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Issues of Transformation and Power**

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Abstract

The following research examines the key issues that emerge in gender mainstreaming as a transnational strategy for achieving gender equality, acknowledging that gender mainstreaming occurs within the context of differing and changing values and norms. The primary focus of this research is on Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad (IKV) a peace and democracy building organization working in the context of the Netherlands and thus in the European Union. The research examines the extent to which gender mainstreaming 'trickles-down' to organizations and the amount that organizations define their own strategies within a larger gender mainstreaming paradigm. The research also discusses the debate between cultural relativism and universalism, as these are used as key areas of contestation and debate within gender mainstreaming as a transnational strategy and specifically within IKV as they attempt to mainstream gender concerns in the different regions where they work. Finally the research attempts to identify various anchoring points on which IKV can build its gender mainstreaming strategy, in order to have a firm grasp of concepts yet at the same time a flexible ability to analyze the different gender regimes that guide policies and practices within their own organization and their partner agencies.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Gender Mainstreaming in North/South Partnerships

Gender mainstreaming has many definitions but the one that seems to be the most complete is that of The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which defines it as:

“the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislations, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality” (United Nations 2002:1).

The specifics of how to gender mainstream is often defined as a two-pronged process. Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay defines this process as integrating gender concerns into policies, programs and projects together with enabling individuals to participate in decision-making processes (2004:95). Claudia Von Braunmuehl defines it as identifying and taking into account gender issues at all levels of development action together with the implementation of ‘women-specific’ projects to address particular constraints that pertain to women (2002:62). In the European Union context, Walby points out that gender mainstreaming has been a transnational strategy from the start owing to the cultural diversity in the Union and different gender regimes in member states (Walby 2003:18). This transnational nature of gender mainstreaming both provides opportunities for learning and understanding the different dynamics embedded in gender mainstreaming as a process, as well as poses new challenges as the strategy becomes contested within different cultural contexts. As such, addressing gender in cross-cultural contexts constitutes the basic practical and political challenge in attempts to integrate gender concerns into policies and program activities.

The basic premise of my research is that gender mainstreaming does not exist in itself but is played out in a world of different orders and regimes where local notions of gender can counter assumptions embedded in organisational strategies. As such, when institutions attempt to mainstream gender into their policies and programs, they must be aware of the contexts in which gender is being played out, so that their strategy can anticipate the opportunities and challenges that emerge.

My research focus is the Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad (IKV), a non-governmental Dutch organization working on peace and democracy initiatives throughout Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Northern Africa and South East Asia. I place IKV's efforts in the larger process of gender mainstreaming of the European Union and the government of the Netherlands and contextualize its North-South partnerships as an important domain in which the meaning of 'gender' and 'the notion of 'gender equality' are negotiated within IKV and between IKV and its partners during the process of gender mainstreaming.

1.2. Research Process, Objectives, Questions and Limitations

When this research began, it was agreed that the two IKV staff members in charge of gender would focus on development and implementation of a gender equality policy within its offices, while my research would focus on how to extend this policy to the program areas where IKV was active. Being a liberal organization, IKV personnel have traditionally been progressive, accustomed to address the causes of the marginalized or excluded from society. Given this liberal orientation, the two IKV staff originally felt that gender equality would be welcomed within their office, particularly with the arrival of the new director who seemed to be in favour of moving forward on the gender policy. However, after their attempts at discussing the concept of gender with their colleagues, attempting to 'mainstream' gender language in the office and seeking feedback on a draft gender equality policy, it became apparent that many of the staff at IKV were resistant to the idea of promoting gender equality. As a result, I take on a two-pronged challenge. I first analyze the organisational dynamics within IKV, with special focus on the opportunities or challenges these dynamics provide to the gender mainstreaming

process. In addition I address the context in which the partners work taking up the concerns that underlie the design of a gender equality strategy in the North for the South.

