have not made provisions such as flex time or limiting weekend meetings.

- *My colleague can only work here because her husband is on sabbatical,*

One comment emphasized how difficult work on culture can be:

- *Despite using all the standard gender analysis tools we were not able to get a significant degree of change in the attitude of men and women (both) toward women. In many cases women are more entrenched in their beliefs than their male counterparts.*

Finally, we asked what participants thought CCIC could do to help CSOs advance this agenda.

Generally, the suggestions have fallen into the following categories:

- Learning Forums—share best practices (gender policy development, gender audits, for example), connect with allies, help smaller CSOs with the basics, networking for gender focal points.
- What's new—keep us current, don't have time to keep up with what's new in the field and would appreciate a regular bulletin that had scanned the best sources for information relevant to Canadian CSOs; be a meta resource that points people to other sources.
- Dialogue with CIDA—CCIC could facilitate a better connection with CIDA on gender matters which would allow us to understand what they see as important, for us to advocate for certain approaches and for us to keep up to date on what is happening at CIDA on this issue. How can we be of support to gender allies within CIDA?
- Learning with partners—a learning program that allowed members and partners to learn together about best practices, would include travel to key countries to see examples of good programming; field training with partners.
- CCIC's own practice—CCIC should ensure that everything it does includes a gender perspective, policy work, meetings, all agendas, ... Strengthen Code of Ethics.
- Movements--Help us think about how to make connections between global and Canadian women's movements.
- Male senior managers—CCIC needs to help them see the bottom line in this, how can they get them involved?
- Find ways to make NGO collaboration on this issue possible, the recent example of the collaboration between VCAs shows what is possible. One direction for collaboration would be to work with the councils to raise visibility of the issue.
- Ensure that whatever we do it is aimed at the key blocks.

## An Analysis: How do we understand what is going on here?

In the past 15 years there has been considerable work on the question of what is a “gender-equitable organization”. This work is grounded in the understanding that organizations which do not exemplify gender equality in their own functioning are not likely to have the interest or capability to implement programs to further gender equality. An overview of this work is provided in Appendix 1.

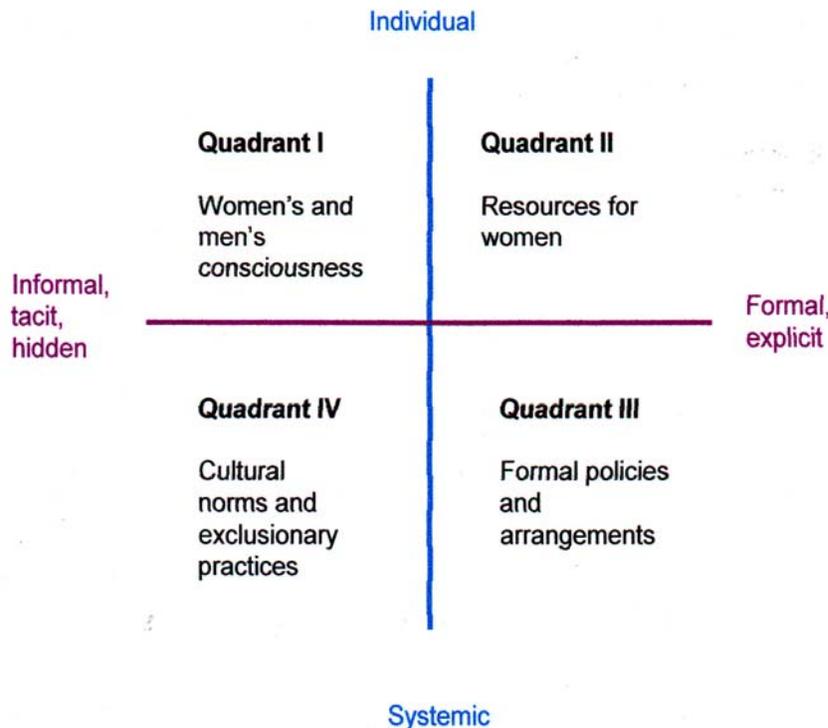
In the early days of this discussion, there was an understanding that women in leadership was an important step but it soon became apparent that it would require more than that. Similarly a gender policy was a good idea but, as we have seen in this research, it is far from enough. Similarly many organizations invested in gender training, but to little effect. The question was, what else is needed? What does a gender-equitable organization look like?

