



Where are the **women** in LSPs?

Women's representation in
Local Strategic Partnerships

By Elin Gudnadottir, Sue Smith,
Sue Robson and Darlene Corry



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First edition 2007

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Book Design: Tony Hillman
Printed in the UK by Eyemedia

Published by Urban Forum,
33 Corsham Street, London N1 6DR

First published 2007

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Women's Resource Centre,
2007

ISBN 978-0-9551421-2-3

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CONTENTS

2	Executive Summary
4	Introduction
5	Methodology
6	Background and Policy Context
6	Local Strategic Partnerships
7	The Local Government White Paper
8	The Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CHR)
8	The Gender Equality Duty
9	The Duty's significance for LSPs
9	Gender equality and local decision-making
11	Research Findings
12	Women's representation in LSPs
15	Supporting women's engagement
16	Monitoring women's representation
17	What women's issues are being raised at LSPs?
18	The Gender Equality Duty
19	Conclusions and recommendations
19	Where are the women in LSPs?
20	What women's issues are being raised at LSPs?
21	How can LSPs engage with women's organisations?
21	How can women's greater representation be supported?
22	How can women's presence be monitored?
22	How can public bodies use the Gender Equality Duty?
23	Further work and next steps
24	Appendix A
	Women's Organisations' Representation on Local Strategic Partnerships
25	Appendix B
	Literature review on gender mainstreaming
29	Appendix C
	Guidelines for women's greater participation and representation
31	Bibliography and References

Executive Summary

In England decisions that affect the welfare of local communities and the services they receive are increasingly being taken at a local level. The recent Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities* (CLG, 2006) emphasises the importance of community involvement in local decision-making. It also places greater importance on Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Local Area Agreement (LAA) to deliver services.

The way to secure transparent and better decision-making is to include women. Women representatives are more likely to focus on social services, the safety of women and children, and gender equality. The new Gender Equality Duty requires all public authorities to promote gender equality and remove discrimination. Using these opportunities, Urban Forum, Oxfam and Women's Resource Centre (WRC) researched women's representation on LSPs, the engagement of women's organisations with LSPs and what issues affecting women are being raised in LSP business.

LSPs typically have a central board or executive, where key decisions are made, and a range of other themed groups which feed into this central board, such as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). They are made up of representatives of local councils, other public sector bodies, local businesses and local voluntary and community organisations.

Where are the women on LSPs?

- ☼ 28% of Chairs of central LSPs boards are women, roughly equivalent to the percentage of women councillors
- ☼ Only 19% of Chairs are women on different LSP groups within LSPs.
- ☼ Women are more likely to be community representatives, thematic partnership representatives or administrators on central LSP boards.

What women's issues are being raised?

- ☼ Women's issues raised most frequently are problems such as teenage pregnancy and domestic violence, reflecting national and local government targets.
- ☼ No LSP demonstrated awareness that all issues have a gender perspective, such as public service delivery in transport or economic development.

Are LSPs engaging with women's organisations?

- ☼ Women's organisations represent around 7% of the total voluntary and community sector, but on LSPs were only 1.8% of voluntary sector representatives.
- ☼ This means they are significantly under-represented in relation to their size in the sector.

How are LSPs supporting women's representation?

- ☼ Support mechanisms for the engagement of community members are sometimes available, but few are specifically tailored to women.
- ☼ 72% of LSPs surveyed did not provide any specific support for women to engage in their business or structures.
- ☼ LSPs reflect wider societal structure where men are still in the majority in senior positions.
- ☼ The few LSPs that provided support for women emphasised that proper engagement and support takes time.



Is women's presence on LSPs being monitored?

- ☀ Over 80% of LSPs did not monitor women's representation.
- ☀ Four LSPs monitored gender representation in an informal way.
- ☀ Five respondents monitored the representation of different equalities groups.

The Gender Equality Duty

- ☀ 70% of LSP respondents said they were aware of the Gender Equality Duty.
- ☀ No LSP interviewed was developing gender equality scheme. Some were considering it, although not as an immediate priority.

Key conclusions and recommendations

- ☀ **The Government should set up and resource a scheme for LSPs and other local bodies to learn from good practice in representing women in decision-making.**
- ☀ **Women's representation on LSPs, especially at senior level, is too low, and can be regarded as discriminatory. LSPs need to examine gender representation, and set targets for improvement.**
- ☀ **LSPs do not know enough about the different needs and experiences of women and men. They should strengthen their data sources on gender, use them to identify how mainstream issues affect women and men differently, and use this information to shape Local Area Agreement targets and other plans.**
- ☀ **Women's organisations are insufficiently represented in relation to their size and their expertise. LSPs should ensure the full involvement of women's organisations in LSPs at all levels.**
- ☀ **LSPs do not do enough to support greater representation of women, particularly at senior level. Positive action is needed to encourage and support them, through such mechanisms as the National Improvement Strategy.**
- ☀ **LSPs simply do not know enough about who is represented on them. LSP partners should collect, analyse, use and report on gender-disaggregated data as part of routine performance management.**
- ☀ **While we acknowledge that LSPs may have limited capacity, they have obligations under the Gender Equality Duty to tackle discrimination. Local Authorities need to take the lead in examining the responsibilities of the Partnership, and taking action.**

Introduction

How do we create a fair and just society? How do we make sure that different views are being taken into account and that marginalised voices are heard? How can we steer away from corruption and decision-making that only benefit the few? One of the answers is to include more women in governance and politics.

Research conducted by different institutions, including the World Bank, has shown that high numbers of women in governance results in greater transparency and better decision making. Women representatives are more likely to focus on issues such as social services, the environment, the safety of women and children and gender equality (Hunt, 2007).

In England decisions that affect the welfare of local communities and the services they receive are increasingly being taken at a local level. It is therefore essential that the decision making process is inclusive and transparent, making room for diverse views to be heard so that the best decisions can be made.

The aim of this research is to look at women's representation in Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) which are becoming increasingly more important in local decision making in England. The main aim is to promote gender equality in LSPs. More precisely, the research looks at how and at what level women are represented in the structure of LSPs, whether women's organisations are fully included in LSP representative structures, whether gender issues are considered as part of LSP business, and how these issues are raised within LSPs.

The trigger for this research is the Gender Equality Duty (GED), which came into force in April 2007, and requires public authorities to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination. The Gender Duty will affect policy-making, public services and employment practices such as recruitment and flexible working. It will apply to all partnership arrangements and agreements, where partners are delivering public services. Since LSPs are becoming increasingly important in developing, coordinating and improving services in localities it is important that women are adequately involved.

This research affirms the findings of other studies, many of which are listed in the literature review (Appendix B). The findings help to build a more accurate picture of gender equality in LSPs, and raise awareness of the need for greater participation by women across the range of regeneration structures, particularly at the most senior level. This is initial research: there is more work to do in examining how a gendered analysis can highlight how policies and practice impact differently on women and men, and how women's issues (by which we mean simply those issues impacting on women) are picked up and tackled in partnership working, now that public authorities are obliged to implement the Gender Equality Duty.

This is a joint project between Urban Forum, Oxfam and the Women's Resource Centre (WRC). Each organisation has a different area of expertise, spanning from gender and regeneration to local government and the women's voluntary and community sector.

Our analysis and conclusions are drawn from the results of the survey, and supplemented by the experience of our organisations. We draw on the expertise of working on gender issues in the field of regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and with the women's voluntary and community sector.

First this report will look at the methodology. Secondly the policy context for women's participation and representation is explained. Thirdly the findings are presented and finally, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made.