The primary objective of this research is to provide IKV with anchoring points that address the opportunities and challenges that could affect their ability to implement gender mainstreaming strategy. I also hope to add to the theoretical understanding of strategies that can be used for the promotion of gender equality within North/South partnerships, by taking into consideration power dynamics and cultural differences. This is especially relevant for myself as I work with Northern organizations providing funding, training, capacity building etc. to organizations in the South. The issues of cultural relevance, power and gender are always at the forefront of the work I do, decisions I make, and relationships I form with the Southern agencies. Therefore it is my hope that this research will provide guidance in my future career path.

In order to provide focus for the research and to reach these objectives, I have identified three central questions.

- The first question is what are the key issues and challenges in gender mainstreaming? This question addresses broader issues surrounding gender mainstreaming as it has been played out within different contexts.
- The second question is what is the context of gender mainstreaming in IKV? This question addresses the origin of the mandate of gender mainstreaming within the broader context of the European Union and the Netherlands as well as cross-cultural issues between IKV and their partner agencies.
- The third question is a practical one which asks: what are the key anchoring points on which IKV can build its gender equality policy? This final question looks at both theoretical and practical issues that can assist IKV staff in the process of conceptualizing and planning a strategy for the promotion of 'gender equality'.

There are a number of difficulties reaching these objectives and answering the above questions. The first is that I, as a Northern female who has worked in North/South NGO partnerships, bring my own biases into how I think gender equality should be defined and how IKV should and should not relate to their partner agencies. As well, who I am can affect the responses that I receive, both from the partner agency staff

and from IKV staff. Finally, as I received survey responses from only about 25% of IKV's partner organizations, I cannot assume that my findings apply to the programs and equality ideals of all of their partners. In order to overcome these limitations I will try to be aware of my own bias and ensure that the reader is aware of them. I will also avoid making broad statements that IKV may take these findings as completely relevant to include all of their partner agencies.

1.3. Methodology

In order to obtain the information necessary for this study, I began by sending a survey¹ to IKV's partner agencies. I received responses from 13 organizations² which make up about 25% of IKV partners. The purpose of the survey was to discover: how different partners define 'gender' and 'gender equality'; the importance they place on gender equality for realizing their mission; and the types of projects the partners currently have that claim to promote 'gender equality'. The responses were then organized by question and analyzed to identify similarities and differences between partners³.

I then attended a partner conference hosted by IKV, where I was able to conduct informal interviews and participatory observation of IKV staff members and their partner organizations. This conference was useful not only for gaining information through dialogue but also to observe the reactions of people when gender was mentioned. For instance, on many occasions gender was referred to in a joking or derogatory manner and when I was introduced to participants as a 'gender researcher', there was often an appearance of defensiveness. For example, one partner staff person insisted immediately upon our introduction on providing a story of how they include women in their projects and finished his story saying: "See, there is some gender for you". Besides the conference, I was able to discuss the issues that the two IKV gender staff members were facing in their work and also sat in on a staff meeting where they discussed if and how they should promote 'gender equality' and define gender mainstreaming in their main policy document. This was important for

¹ See Appendix 1

² The countries/regions represented in the responses include Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Iraq, Israel, Palestine and Morocco

³ See Appendix 2 for survey responses

observing first-hand the arguments both for and against gender mainstreaming and for gaining a better understanding of the barriers that the gender staff are facing.

Finally, I read and analyzed literature around the subject of gender mainstreaming. Some of the themes included in this literature were discussions of the successes and failures of gender mainstreaming in terms of meeting its goal of 'gender equality', different contexts in which gender mainstreaming is played out and the history of gender mainstreaming as a transnational strategy. I also reviewed literature dealing with the importance of promoting 'gender equality' for successful peace and democracy-building strategies, which is one of IKV's primary objectives.