Gender at Work has developed an understanding of institutional change that has evolved from over a decade of practice, writing and conversations with colleagues in Asia, Africa, North America and Europe. What has grown out of this work is a conception of institutional change that is multi-factorial and holistic. It is concerned with the individual psychology of women and men, their access to resources and the social structures in which they live. Our conception is intervention-focussed—it begins from the point of view of an organization attempting to change the factors underlying inequality. We also begin with the assumption that organizations that are

not gender-equitable in their own functioning will be limited in what they can do to infuse gender equality into their work.

The following diagram is an adaptation of the work of Ken Wilber.<sup>6</sup> It shows the changes required inside the organization. There are two primary dimensions. The first is individual-systemic and the second is formal-informal.

**Figure 1 Organizational level**



The top two clusters are individual. Quadrant II is about resources: changes in measurable individual conditions (resources, voice, freedom from violence). Quadrant I is about individual consciousness (knowledge, skills, political consciousness and commitment to change toward equality). The bottom two clusters are systemic. The cluster on the right is of formal institutional rules as laid down in policy, strategy and other formal arrangements. The cluster on the left is the informal norms and cultural practices that maintain inequality in everyday practices. Change in one quadrant is related to change in the others.

Figure 1 shows these dimensions from the point of view of the organization. It reminds us to ask what resources are available to women (promotion, access to training, access to influence, and freedom from harassment, for example), but also shows that gender equality in an organization requires attention to the consciousness and learning of individual men and women (the top left quadrant). However, both of these top quadrants are concerned with *individual* change. What is also required is attention to the *systemic* or social aspects of the organization.

<sup>6</sup> Ken Wilber, *A Theory of Everything*, Boston: Shambala, 2000

The first of these (bottom right) is the set of formal policies procedures and arrangements such as presence of a gender policy, family-friendly human resource policies, an adequate budget for work on gender equality and well-developed programs to further gender equality.

The bottom left-hand quadrant is about *culture and informal norms and practices*. In the organization, this is what we have called the “deep structure of organizations” -- a collection of values, history, culture and practices that form the basis of organizational choices and behaviour, that are gendered, kept in place by power structures and often unquestioned.<sup>7</sup>

The deep structure may be likened to the unconscious of an individual in that it is largely out of our awareness and is unquestioned. Gender-positive aspects of the deep structure include:

- Acceptance and encouragement of women’s decision-making and agenda-setting.
- Values of equality that are exemplified in social, informal and work relationships between women and men.
- Acceptance of women’s “triple role” (career, family and community) and its implications for participation in the work of the organization.
- Belief in the importance of work on gender equality and informal reward structure for this area of work.

This framework allows us to see what an organization should look like if it is to be experienced as equitable by women and men inside the organization and if it is to be capable of developing and implementing programs that further gender equality. It:

- is staffed by men and women who are knowledgeable and committed to gender equality;
- provides opportunities for women to advance to positions of influence, ensures they are paid equitably and have access to the resources they need to perform at their best;
- has policies regarding organizational and programmatic aspects of gender equality, has family-friendly human resource policies, has budget, strategy and program tools and an accountability mechanism that ensures implementation;
- has an organizational culture that values women as colleagues and their legitimate place in decision-making. It values and rewards work on gender equality.

Using this framework, how do we understand the information we have in this study. Broadly, what is the situation of Canadian CSOs?

Looking first at Quadrant 1, although many organizations feel the issue is important, with the exception of two organizations we have heard very little about efforts to train staff and to build an awareness of gender issues. We have heard of successful training associated with gender audits and development of organization-specific tools. In fact, gender audits in themselves can be vehicles for building awareness and understanding of this issue if they are done in a participative way. A number of respondents mentioned that while they had done gender training in the past, staff turnover has meant that current staff doesn’t have these understandings. Two interviewees emphasized how important it was to learn with partners.