Methodology

This research was carried out in two stages: an online questionnaire, followed by targeted telephone interviews. Alongside the two stages an audit was carried out to collect data on the representation of women's organisations in county and district Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) across England.

Online questionnaire

Stage One consisted of an online questionnaire sent to 368 contacts covering all LSPs in England. Contacts for the LSPs were obtained from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and through a web search. Sixty-one (17%) responses were collected.

The aim of this stage was to reach as many LSPs as possible to find out about women's representation on them. There were two sections to the questionnaire. Section A covered background questions about the respondent and the LSP. Section B asked questions specifically on women's representation, and women's issues in the LSP. Respondents were also asked if they wanted to participate in further research.

Telephone interviews

Stage Two consisted of 29 telephone interviews, carried out by WRC, Oxfam and Urban Forum. The respondents contacted, had a higher number of women represented on their LSPs; they monitored participation of women and men; gave support to women and/or identified that women's issues had been raised at their LSPs. The aim of the second stage was to elaborate on the information gathered in Stage One, in order to gather more detailed information about the barriers and reasons for women's low representation on LSPs, and to identify good practice. Respondents were asked whether women's issues were raised at LSPs, and the interviewers had a checklist of "women's issues" to prompt any question about what they were.

Representation of women's organisations

Internet research was carried out to collect data from websites of local authorities and their LSPs. Each LSP was researched individually and the details of their membership were recorded. This included the number of members either overall or on the central board; how many of these were voluntary or community organisations, and then how many of these were women's organisations. Out of 379 identified LSPs, 275 (72%) had accessible membership data. (See Appendix A).

Alongside this primary research, a literature review was carried out of "gender mainstreaming" (See Appendix B). This illustrates the research of academics and the experience of organisations studying how, and how effectively, gender equality has been integrated into regeneration, anti-poverty, and democratic practice in the UK. It highlights mechanisms to achieve this, levels of success and forms a benchmark against which the research can be measured. We also included simple guidelines for increasing women's participation and representation (See Appendix C).

Where are the
women in LSPs?



Background and Policy Context

Local Strategic Partnerships

The Government introduced Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in 2000 in England. LSPs are a way of bringing together local people, including public sector organisations, voluntary and community organisations, and business to work to improve the local quality of life. LSPs aim to improve the way that local services are planned and delivered. They help local agencies and others to focus on improving the quality of life and leadership in a locality by getting communities involved in their design and delivery of public services. This includes major public services like education, health, housing, police and social services.

The role and the responsibility of LSPs can be summarised in the following:

- ✿ LSPs are responsible for producing the Sustainable Community Strategy. This is a plan that draws on and influences future plans from all key local organisations. It sets out the priorities for an area, and how services can be improved and delivered in way that increases the environmental, social and economic well-being of a community.¹
- ✿ Local Strategic Partnerships develop the strategy for delivering services through a Local Area Agreement (LAA). This is a three year 'contract' between a local area (represented by the local authority and other partners through the Local Strategic Partnership) and central Government to deliver particular priorities as set out in its Sustainable Community Strategy.
- ✿ LSPs are critical in ensuring robust implementation of forthcoming legislation such as the Local Government White Paper (or Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill 2006-7), in which a key driver is devolution of power to local level. The Act places greater emphasis on community engagement and civic participation, and acknowledges the need for greater involvement of voluntary and community organisations.

¹ The LSP Guide 2006, third edition, www.urbanforum.org.uk/pubs/index.html

- ✿ The performance of LSPs is monitored through regional Government Offices. LSPs can develop their own performance management frameworks but they must include the following three elements:
 - reviewing outcomes (previously reviewing delivery)
 - reviewing partnership working
 - improvement planning
- ✿ Information guidance issued to LSPs by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, now CLG, emphasises the importance of care in ensuring that equalities law and guidance is taken into account by partnerships.²
- ✿ The core requirements of this guidance for 2005-2006 also state the need for 'addressing race equality and diversity, in particular the issues faced by disadvantaged groups and excluded communities.'

The Local Government White Paper

The Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities* (2006)³ aims "to give local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives". Overall, the government aims to devolve power to cities and regions and allow for flexibility to include local issues. It proposes to:

- ✿ make services more responsive and empower communities
- ✿ strengthen the role of councillors
- ✿ devolve power to cities and strategic regions
- ✿ strengthen the role of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Local Area Agreements (LAAs)
- ✿ provide a new performance framework
- ✿ create the 'Third Sector Strategy', which sets will set out the framework for engagement with the sector.
- ✿ set a new standard of representation of voluntary and community sector representation on LSPs
- ✿ create a new 'Duty to Involve', which will mean local authorities have a legal obligation to consult and engage meaningfully with local communities
- ✿ affirm the importance of local government working with partners in transforming local services
- ✿ require that community cohesion be central to community strategies and LAAs

It aims to place the voluntary and community sector on a level playing field with other service providers and to involve communities in shaping local services through petitions, community call for action and local charters. It also emphasises the role of the Third Sector in "shaping localities", and calls for more sustainable and long-term funding for local voluntary and community organisations. The White Paper has now become the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill 2006-07.

2 *The LSP Guide 2006, third edition, www.urbanforum.org.uk/pubs/index.html*

3 *Strong and prosperous communities: the Local Government White Paper (2006)*

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)

The new Commission, due to be launched in October 2007, will be the independent advocate for equality and human rights in Britain. The CEHR aims to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations between people, and promote and protect human rights.

The CEHR will take on all of the powers of the existing Commissions, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), as well as new powers to enforce legislation more effectively and promote equality for all. It is a statutory body, established under the Equality Act 2006, which will enforce equality legislation on age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and transgender status, and encourage compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998. The CEHR will act directly and by fostering partnerships at local, regional and national levels.⁴

The Gender Equality Duty

The Gender Equality Duty, or the Duty, came into force in April 2007. It requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment. The duty covers all the functions of a public authority, such as policy-making, public services, and employment. The Duty places legal responsibility on public authorities to demonstrate that they treat men and women fairly, which means they need to identify and prevent discrimination rather than react to problems when they occur. The new duty represents a change from previous legislation in that it requires public bodies to be pro-active in promoting gender equality.⁵

The legislation also introduces specific duties to assist in meeting the general duty which requires that public bodies;

- ✿ prepare and publish a gender equality scheme (by 30th April 2007) showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives.
- ✿ consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.
- ✿ gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- ✿ consult stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and other key stakeholders, such as trade unions and women's organisations) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
- ✿ assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality.
- ✿ implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.
- ✿ report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

The EOC's Code of Practice explains the gender duty in full. The EOC has also produced guidance for different sectors and issues, including guidance for how local government can implement the gender duty.⁶

⁴ <http://www.cehr.org.uk/content/purpose.rhtm>

⁵ EOC Overview Guidance on the Gender Equality Duty for public bodies

⁶ EOC guidance: The gender equality duty and local government

The Duty's Significance for LSPs

The Gender Equality Duty was developed in response to continued systematic discrimination against women, in terms of employment, access to services, political representation, care, leisure and personal safety. Existing social, cultural and institutional practices mean that women's inequality is still persistent and widespread.⁷ In this report we examine one aspect of discrimination against women in the decision-making arena, but it is important to recognise that there are many other areas of gender inequality which are not covered here.