1.4. Relevance and Justification

10-years after the Beijing Platform for Action feminist, scholars are evaluating the achievements of the various strategies that have been used to promote gender equality, including gender mainstreaming. It is in this context that this research is being undertaken. This research looks at a current case study, walking with the organization for a 6-month period as they attempt to mainstream gender issues. As a result the research reaches an understanding of actual barriers that exist for the organization in their attempts to mainstream gender. This research therefore adds to the body of literature, which looks to develop new and strengthen old strategies to achieving gender equality, by bridging the gap between theory and practice.

On a practical level, this research will provide IKV with relevant information for their mainstreaming process. It will provide them with an understanding of the political and cultural contexts of the organizations with whom they partner, to assist them in developing a policy that is universal enough to be a single policy, yet flexible enough to allow for cultural differences, partner autonomy and relevant programs for each area.

1.5. Layout of Research Paper

In this chapter I explained the focus of this study as it deals with North/South NGO partnerships. I then went on to explain the methodology, objectives and research questions that guide this work as well as the limitations that exist in being able to

meet the objectives and answer the questions. Finally I explained why this research is relevant both for IKV and for gender experts who are working in the field and possibly facing similar problems in forwarding their mainstreaming strategy.

The following chapter contains the analytical framework used for this thesis. It looks at the academic literature dealing with the definition, successes and failures of gender mainstreaming. It then goes on to discuss various definitions of gender equality as the end goal of gender mainstreaming, primarily drawing on Nancy Fraser's framework of redistribution and recognition. This framework is especially important for the work of IKV and their partners as one of their principle objectives is the promotion of democracy and Fraser's framework examines the two more important trends in social democracies, arguing that the two need to be combined for gender equality to be achieved. I then look at the debate on cultural relativism vs. universalism, as this is a key argument for why or not to promote gender equality cross-culturally and especially in North/South NGO partnerships. Finally I look at some of the experiences of transnational feminism and the successes and failures that have come from the strategy.

Chapters Three and Four deal with the specific issues faced by IKV and their partners respectively, with Chapter Three outlining the opportunities and challenges faced by IKV in their gender mainstreaming strategy and Chapter Four identifies the political, cultural and historical differences of the partner agencies and then identifying four pillars on which IKV can build its gender mainstreaming policy for its program areas. In Chapter Five I conclude with a summary of the context of gender mainstreaming, the opportunities and challenges that lie within in the context at IKV and finally I provide some anchoring points on which IKV can build its gender equality policy.

Chapter 2 Defining the Concept, Process and Goals of Equality

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the debates of gender mainstreaming which has evolved from the main principles advocated by the Women in Development paradigm (WID) and highlights its key contributions and challenges to development practices as well as policy design. The chapter shows how the evolution of the concept of gender, from an attribute of individuals to a principle of social organisation, has enriched the understanding of gender mainstreaming of policy leading to a distinction between the notion of gender equality and gender equity. Using Nancy Fraser's theoretical framework for analysing policies and programs that seek to address social inequalities by way of recognition and redistribution, the chapter tries to distil the affirmative as well as transformative remedies for gender mainstreaming. The chapter will then explore how the debate of cultural relativism vs. universalism may contribute to the understanding of the challenges by North/South partnerships when promoting gender equality. Drawing on some of the experiences of the transnational women's movement and how they overcame cultural differences in order to successfully lobby for a common cause, the chapter shows how institutions working within a framework of power relations in North/South may consider adopting practices of transnationalism in order to help overcome the boundaries of nations, histories and cultures.

2.2. Mainstreaming and the Evolution of 'Gender' in the Administration of 'Development'

The fact that inequalities exist between different groups has long been acknowledged as a contributing factor towards poverty, violence and other negative social realities. Among these inequalities are those between women and men. These inequalities between cover all facets of life from the economic to the social, the public to the private sphere, the legal to the political spheres. As Rao and Kelleher point out, in no country in "the world are women and men equal in legal, social and economic rights" (2003:142). Despite the long struggle against inequalities, they continue to thrive.