Overall, it is fair to say that the level of knowledge and commitment to gender issues in the organizations we spoke with is quite low.

Looking at Quadrant II, the most interesting finding is the difference between large and smaller organizations. Small CSOs are more likely to have a strong representation of women in senior

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<sup>7</sup> Aruna Rao, Rieky Stuart, David Kelleher, *Gender at Work: Organizational Change for Equality*, Kumarian Press, 1998.

management and on the board. The second question is whether or not women have the resources they need to work on gender issues. What we heard was that, in almost every case, gender work was under-resourced, the work was voluntary or informal, and in some cases there was no one working on gender equality in the organization.

Looking at Quadrant III, the area of formal policies and arrangements—this is probably where there has been most effort at an organizational level (as opposed to the efforts of individual advocates). Recall that 88% of the survey respondents and virtually all of the interviewees reported having a policy. Moreover, 77% felt that the policy had an effect on organizational decision-making. This was contradicted by the focus groups and interviewees, who felt that the policy wasn't leading to good programming because of lack of resources, low priority or lack of interest of senior management. When asked whether they had tools to ensure that gender equality was part of all programs, 42% said yes. No organization spoke to us about strategies for implementing their policy, although some may be in place. A number of organizations reported family-friendly arrangements such as flex time, but it was clear in a number of the discussions that because women generally have the primary responsibility for child care it was difficult for women to commit to the pattern of travel, long hours and weekend meetings that are such a part of work in this sector.

Looking at Quadrant IV, organizational culture, we see that the idea of gender equality is by and large not present in the organizational cultures of the majority of Canadian CSOs. This is shown by the marginalization that is felt by gender advocates, the lack of resources devoted to work on gender equality, and the lack of priority given the work by senior managers and boards.

The chart below summarizes these observations.

<p><b>Quadrant I: Knowledge and commitment:</b></p>	<p><b>Quadrant II: Resources for women:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Some training and gender audits</li> <li>- Staff generally feel less than capable</li> <li>- Low commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Women in management and boards in smaller organizations</li> <li>- Large organizations' leadership dominated by men</li> </ul>
<p><b>Quadrant IV: Organizational Culture:</b></p>	<p><b>Quadrant III: Formal policy and arrangements:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender idea not present</li> <li>- No priority</li> <li>- Advocates marginalized</li> <li>- Gender work is undervalued</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Almost all have gender policies</li> <li>+ Many have family-friendly policies</li> <li>+ Many have tools, some feel more tools needed</li> <li>- Few have implementation strategies</li> <li>- Insufficient resources for gender work</li> </ul>

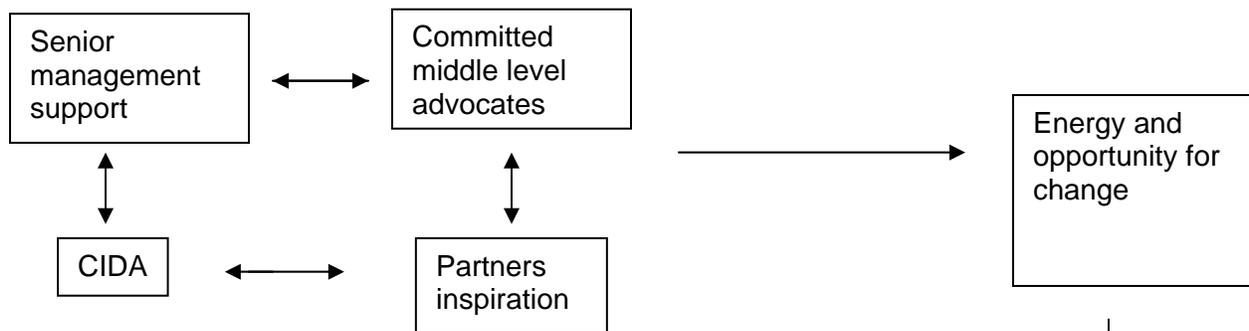
Given this analysis, what is the path to change? The diagram on the following page describes the process of moving toward more a "gender-capable" organization.