The Duty represents the biggest step forward for gender equality since the Sex Discrimination Act, 1975. Rather than relying on individuals to make a case, it places a proactive obligation on public bodies. It applies to the delivery of services as well as employment practice. The Duty has the potential to bring about real change in the culture of public organisations and the onus will be on organisations to promote equality, rather than on individuals to appeal against specific instances.

Local authorities are subject to the Gender Equality Duty and therefore need to ensure that any work they do in partnership with others, including Local Strategic Partnerships, contributes to their delivery of the Duty.

The Gender Equality Duty applies to different organisations in different ways within those partnerships. In an LSP, for example, some partners will be subject to the Duty in their own right (because they are public bodies, or they are private or voluntary sector organisations delivering services on behalf of a public body) but others will not. The relevant partners need to co-operate with the authority in order for the partnership to work.

EOC Guidance clearly states that local authorities must ensure that all partnership work, including LSPs, is included in their Gender Equality Schemes.⁸ A Gender Equality Scheme could also be written by the LSP itself as good practice, to outline the responsibilities of all partners in working to promote gender equality. This means that gender equality within the work of partnership groups, including women's representation and participation, needs to be addressed, either within each relevant partners' Gender Equality Scheme (GES), or in a joint GES for the partnership.

Gender Equality and Local Decision-Making

Women continue to be significantly under-represented in decision-making. In 2006 only 20% of MPs in the UK were women, with only two from black or minority ethnic groups.⁹ 26% of Members of European Parliament (MEPs) are women, and only one of them is from a black or minority ethnic group (BME group).¹⁰

Just over a quarter of local authority councillors are women, and no region has reached the threshold of one-third female councillors. Only 2% of local councillors were BME women in 2006.¹¹ Men still make up more than 70% of councillors¹², and only 13% of local authority chief executives are female.¹³ The Local Government White Paper recognises the need for greater diversity of representation among local councillors, including greater representation of women.

⁷ EOC. *Guidance on the gender equality duty for the voluntary and community sector (England), 2007.* www.eoc.org.uk/Docs/Voluntary_and_community_sector.rtf

⁸ EOC. *The gender equality duty and local government guidance for public authorities in England, 2007.* www.eoc.org.uk/Docs/Local_Government_Guidance.doc

⁹ EOC, 2007. *Sex and Power: Who runs Britain?*, London (www.eoc.org.uk/pdf/sexandpower_GB_2007.pdf)

¹⁰ *Operation Black Vote website* (www.obv.org.uk)

¹¹ *Fawcett Society website* (www.fawcettsociety.org.uk)

¹² *Fawcett Society* (www.fawcettsociety.org.uk)

¹³ *Equal Opportunities Commission* (www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=0)

Where are the women in LSPs?

So why does gender balance in decision-making matter? International and European requirements point out that empirically, gender balance leads to better policy making.¹³ The UN Conference on Women in 1995 Action Plan called for a 50-50 split on decision-making bodies as essential for democracy and equality. Its Beijing Platform for Action also specified that a minimum membership of 33% by women on decision-making bodies was necessary before any change in culture could take place.¹⁵

So gender balance is a necessary condition for women's participation, or for women's issues to be raised. However, this is not sufficient. A study by the Manchester Women's Network of Local Strategic Partnerships¹⁶ found that even when women were equal in numbers on partnership bodies, they spoke less than their counterparts. A study in Scotland on women's partnership working found that even when women were represented on partnership bodies, they did not raise issues of importance to them as women. The importance of women's active input of their concerns to the regeneration decision-making process, has been recorded in the Oxfam ReGender project.¹⁷

Raising women's issues in LSPs

It is important that partnerships hear about issues that are important in the daily lives of ordinary women, and that they are well represented on LSPs. It will give LSPs a better understanding of the daily reality from those closest to the ground, and a better chance of improving service delivery. Therefore it is important that there is an equal balance of women to men representatives at all levels of the LSP. However, it is equally important that women's and men's different experiences are actually visible in LSP business.

The existence of gender balance in representation will not necessarily make visible the differences between women's and men's lives and experience. For example, gendered transport needs are different - women use public transport more. Women have different needs in terms of the location of paid employment, as locally available work is often what they have to choose to meet their caring responsibilities effectively. EOC guidance for local government in implementing the Gender Equality Duty makes this clear, saying "differing needs of men and women are often not identified and addressed in local strategies such as housing, regeneration and transport".¹⁸ Women may raise these issues, but often they do not. As indicated in the Gender Equality Duty, they are essential to tackling discrimination in service delivery, and should be considered in the planning and delivery of mainstream services.

Women's voluntary and community organisations

There are over 30,000 women's organisations working across England and Wales. Women's voluntary and community organisations are experts in promoting and working towards gender equality. Women's groups provide valuable, and often life-saving, services and support to thousands of women as well as challenging discrimination against women. They have expertise and experience in identifying and meeting local women's needs, they work with some of the most marginalised and forgotten communities of women who do not engage with statutory services, and they are a crucial way to effectively support women's 'voice' at a local level.¹⁹

¹⁴ *Going for a gender balance in decision making, Council of Europe 2002*

¹⁵ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

¹⁶ *Gender Equality in Manchester (GEM) Project report, 2005*

¹⁷ *Into the Lion's Den, Oxfam 2005*

¹⁸ www.eoc.org.uk/Docs/Local_Government_Guidance.doc

¹⁹ *Why Women? The women's voluntary and community sector, The Women's Resource Centre 2006*



Research Findings

Respondents were asked about their role in the LSP, which sector they worked in and in which region they were based.

Table 1 shows the number of responses from each English region. The regions with the highest number of respondents are the South East (13) and North East (12) while there was only one respondent from Yorkshire and Humber.

Table 2 shows the different roles respondents have within LSPs. The respondents were evenly distributed between the four roles.

Table 3 shows the number of respondents from different sectors. The majority (54 out of out of 60) were from the public sector. This is like to be due to the questionnaire being sent to the LSPs which are co-ordinated by local authorities.

Table 1: Number of respondents from each region.

Region	no. of respondents
South East	13
North East	12
South West	8
North West	8
Greater London	7
West Midlands	6
East Midlands	5
Yorkshire and Humber	1

Table 2: Number of respondents in different roles in the LSPs

Role in LSP	no. of respondents
LSP manager	16
LSP Coordinator	14
Partnership/Development Coordinator	12
Support staff	13
Other (unclear)	5

Table 3: Distribution of respondents between sectors.

Sector	no. of respondents
Public	54
Private	0
Voluntary	2
Other [Independent (1), "multi" (1) LSP (1)]	3

Women’s Representation and Participation in LSPs

Women on different bodies in the LSP

In Stage One, LSPs were asked to give the total number of people sitting on listed groups and how many of them were women. The groups listed were:

- ☉ LSP Board,
- ☉ Any other LSP management group,
- ☉ Children’s Trust (statutory), and
- ☉ Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) (statutory).

These groups were chosen either because they were the decision makers, or as representative of the range of partnership groupings. In total there were 46 responses to this question (see table 4). The Children’s Trust had the highest percentage of groups (67%) where women were more than 50% of members, while the Central LSP Boards have the lowest percentage (11%) of groups where women are above 50% of members. However Central LSP Boards had fairly high percentage of groups both in the 40-49% and 30-39% brackets, or 30% in each bracket.

Table 4: Percentage of women members in different LSP groups.