## Steps to a gender capable organization

How can we understand how these and other factors can work together to stimulate change? The diagram below shows how various factors combine to lead to organizational change toward a more gender capable organization.

First, all of this exists within a societal context that is not particularly supportive of work on gender equality. This means that few organizations will devote the time, energy and resources to effective gender equality work unless pressured or otherwise energized to do so.

### Within a societal context of indifference...



What is required is a combination of pressure from CIDA, senior management support, inspiration from partners and generally, most important, a committed group of middle level advocates who are lobbying for change. This combination of factors can build energy and the possibility of change. But what is needed at this stage is a group skilled in organizational politics that can translate this energy into accomplishment.

If this group is able to build the alliances, develop the vision, hone their analysis, negotiate space and make the deals, it is possible that they will develop the infrastructure that is required to go from promise to practice.

This infrastructure includes:

- Policy
- Organizational process—tools, budgets, human resources, training
- Women in leadership positions
- Organizational culture that sees gender equality as a key part of development and includes both men and women in the articulation of organizational strategy

- Program that can inspire all
- Organizational process — tools, training, human resources, accountability mechanisms
- Women in leadership positions
- Culture that values work on gender equality, inclusive of women and men

This conception allows us to think more clearly about intervention. How can CCIC best intervene to help members on their path from promise to practice?

Looking again at the diagram there are (at least) the following options for the sector to consider in its development toward more gender-equitable organizations:

- At a societal level—it may be possible to create a movement analogous to Make Poverty History to attempt to change Canadian attitudes toward gender equality.
- Advocates could work with CIDA to develop ways in which CIDA could be of most influence.
- Senior managers (particularly of larger CSOs) need to be able to see how considerations of gender equality are not only a question of justice but are required for the accomplishment of all the Millennium Development Goals.
- Middle-level advocates need information, training, opportunities to meet and strategize, and to share best practices.
- There needs to be more awareness of organizational politics and political strategy and sharing of what works in what situations.

To give us some perspectives on these directions we include the following reflection on the past 20 years by Rieky Stuart.

## Second Generation Reflections

By Rieky Stuart

Almost 20 years ago – a generation – I was actively involved in promoting gender equality in Canadian NGOs, in CIDA, and with CSOs and governments in Africa and Asia. For CCIC, I led the team that developed “Two Halves Make a Whole”, the resource book for NGOs wanting to implement gender equality initiatives, and co-authored, with Betty Plewes, the action research about Canadian NGO gender policies that we reported as “Gender Work is Never Done”.

So what’s different now? At that time, there was a group of mainly women activists at the middle level of CSOs who felt they were struggling to convince their colleagues and their bosses that gender equality is important in its own right, and as a determinant of sustainable development. They drew strength from each other as they tried to figure out how to make a difference in the face of organizational indifference and sometimes individual hostility from colleagues. CIDA and CCIC and organizations like the Aga Khan Foundation invested in bringing some of the world’s leading thinkers in this area – Mary Anderson, Kate Cloud, Caroline Moser, Kate Young – to conferences and workshops to help us figure out what could work. The frameworks and analysis these feminists had developed were powerful tools for understanding and for change. While there were few women CEOs in the community, we were confident that more women –especially feminist women – would take on leadership positions in the future, and that they would make a difference.

What strikes me today is that the people we met in our recent study for CCIC were a new generation of CSO staff with the same kinds of values and drive that existed at the time. But while there is more evidence and acceptance of the importance of gender equality, and less hostility, there is perhaps more indifference. Policies are in place, but they are not followed through. The intellectual resources that were available to us still exist, but are not easy to find – there is no collective or organizational support for them – with a few notable exceptions. And the masculine leadership for large organizations is more pronounced than ever. Women’s leadership is even more concentrated in small, poorly resourced organizations. Where women have led, their feminist influence has had some impact, but it is nowhere near enough to change the massive cultural pressures that maintain gendered divisions of labour and responsibility in the workplace, the family and our societies.

Gender equality epitomizes, for me, the deep dilemmas of systemic change. As the framework that Gender at Work has developed shows, systemic change is not a question of revolution or of getting the tools right. Since everything in a system has complex relationships to everything else, creating systems change is a matter of values, strategy, persistence – and luck. Who knows where the tipping point will come? The work we have done to legitimize – and make matter of course – the importance and validity of gender equality is necessary but not sufficient. The multitudes of women who have had an education that has changed their life path and that of their children and families will bring new possibilities to their families and societies.

The CSO feminist activists of today don't need to re-invent the wheel by searching for 'tools' and 'policies'. Those exist, and were created for the world of 'development assistance'. They can organize a study group on Kate Young or Caroline Moser, and critique the Harvard and Moser frameworks to update them and see whether/how they are still relevant. There is a wealth of Canadian resource people who would be more than willing to help.

Part of the way forward is to build on that base by thinking about how human systems change, and how to mobilize to support that change. The work on anti-smoking, climate change, fair trade and other collaborative campaigning efforts provide an interesting place to start. CSOs that relate to the aid regime are often constrained by funding (both public fundraising and official aid funding) to frame their work in terms of the aid regime. In future, looking critically at how aid constrains as well as provides a useful tool is one promising way to move the gender equality agenda forward.

## Appendix: Frameworks for Understanding Gender Equality in Organizational Practice

The past fifteen years has seen the development of an “organizational” approach to working on gender equality. Although there had been some work on how corporations were unequal from a gender point of view, Anne Marie Goetz’s paper on Gender and Administration was one of the first to demonstrate the link between a gendered development organization and the inability of that organization to deliver gender-equitable services.<sup>8</sup> In the early 90’s there were a variety of efforts to bring the tools of organizational change and organizational development to the problem of gender equality. A number of international conferences and books focused attention on the importance of organizational capacity to delivering services in an equitable manner.<sup>9</sup>

More recently, there have been a number of steps forward. One important step was the CIDA results framework, published in 2005, which included an institutional analysis for use in analyzing the gender equality capacity of partners.<sup>10</sup> CIDA’s tool looks at six areas:

- Monitoring for gender equality results
- Mandate, goals related to gender equality
- An enabling environment
- Policy frameworks
- Commitment as seen in resources allocated, speeches of the leadership, etc
- Gender balance and employment equity

Another contribution has been Novib’s work with their 9 Box model.<sup>11</sup>

	<b>MISSION AND OVERALL STRATEGY</b>	<b>STRUCTURE</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>
<b>TECHNICAL ASPECTS</b>	1. Policy 2. Planning and budgeting 3. Monitoring and evaluation	Systems, procedures and facilities reflect gender sensitiveness	Expertise & staff capacity/ responsibility
<b>POLITICAL ASPECTS</b>	People who influence the technical aspects: - Members of upper and middle management are committed and dedicated to GJ	Decision-making: - Management takes GJ issue into account when making decisions	Room to manoeuvre: - Work on GJ issues (e.g. diversity of leadership styles) is overtly valued
<b>CULTURAL ASPECTS</b>	Organizational culture: - Openness to change towards a more favourable environment for women;	Partnership & Learning: - Cooperation and support among staff reflect concern about GJ issues	Attitudes and beliefs of staff: - Staff is convinced that GJ is crucial to their work and put it into practice

<sup>8</sup> A-M. Goetz, Gender and Administration, *IDS Bulletin*, 1992.