Percentage of women in each group	Central LSP Board	Any other management group	Children’s Trust	CDRP
more than 50%	5 (11%)	11 (40%)	12 (67%)	6 (27%)
40-49%	14 (30%)	3 (11%)	5 (28%)	2 (9%)
30-39%	14 (30%)	7 (26%)	0 (0%)	7 (32%)
20-29%	11(25%)	5 (19%)	1 (5%)	4 (18%)
less than 20%	2 (4%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	3 (14%)
total responses	46	27	18	22

Respondents were also asked to name any other partnerships or groups that were part of their LSP. Five respondents said that they had environment and sustainable development groups, the distribution was one in each category. Five respondents had Health and Wellbeing partnerships, with two in the 40-49% brackets and 3 in 20-29% bracket. Two respondents had learning and skills partnerships; one had more than 50% women representatives, while the other had between 30-39%. The two respondents that mentioned Economic and Enterprise Forums had less than 20% of women sitting on them. Other groups that featured and only had one response were Older People’s Reference Group (23%), Culture and Tourism (50%) and Transport Thematic Group (23%).

Women at different levels of the LSP

Stage One also asked respondents for details of the roles and positions women hold on the LSP. The groups that were specifically asked about were the same as in table 4. The choices of different roles given were:

- ☼ Chair
- ☼ Vice-chair
- ☼ Lead officer
- ☼ Secretary
- ☼ Administrator
- ☼ BME representative
- ☼ Community representative
- ☼ Thematic partnership representative

There were 46 responses to this question. Table 6 shows the number and percentage of women carrying out different roles within the LSP. On central LSP boards, there were more women at community representative level (63%) than any other, followed by thematic partnership level (60%). Twenty eight percent of respondents said they had a woman as the chair of their board. The role that had the fewest women representatives was BME, which was true for all groups. Children’s Trust had nine (20%) women as chair which is interesting since Children’s trusts had the highest percentage of groups (67%) where women were more than 50% of members.

Table 5: Percentage of groups where women hold different positions.

	Central LSP Board	Any other management group	Children’s Trust	CDRP
Chair	13 (28%)	9 (20%)	9 (20%)	3 (7%)
Vice Chair	11 (24%)	7 (15%)	3 (7%)	1 (2%)
Lead officer	21 (46%)	9 (20%)	10 (22%)	9 (20%)
Secretary	18 (39%)	9 (20%)	5 (11%)	6 (13%)
Administrator	20 (43%)	15 (33%)	13 (28%)	12 (26%)
BME rep.	9 (20%)	4 (9%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
Community rep.	29 (63%)	12 (26%)	8 (52%)	7 (15%)
Thematic partnership rep.	28 (60%)	14 (30%)	6 (13%)	7 (15%)

Respondents were also asked to name other groups or partnerships in their LSPs and the positions that were held by women.

- ☼ Three environment and sustainable development groups had women as chairs; two had a woman lead officer.
- ☼ Two health and wellbeing groups had women chairs; three had woman as a vice chair.
- ☼ Two learning and skills groups had women lead officers; one had a woman chair and a woman vice chair.

Where are the women in LSPs?



Why is women's representation so low?

In the second stage of the research we asked respondents for reasons why the representation of women on their LSP was so low. Of the twenty nine that answered this question, sixteen respondents said that it was part of a wider social problem and blamed it on the structure and hierarchy in society where men tend to be in decision making positions and in leadership roles. It was pointed out that LSPs are drawn from the public sector which reflects wider society and is dominated by men. Furthermore, since the majority of councillors are men, this is reflected in LSPs. The findings here echo other studies on male dominance in the culture of decision making bodies (see Appendix B).

Further barriers identified to women's representation varied. They included timing and location of events that are often held in the evenings and far away (especially at a regional level), involving more travel and time than they can manage. It was mentioned that women were put off by the structure of the Board and other higher level meetings and the short timescale given to read long documents in advance. Two respondents pointed out that women have low levels of confidence about the value of their contribution and their ability to give it. These issues indicate blocks to women's presence and active participation.

Four respondents said that they did not have much control over who sits on the LSP board and it was up to the partners to make sure that they have equal representation of women. One respondent said that the LSP did not look at women's groups as a stand-alone group and that representatives were not aware of women's issues. Three respondents said that they were aware of low representation of women from BME groups.

Five respondents said that there was a good representation of women on their LSPs. None of them were able to give reasons for this.

Why are women more likely to be community representatives?

Stage Two asked why women were more likely to be LSP representatives at community level. Of the twenty nine that answered the question ten respondents attributed this to existing roles and wider societal structures. One respondent said *"women are more likely to take up work in the voluntary and community sector or in roles that involves care"*. Another claimed that *"it's the nature of society that women are drawn into voluntary and community work"*. One respondent pointed out that the voluntary and community sector is more flexible regarding working hours and *"fits better around childcare"*. As in the previous answer, respondents believed it was the responsibility of the partner organisations to choose representatives to the LSP.

Women's Organisations' Representation on LSPs

Evidence from the audit demonstrates that women's organisations are not engaging with LSPs. It found that out of 1,064 representatives from the voluntary and community sector (VCS) on LSPs across England, there were only 19 women's organisations on LSPs amounting to 1.8% of VCS representation. There is an opportunity here, with the current government drive for civic participation and engagement, to explore the barriers to women's organisations engagement and encourage LSPs to seek their expertise. For further information on the Audit see Appendix A.

Supporting women's engagement

In Stage One respondents were asked if the LSP had any mechanism in place to support women's engagement, such as capacity building and mentoring. Forty three people responded to the question of which:

- 🌸 31 (72%) people said there was no specific support to women
- 🌸 3 (7%) said that there was specific support for women (including one for BME women)
- 🌸 9 (21%) said that there was some kind of capacity building or mentoring in place, current, past or planned.

Stage Two asked further about support offered to women representatives. From the 15 questioned, six (40%) said that specific support for women was provided, five (33%) provided general support and four (27%) none at all.

Of those who said that they provided support for women, two respondents had a specific networking event targeted at women and one made sure that the conferences that they held each year addressed women's issues. One drew attention to informal mentoring by senior women as a helping factor. The same respondent said *"you have to show how you value them [women] in partnerships. Not just on paper but you have to go out of your way to show your appreciation"*. Both emphasised that linking up with women's groups was the key to increasing their involvement. Both emphasised that proper engagement takes time.

Other examples of support for women were less planned. One respondent said they provided support for women if they needed it and mentioned that *"...it is particularly important to make it clear to women that they are competent to participate"*. Another said that they were considering a women's group on the LSP board as a part of a good engagement strategy but are *"focusing on women's groups as one of many groups in looking for more representation"*. The same respondent said that the main engagement was through community forums and they were actively encouraging participation in them. Other examples included women's engagement as part of LSP stretch targets.

There were five respondents that provided general support but did not support women specifically. This included looking at training requirements for board members and one was running a monthly induction which anyone joining the LSP could attend. Participants could then ask for more specific support if they felt they needed it. A special effort was made to reach people in their communities but women were not targeted specifically. One respondent said that they had a support worker but wasn't sure if women were specifically targeted. Another said they tried to be as inclusive as possible.

Those who said that they did not give any support for engagement either didn't think there was an issue or a need. One respondent said, *"LSPs focus on business rather than people"*.

Where are the women in LSPs?

When asked what advice they would give to LSPs to ensure a focus on increasing women's participation happens more widely, respondents suggested:

- ☼ Monitor their presence, collect numbers
- ☼ Provide transport and childcare
- ☼ Make clear that women are competent and can do the job
- ☼ Encourage women to become chairs
- ☼ Raise it as an issue with the chair
- ☼ Don't be afraid of affirmative action
- ☼ Provide training around the gender duty

Monitoring Women's Representation

In Stage One, respondents were asked if their LSP monitored women's representation, and if they collected gender-disaggregated data. Disaggregated data is where data is broken down according to all variable characteristics including gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality, disability, income, faith, etc. Gender-disaggregated data breaks down gender alongside the other equalities factors, so it shows clearly what kinds of women are represented, for example, how many black women, how many disabled women, how many young women, etc.. This is necessary to gain a true picture of all women and men involved in the LSP. Forty four responded to this question, of which:

- ☼ 36 (81%) people said they did not monitor
- ☼ 2 (5%) said they did monitor by gender
- ☼ 3 (7%) did so on an informal basis
- ☼ 3 (7%) said they would like to

In the second stage of the research respondents were also asked whether they monitored the representation of other equalities groups (age, race, disability, sexual orientation and faith) as well as gender. Sixteen people answered this question. Five respondents said that they had a formal way of monitoring the representation of different equalities groups. One respondent said that they had not done so until they had filled in the questionnaire (from the first stage of this research). The LSP has now reviewed their partnerships and plan to continue doing so, looking at the participation and representation of different equalities groups with a particular focus on gender. Two other respondents were already doing the same and looking at different panels and groups within the LSP. Another respondent said that they monitored through their database but also added that they needed advice what to do with the data. It was pointed out that often data was collected for funding-driven beneficiary monitoring, such as numbers of vulnerable groups, such as older women or asylum seekers.

Four respondents said that monitoring was carried out on an ad hoc basis, and there was no formal monitoring mechanism. One respondent said that a comprehensive community strategy was being drawn up and that monitoring participation or representation of different equalities groups would be part of that. Another respondent said that they kept information on who comes to their meetings while another was able to monitor through their database. However both said that there was no formal way to use the data gathered, as there is no funding or other performance driven requirement to monitor data by gender.

Seven of them said they had no mechanism in place to monitor participation or representation of different equalities strands. It was pointed out that the partners in the LSP should be responsible for the monitoring the participation of different groups, or the responsibility of an equality team within the Council. None of the respondents were sure if there was a plan to start

monitoring. Some respondents drew attention to their LSP's commitment to good consultation processes with the community, and had data that could be accessed and analysed as a result, but few had done so as this was not required.

What Women's Issues Are Being Raised on LSPs?

Stage One asked respondents whether women's issues had been raised on different occasions in the LSP. There were twenty one respondents that answered yes to this question. Each respondent could pick more than one choice:

- ✿ 7 (33%) Research
- ✿ 5 (24%) Specific policies
- ✿ 15 (71%) Issues raised at LSP meetings
- ✿ 12 (57%) New and existing service delivery

Women's concerns are mostly raised verbally at meetings. Given the barriers to women's participation mentioned earlier (see page 14) this is un-surprising. The second most common way of raising issues which affect women is through service delivery. Specific research on issues perceived as being connected to women, was commissioned by 33% of LSPs. Finally, gender equality does not play a significant role in LSP frameworks and procedures, which is a surprising result, given the length of time equal opportunities have been a specific requirement for organisations in the public arena.

The follow-up interviews probed the nature of women's issues raised. Interviewers had the option of explaining what was meant by "women's issues". The definition used was: women's issues can include traditional issues understood to impact particularly on women, such as sexual or domestic violence, abortion, equal pay, representation in decision making. Or it can be any issue which explores the impact on women, e.g. transport, housing, economic development, small business etc. The definition was chosen to clarify the difference between gender-stereotyped women's issues, and gender mainstreaming in all issues in LSP business.

In total, 19 responses were gathered. Most of the responses referred to gender- stereotyped issues, and a number of them related to targets within the Local Area Agreement and national government priorities. The issues mentioned were:

- ✿ Domestic violence, as part of community safety, research, or partner membership work (10)
- ✿ Teenage pregnancy (6)
- ✿ Women's health including mental health, maternity and paediatrics (4)
- ✿ Fear of crime (3)
- ✿ Economic development, entrepreneurship, and worklessness (3)
- ✿ Attainment and education of girls (2)
- ✿ Housing for vulnerable and young women with families (2)
- ✿ Unemployed BME women (1)
- ✿ "Hidden harm" (1)
- ✿ Transport – concessionary and late night fares (1)
- ✿ Childcare (1)

The results demonstrate that the women's issues raised are either problems women are perceived as experiencing, or those identified in wider government targets as needing attention, or both. It was surprising that, childcare, the most common barriers to women's engagement in our organisations' experience, was mentioned only once. No awareness was demonstrated that all issues have a gender perspective, and that public service delivery in mainstream areas such

Where are the women in LSPs?

as transport or economic development present different barriers and opportunities for women and men which need attention. This is despite the fact that the literature (see Appendix B) draws attention to the need for a structural gender analysis of the significance of gender issues in partnership working.

For instance, systematic gender-disaggregation of data on key priorities is needed to analyse what the gender issues are, and a gendered analysis can highlight how gender-neutral policies can easily have unintended impacts unless there is a commitment to exploring how policies and practices are impacting differently on women and men. Two said that domestic violence had been blocked as an issue for discussion for some time but this had now been resolved.

Finally, respondents were asked what would make it easier for their LSP to respond to women's issues. The answers fell into two types – embedding them in the structures and procedures of the LSP, and giving encouragement to pick them up. In the former category were:

- ☘ Government guidance needed on women's representation.
- ☘ The need to carry out equalities impact assessments.
- ☘ Disaggregation of Local Area Agreement targets by gender and locality.
- ☘ A requirement on LSPs to address women's issues as a specific theme or category.

In the latter category the comments included:

- ☘ The need for gender champions.
- ☘ Dissemination of good practice in community involvement.
- ☘ Guidance on what a well-run LSP should be doing.

A number of these practical ideas could be picked up as part of an LSP Gender Equality Scheme.

The Gender Equality Duty

In Stage One people were asked if they were aware of the Gender Equality Duty. Of the 46 that answered the question, 70% (32) said they were aware of it. When asked if they knew how it would affect them, 31 responded, of whom 18 (58%) said that they knew how it would affect them while 12 (39%) did not know and one was looking into it.

In Stage Two, respondents were asked if their LSP was introducing a gender equality scheme. No LSP interviewed was drawing up gender equality scheme. Some were considering it, although not as an immediate priority. There were different levels of understanding about LSP obligations under the Duty: some thought it was not their responsibility, and that it was the job of the Local Authority. Some respondents thought its implementation would be driven by other priorities such as required outcomes in Local Area Agreements.

EOC guidance¹ makes the position clear, saying:

"for a public authority to be compliant with the Gender Equality Duty, it needs to have a gender equality scheme that covers all of its functions and policies, not just those it conducts in partnership. Therefore although it might be good practice to have equalities schemes for partnerships, with commitments to equality in all the work done together, that scheme would not be enough in order for each individual organisation to meet their legal requirements in total."

Therefore as a body responsible for the delivery of public services, LSPs need as a minimum to look urgently at the commitments of their partners, and consider to what extent this covers requirements under the Gender Equality Duty. This does not seem to be happening at present.

¹ http://www.eoc.org.uk/Docs/Local_Government_Guidance.doc



Conclusions and Recommendations

Where are the Women in LSPs?