<sup>9</sup> See for example, Goetz, *Getting Institutions Right for Women*, Porter et al, *Gender Works* and Rao et al., *Gender at Work*

<sup>10</sup> CIDA Framework for Gender Equality Results, [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/GenderEquality3/\\$file/GE-framework.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/GenderEquality3/$file/GE-framework.pdf)

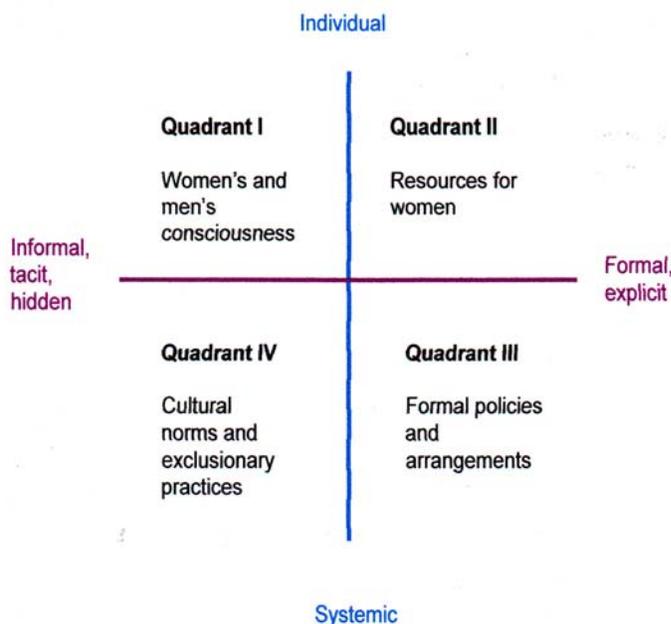
<sup>11</sup> M. Mukopodyay, G. Steehouwer, F. Wong, *Politics of the Possible*, KIT/Oxfam Novib, 2006

This analytic tool was the basis for work with Novib partners. The tool, adapted from organizational development, directs attention to the technical, political and cultural aspects of organizational life. In each of these three aspects Novib asked about mission, structure and human resources. This analysis gives them the gender justice (GJ) model below:

In an effort to integrate these and other frameworks, Gender at Work, an international research and capacity-building organization, developed an integral approach, which has been used with CSOs in Asia, Africa and North America as well as in UN agencies.

The framework, like others is multi-factorial and holistic. It is concerned with both the individual psychology of women and men, their access to resources and the social and organizational structures in which they live. It also begins with the assumption that organizations that are not gender-equitable in their own functioning will be limited in what they can do to infuse gender equality into their work.

The framework focuses on organization first and leads us to ask about resources available to women staff (promotion, access to training, access to influence, and freedom from harassment,



for example) but also shows that gender equality in an organization requires attention to the consciousness and learning of individual men and women (the top left quadrant). However, both of these top quadrants are concerned with *individual* change. What is also required is attention to the *systemic* or social aspects of the organization.

The first of these (bottom right) is the set of formal policies procedures and arrangements such as presence of a gender policy, family-friendly human resource policies, an adequate budget for work on gender equality and well-developed programs to further gender equality and strong monitoring systems.

The bottom left hand quadrant is about *culture and informal norms and practices*. In the organization, this is what we have called this the “deep structure of organizations” – a collection of values, history, culture and practices that form the basis of organizational choices and behaviour, that are gendered, kept in place by power structures and are often unquestioned.<sup>12</sup>

The deep structure may be likened to the unconscious of individuals in that it is largely out of awareness and is unquestioned. Areas of inquiry regarding the deep structure include:

- Acceptance and encouragement of women's decision-making and agenda-setting;

<sup>12</sup> A.Rao, R.Stuart and D.Kelleher, *Gender at Work : Organizational Change for Equality* : Kumarian, 1998. See also, Rao and Kelleher, Is There Life after Gender Mainstreaming, [www.genderatwork.org](http://www.genderatwork.org)

- Values of equality that are exemplified in social, informal and work relationships between women and men;
- Acceptance of women's "triple role" and its implications for participation in the work of the organization, and efforts to rebalance work and life to benefit both women and men;
- Belief in the importance of work on gender equality and informal reward structure for this area of work.

Organizations that have worked with this framework have found it helpful in two ways. First it shows how a "gender capable" organization is more than a policy and women in management. Secondly it allows them to see what has been accomplished and what remains to be done to build an organization that is gender-equitable.