Women are still in the minority when it comes to decision-making. On average 19% as chairs of different groups within LSPs are women. On central LSP boards 28% of chairs are women, roughly equivalent to the percentage of women councillors (29% in 2004).¹ The Local Government White Paper (2006) aims to strengthen the role of local councillors, encourage them to take on community leadership roles and make them more diverse. The research demonstrates that there is a clear need for this and that women's representation, especially at senior levels, is unacceptably low, for a group which represents half the population.

Women's role on LSPs, both in terms of where they sit, and expectations of what they are likely to be doing, still follows traditional gender stereotypes. Community representatives and administrators are the most common roles for women on LSPs (39% and 33%). 67% of Children's Trusts surveyed had more than 50% of women as representatives, emphasising their roles as carers. When respondents were asked for the reason, the answers cited women as 'more caring' and 'naturally more inclined to community work', such as social care, disability or unemployment, than men. Respondents saw LSPs as reflecting wider societal structure where men tend to have more dominant roles.

The evidence highlighted occupational segregation within LSPs. This is where women tend to occupy less senior positions (vertical segregation) and be over-represented in more traditional roles (horizontal segregation).

We recommend that:

- ✿ **women should be better represented at all levels on LSPs, particularly senior level. Low representation of women should be recognised as discriminatory;**
- ✿ **LSPs should take steps to address occupational segregation, both horizontal and vertical;**

¹ *Strong and prosperous communities: the Local Government White Paper (2006), page 50*

Where are the women in LSPs?



- ❁ LSPs should look at who is represented on them, considering the whole range of equalities issues including gender;
- ❁ women's representation should be improved as part of an LSPs Gender Equality Scheme;
- ❁ the new 'Duty to Involve' for local authorities should include equalities targets, including increasing representation of women on LSPs;
- ❁ the target of women's representation should rise to, on average, 50% at each level of the LSP;
- ❁ guidance is required from central government on how many women representatives are expected.

What Women's Issues Are Being Raised on LSPs?

Most of the women's issues raised in the interviews were gender-stereotyped. These were either the problems raised by or about women's situations, or issues highlighted in existing government targets, such as teenage pregnancy or domestic violence. No respondent was aware that gender issues might not be concerned only with the special needs of women, but could be about how women and men are affected differently by mainstream areas of LSP concern such as transport, or enterprise. Although this is now highlighted by the Gender Equality Duty, respondents demonstrated little awareness of the potential for improvement in LSP effectiveness that exploring the gendered dimension of issues can offer, or of the potential to tap into a wealth of knowledge held by women about issues affecting them. One way of addressing the lack of awareness of women's issues is through gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels.

We recommend that:

- ❁ LSPs use gender mainstreaming frameworks to ensure they explore women's and men's different needs, and how existing and proposed policies and practices impact differently on women and men;
- ❁ the National Improvement Strategy include building the capacity of partnerships to improve their knowledge of women's issues and strengthen their evidence base;
- ❁ the information and knowledge acquired on how issues impact on women is used to inform and shape Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements.

How can LSPs engage with women's organisations?

Whilst women's organisations represent around 7% of the total voluntary and community sector, they accounted for 1.8% of voluntary and community sector representatives on LSPs. Women's organisations are in touch with the issues affecting local women on the ground and have specialist expertise on gender equality and challenging discrimination against women. Women's organisations have established knowledge about the solutions to local problems, which means they should be key players in LSPs. The Local Government White Paper acknowledges the crucial role played by the Third Sector in engaging local communities and calls for greater resourcing of the sector.

We recommend that:

- ✿ **LSPs should actively engage and support engagement with women's organisations to participate in partnership working to ensure public accountability with under-represented groups;**
- ✿ **the Department for Communities and Local Government should ensure they address the under-representation of women's organisations through target setting, in their 'Third Sector Strategy' work;**
- ✿ **the new 'Duty to Involve' for local authorities should include targets for supporting the engagement of specialist equalities VCS, including women's organisations;**
- ✿ **local grant funding should support women's organisations and other specialist groups to engage with LSPs and other local forums.**

How can women's greater representation and participation be supported?

The survey showed that 72% of LSPs provide no specific support for women to engage in LSPs. The few that do emphasised that in order to engage women, the issues that impact upon them must be raised at meetings and conferences and time is needed to do this properly.

The research demonstrates that LSPs reflect wider societal structure where men are still the majority in senior positions. Women's representation will not increase unless specific support is available for them. Support mechanisms are available, but few are specific to women's needs. Respondents told us about good practice, including targeted leadership training and targeted mentoring, informal mentoring and championship by senior women, networking meetings, and actively seeking women in filling Board vacancies.

We recommend that:

- ✿ **the Department for Communities and Local Government set up and resource a scheme for LSPs and other local bodies to learn from good practice in supporting women's greater representation and active participation at all levels, particularly on the Board;**
- ✿ **the new National Improvement Strategy (required in the Local Government White Paper) include a scheme to build women's capacity to participate in LSPs, especially at senior level;**
- ✿ **Positive action should be undertaken by the LSP or partners to ensure gender balance in representation;**
- ✿ **LSPs should take steps to identify and remove the barriers to women's participation in their structures and processes, as part of the Gender Equality Duty.**

How can women's presence be monitored?

81% of LSPs surveyed did not monitor women's representation. Five respondents monitored the representation of different equalities groups as part of formal procedures. Four respondents monitored by gender in an ad hoc way. Two others drew attention to funding streams requiring data to be collected on pre-defined vulnerable groups, some of which would have a majority of women. This is valuable, but not a substitute for looking at women's representation across the board.

It is hard to see how women's representation can be improved until there is a baseline of systematic monitoring by LSPs on a regular basis. It is difficult to know what the barriers are for the full participation of women until this data is routinely collected and analysed. Monitoring representation of women and other equalities groups is essential to get an accurate picture of LSPs. Gender-disaggregating this information is essential to gain a true picture of all women and men involved in the LSP.

We recommend that:

- ✿ **LSPs should routinely monitor the representation of women and men, and other equalities groups, at all levels;**
- ✿ **LSP partners should collect, analyse and report on gender-disaggregated data to identify gaps and inform priorities on LSP.**

How can public bodies use the Gender Equality Duty?

The Gender Equality Duty is a key opportunity to promote equality and remove gender discrimination, and is a legal requirement for all public bodies, including their partnership work. Our research highlights gender equality within LSPs.

We recommend that:

- ✿ **LSPs partners, covered by the Gender Equality Duty, should ensure the Gender Equality Scheme extends to their partnership working;**
- ✿ **LSPs should be encouraged to develop their own Gender Equality Scheme as good practice;**
- ✿ **Awareness-raising and training on the Gender Equality Duty should be a mandatory part of the local government National Improvement Strategy and the new 'Duty to Involve' for local authorities, with resources made available through the main statutory partners on LSPs.**



Further work and next steps

This research has revealed the need for further work in relation to gender and equality issues for Local Strategic Partnerships. It is important to carry out further research into the functioning of LSPs as they have been identified as the “partnership of partnerships” (Local Government White Paper, 2006) and therefore a central model to get right on gender equality. It has not looked at the broader issues of women’s participation, at where there is good practice and how it can be disseminated, and the potential impact of women’s participation and representation on key delivery mechanisms such as Local Area Agreements and the Sustainable Community Strategy. There is also scope for improved information about the value of using a gender analysis to reveal inconsistencies and needs in service delivery.

We would recommend further research into these areas.

- ✿ **Good practice case studies of where capacity-building for women and/ or partnerships is working to achieve equal participation of women in LSPs,**
- ✿ **Good practice case studies of where an LSP has developed a collective Gender Equality Scheme,**
- ✿ **Action research to identify the structural and cultural barriers to women in LSPs, (with those LSPs who want to make changes to promote women’s equality).**
- ✿ **Women’s influence on decision making in LSPs, and evidence whether more women equates with equal participation.**
- ✿ **Research examining how the (unequal) position of women in LSPs translates into the development and delivery of Local Area Agreements.**
- ✿ **Research into the position of the women’s voluntary and community sector. Where are they in Community Empowerment Networks and LSPs, and why aren’t they engaging?**

Appendix A

Women's Organisations' Representation on LSPs

WRC conducted internet research of all the LSPs across England, in order to see how many organisations or forums sit on LSP as participants; how many of these participants are from the voluntary and community sector, and how many of these VCS representatives are from women's organisations.

The key difficulties we had were not being able to access sufficient data from the internet, as there was a lack of comprehensive information on all LSPs; not all LSPs had websites; not all of these listed their members, and often those that did only listed their executive or board members.

Findings:

We identified 379 LSPs, and found membership data for 275 (72%) of these, in which there were 7,287 participants in total. Out of this 7,287, there were 1,064 voluntary and community sector representatives, with just 19 of these (1.8%) from women's organisations. This is despite the fact that the women's sector makes up 7% of the voluntary and community sector.

Below is a breakdown of our findings by region.

East Midlands		East		London	
Region		Region		Region	
LSPs	43	LSPs	52	LSPs	33
LSPs with membership data	32	LSPs with membership data	45	LSPs with membership data	27
Total number of members	696	Total number of members	1123	Total number of members	676
VCS members	100	VCS members	166	VCS members	140
Women's organisations	2	Women's organisations	4	Women's organisations	2

North East		North West		South East	
Region		Region		Region	
LSPs	25	LSPs	45	LSPs	69
LSPs with membership data	22	LSPs with membership data	30	LSPs with membership data	54
Total number of members	729	Total number of members	1017	Total number of members	1066
VCS members	101	VCS members	173	VCS members	170
Women's organisations	3	Women's organisations	5	Women's organisations	1

South West		West Midlands		Yorkshire & Humber	
Region		Region		Region	
LSPs	51	LSPs	39	LSPs	22
LSPs with membership data	27	LSPs with membership data	21	LSPs with membership data	17
Total number of members	706	Total number of members	727	Total number of members	547
VCS members	89	VCS members	74	VCS members	51
Women's organisations	0	Women's organisations	1	Women's organisations	1

Appendix B

Literature Review on Gender Mainstreaming

The term 'gender mainstreaming' emanates from the European Commission and describes the process of ensuring that gender is considered in the participation and outcomes of all regeneration policies, strategies and programmes across Europe. 'Gender mainstreaming' within the European Commission is the result of concerted efforts during the 1990s by the European Women's Lobby, as well as influences from the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference (Braithwaite 2000). In the late 1990s early pioneers, such as the West Midlands Regeneration project and the Women's Design Service, began to tackle issues in their locality and region. The most concerted efforts to address gender inequality in urban regeneration in Britain are apparent in the Oxfam ReGender Project (Bennett et.al. 2000, Rahman and Smith 2000, Booth 2003, Oxfam UK 2003, Smith 2003). Oxfam UK has been lobbying Government to prioritise gender in regeneration policies, strategies, processes and programmes based upon findings from four grass-roots women's projects in England, Scotland and Wales (Objective 1 South Yorkshire 2003, Oxfam UK 2003).

In 1998, in response to pressure from Europe, the UK Government issued 'Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment's (PAFT) guidelines for all regeneration programmes requiring the development of understanding of policy impacts upon different groups (Women and Equality Unit 1998). In 2000, Bennet et. al. suggested that Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and Local Authorities would be well placed to mainstream gender equality especially since European funds are matched by funding from domestic programmes. In 2003, the British government's strategy on social inclusion included action to mainstream gender into all levels of Government (DWP 2003).

The Oxfam UK ReGender project made advances in raising women's consciousness of gender inequality and in determining how issues affect the lives of women and men differently (Oxfam UK 2003). One of the outcomes of this work is a practical guide for including women in regeneration, both for women themselves but also through capacity building with voluntary and statutory service providers:

When gender has been taken on board, it has made a significant difference to regeneration. Better targeting and results are obtained for the whole community through and awareness of women's and men's differing needs' 'Into the lion's den,' Oxfam UK (2005)

The Northern Ireland Women's Network 2005 emphasises the key role women's organisations have to play in building the capacity of public bodies to address gender issues and build the skills of women themselves to press for their gender needs to be met.

Review of other studies

Braithwaite (2000) highlights the positive effects of gender mainstreaming at a micro level, for example in promoting innovative uses of technology and entrepreneurship among women and supporting community development projects and resource centres. However, several studies express concerns about the impact of gender mainstreaming upon wider social, economic and political structures:

Braithwaite (2000) concludes that gender mainstreaming in European Programmes has as yet had limited impact upon the mainstream political economy.

May (1997) suggests an analysis of how gender is constructed should inform policy and the impact of programmes upon equality should be measured.

For Knight et al. (2002) and Hoogvelt (2001), gender mainstreaming involves more than integrating oppressed women within a system which constructs roles for them, transformation is required to distribute resources equitably, creating the conditions for women to determine their own priorities and influence values and norms.

For May (1997) and Hoogvelt (2001), mainstreaming tends to conflate sex and gender by measuring outputs for men and women within an existing paradigm that predetermines needs on the basis of them being gendered subjects before they enter the regeneration arena.

Several studies suggest that there is a need for a structural analysis of gender, power and equality issues in partnership working:

For Brownill and Darke (1998) partnership and networks provide the forum for new systems of local governance and women's participation in regeneration partnerships is higher than in other decision-making structures such as Local Government.

Harris (1999) notes that in Bradford individual women were present on partnership bodies at an operational level but their participation diminished at a management and strategic level.

In Appleton's (1999) Sheffield study, women's participation is perceived as an extension of their domestic role. At the point where decisions are to be made 'men take over' and women are under-represented at management and strategic levels in the public sphere.

In Riseborough's study (1998) of SRB partnership women struggled with so many demands they became demotivated and experienced 'challenge fund fatigue.'

For May (1997) the 'triple burden' of expectations due to their other work commitments in the family and employment, is a barrier to women's participation in community-based partnerships.

Both May's and Riseborough's studies identify a tendency to neutralise women's power to effect change within private and domestic constraints.

For Brownill (2000), social relationships are hidden behind an ideological discourse of the community and rest upon traditional notions of the roles of men and women.

Masculine cultures and processes that silence women are also noted in a number of studies:

For Harris (1999) regeneration has developed as a male dominated profession and an ingrained male organisational culture is de-motivating for women, particularly when it becomes apparent that decisions are made in informal male networks outside of meetings.

These findings are corroborated in two studies 'Why women leave architecture'¹ and 'Room at the Top: a study of women chief executives in local government in England and Wales' conducted by Bristol Business School (both cited in Macauley 2004).

Both Harris (1999) and Appleton (1999) note the trend of male local authority officers and community leaders to dominate decision-making processes.

For Brownill and Darke (1998) gendered and racialised styles of power in partnership working reinforce inequality.

Other studies point to an ingrained 'macho culture' pervading regeneration that is linked to major strategic policies, based on tough negotiations, moving quickly, closed decisions and well developed male public/ private sector networks, whereas women's networks are under developed (Brownhill 2003, Objective 1 South Yorkshire 2003).

For Alsop et. al. (2001) working practices are shaped around male patterns of participation and there are few female role models.

For Gilroy² (1996), women are silenced by the 'men in suits,' or as Harris (1999) notes, survive by colluding and embracing male dominated cultures.

For Riseborough (1998) a gender blind approach results in a male view of social and economic interests.

A case study of Southwark Muslim Association's failed bid as an SRB6 programme lead suggests that the mystique surrounding programme appraisal³ is a barrier and furthermore that those who control resources and technical expertise (men) retain power (Zhano 1997).

Some of the key findings of a similar study conducted by Scott et al, (1999) into ' Women's issues in Local Partnership Working in Scotland' are as follows:

- ✿ Published strategy documents seldom referred to women's issues.
- ✿ Little commitment to target setting in relation to women.
- ✿ Virtually no part of the partnership working monitoring system recorded either quantitative or qualitative data disaggregated by gender.
- ✿ An assumption that women's strong presence as community representatives on partnership boards ensured that women's issues were adequately addressed.
- ✿ Gender specific barriers to effective involvement in partnership governance, included multiple home- and care-based responsibilities and access to appropriate childcare.
- ✿ Little recognition that women are also affected by economic and environmental change as well as social and family issues.
- ✿ The needs of women at risk of multiple exclusion within communities, such as carers, ethnic minority and older women, were less likely to be addressed.

¹ www.riba.org/go/RIBA/Also/Education_2691.htm

² Cited in Brownill and Darke 1998

³ *Measuring the value of outputs and targets against programme expenditure*

Where are the women in LSPs?

For May 'a valid gender strategy' would rest upon building individual and institutional capacity (1997:p66). Similarly for Brownill and Darke (1998) capacity building should involve all partnership members, examining their impact upon decision-making processes and organisations should build their capacity to understand and recognise diversity, translating this into policy and practice. May (1997) concludes that progress on gender issues relies upon commitment from a senior-management level, since those lower down the hierarchy are unable to exert influence

Riseborough (1998) cites two experimental projects in the West Midlands which were seeking to stimulate women's involvement, one targeting women's groups, the other encouraging black minority ethnic women to participate. These were exceptions however and only a handful of partnerships were investing in community development approaches centred on women's needs or gender in the partnership or network building process.

Appendix C

Guidelines for women's greater participation and representation^{1, 2}

Use different approaches

Because men and women's motivations and barriers to participation differ, there is a need to use a combination of approaches for facilitating community involvement (eg. focus groups, newsletters, community events, surveys, outreach, cascading communication).

Gender balance in consultations

When conducting surveys and interviews, try to ensure that 50% of the respondents are women and 50% men. In either case the representation of either gender should not fall below 40%.

Format of meetings

Very formal meetings can be especially intimidating to many local women. Use mechanisms which promote dialogue, rather than one-way communication. Small group discussions and a participatory format for meetings and activities result in enjoyable and productive meetings where people do not feel threatened.

Shared chair and co-facilitation

Consider using a female/male co-facilitating team in engagement activities. Consider alternating male and female chair.

Contribution in meetings

Pay attention to the contributions made in a meeting. If a dialogue seems to be dominated by one gender, make efforts to invite people from the other gender to participate and express their views.

Targeted publicity/invitations

Invite equal numbers of men and women, paying attention to and targeting the gender group less likely to participate. Use inclusive language so that each group feels invited. Consider using people from both genders to promote the event.

Women-only workshops

Some women may be more comfortable expressing their views in a separate forum if they feel that they have more opportunities to share their opinions in women-only group activities. This would guarantee the inclusion of women for whom it is not culturally appropriate to speak in front of men.

Childcare

Consider the need to provide childcare to enable those with young children to participate. Inform parents in advance that this provision will be available.

¹ The suggestions in the leaflet are examples only. Different situations and communities will demand other issues to be considered and their own solutions.

² Leaflet for Gender and Community Engagement in Manchester Project, Manchester Women's Network, 2005

Venue and transport

Women often find local venues more accessible and feel more confident attending familiar venues. Offer transport to guarantee a more gender balanced participation.

Timing of the meeting

Because of their different roles and commitments, men and women differ in terms of the best time for them to attend meetings and activities. There is a need to consider, for example, the most suitable time of day for women with both family/childcare commitments and work commitments, as well as for men with full time work commitments outside the area.

Time and safety

When planning a time for community engagement, it is also important to bear in mind concerns about safety and security associated with going out at night.

Issues

Men and women experience the city and their daily life in different ways. It is important to guarantee that the issues discussed appeal to both women and men so that both groups are motivated to attend.

Training and capacity building

In order to guarantee more female participation, training and capacity building for women may be required. Training spaces and/or mentoring could be provided so that women become familiar with the subject matter and increase their confidence, communication skills and presentation skills.

Gender assessment

Consider the need for gender analysis in assessing and reporting the outcomes of community engagement processes.

Cross cutting gender with other demographic factors

It should not be assumed that men and women comprise homogeneous groups by virtue of their sex alone. Factors like ethnicity, age and sexual preference interrelate with gender and affect community involvement and participation.

Gender disaggregated statistics

Maintain gender disaggregated statistics to monitor gender balance in participation and responsibilities.

Maintaining gender views at all levels

To ensure that men and women's perspectives are heard and retained from the bottom to higher levels, and that information is not filtered or changed as it moves up to city/wide and national levels, it is important to consider such questions as: Who records proceedings and checks conclusions? Who writes reports and edits any plans? To whom are decision makers accountable? Who monitors their accountability?

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Where are the **women** in LSPs?



Urban Forum

Urban Forum is a national membership charity for community and voluntary groups involved in regeneration. Urban Forum exists to influence national urban policy so as to bring about effective change for local communities. Working from the ground up, Urban Forum takes messages from communities to Government, where it seeks to influence policy-making.

Urban Forum, 33 Corsham Street, London N1 6DJ

www.urbanforum.org.uk



Oxfam UK Poverty Programme

Oxfam's UK Poverty Programme (UKPP) was created in 1996, in response to the growth in poverty and inequality in the UK. Our experience of working with communities around the world enables us to bring new perspectives and approaches to tackling poverty at home. Oxfam works to enable people in poverty to find their own solutions to their problems, and to challenge the policies and practices that are responsible for creating and maintaining poverty.

Awareness of the way that poverty has a different effect on men and women and different ethnic groups is now generally accepted as a must in international development programmes. For Oxfam's UK Poverty Programme, it is vital to recognise that men's and women's needs and interests are distinct, for two reasons. Firstly, it is women who tend to bear the brunt of poverty, so it is a question of fairness. Secondly, being aware of the distinct needs of men and women, and acting on this awareness, means that we can address poverty – for both sexes – more effectively.

Oxfam UK Poverty Programme, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Oxford OX4 2JY

www.oxfam.org.uk



Women's Resource Centre

The Women's Resource Centre is a charity which supports women's organisations to be more effective and sustainable. We provide training, information, resources and one-to-one support on a range of organisational development issues. We also lobby decision makers on behalf of the women's not-for-profit sector for improved representation and funding.

Our members work in a wide range of fields including violence against women, employment, education, rights and equality, the criminal justice system and the environment. They deliver services to and campaign on behalf of some of the most marginalised communities of women.

There are over ten thousand people working or volunteering for our members who support almost half a million individuals each year.

Women's Resource Centre, Ground Floor East, 33-41 Dallington Street, London EC1V 0BB

www.wrc.org.uk