For at least 30 years feminists have been struggling to have women's concerns addressed in development policy and planning (Wieringa 1994:830). It has been a

struggle to challenge the liberal political world-view and symbolic code, which prioritises production, economic market exchange, and individual capacity to participate in the market, while largely ignoring reproduction and sexuality (ibid.:829). It has been a struggle to get womens' concerns prioritised within male-dominated bureaucracies that may not understand the feminist agenda, therefore marginalizing women's concerns (Braunmeuhl 2002:64-66). Despite the struggles, feminists have made many inroads into development policies and planning for gender equality. Many of these gains have been in more technical areas including "developing and implementing training programmes, frameworks, planning tools and even checklist and unpacking organisational development and change from a gender perspective" (Mukhopadyay 2004: 95). However, from a more political standpoint, there has been limited success in "redistribution of power, resources and opportunities" (ibid:96).

In 1970, Ester Boserup wrote "Women's Role In Economic Development", a work seen by many as pivotal for the increase in awareness of womens' issues in development practice and the birth of what is often referred to as Women in Development (WID)⁴. The pioneers in bringing women's issues into development worked hard and often faced 'up-hill' battles in order to have their messages heard. However, the WID approach in essence, failed to address structural, social and political reasons underlying inequalities and thus to provide the necessary framework to transform social relations, which is what is necessary for true equality to be achieved (Wieringa 1994).

Following WID came the Gender in Development (GAD) approach. This attempted to adopt some of the criticisms of WID by looking at differences between men and women and taking into account intersectionalities with race, class etc. In essence, the

⁴ WID advocates argue that development practice ignored women and that women should therefore be brought into development by providing them with equitable access to resources, which would then make the whole development process more efficient. One argument against the WID approach was that women were already 'in' development but that their role was constructed to conform to certain ideals therefore giving them few benefits. Another argument coming largely from Southern feminists was that the WID approach continued to construct women's roles by viewing Southern women as a homogenous group and trying to reconstruct their roles and identities using Northern values. A third important argument against the WID approach was that it proposed to provide women with the same opportunities as men especially with regards to income-generating activities which resulted in women carrying the 'double-burden' of being responsible for both reproductive and productive work. (Wieringa 1994).

shift to gender allowed “space for the analysis of the social construction of gender” (Wieringa 1994:59) and facilitated the use of the empowerment approach, which would in theory be a more ‘bottom-up approach’ to defining and achieving equality.

Within the GAD approach came the mainstream approach for achieving gender equality. Since the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, gender mainstreaming has been heralded as a key policy strategy for the achievement of gender equality. However, there are areas of contestation of the ways that gender equality can be brought into the mainstream. Some feel that integrating gender issues into policy areas implies analysing existing policies through a gender lens, while others feel that an analysis of the paradigms that guide existing policies is needed, together with the potential transformation of these paradigms (Walby 2003:4, Mukhopadhyay 2004:96)⁵. Whichever stance is taken however, in theory the two-pronged strategy to gender mainstreaming implies both a technical component entailing the creation of women’s machineries, analysis, monitoring and evaluation tools and affirmative action programs; and a political component which entails empowering women and men to voice their concerns and make choices as to what types of policy and programs will be implemented to address these concerns (Mukhopadhyay, 2004).

The emergence of ‘gender equality’ strategies around the globe has been unprecedented in the post-war era, with an influx of ‘women’s machineries’ appearing at various levels of government (True and Mintrom 2001:30). Parallel to the development of these ‘machineries’ has been the promotion of gender mainstreaming as a key strategy of the ‘machineries’ for the promotion of ‘gender equality’ (ibid:33). They go on to provide four possible explanations for the rise in gender mainstreaming across states: the role of transnational networks in transmitting global gender norms and translating them for various national contexts; the emergence of international norms formed in the context of world systems; period effects which include the intangible factors surrounding policy making and state-based explanations which address internal conditions that affect policy-making, including democratization (2001). The diffusion of gender mainstreaming is therefore due to a number of factors

⁵ These two approaches are respectively referred to as an integrationist and agenda setting or transformative.

at both the global and the local level which come together to provide opportunity for change.

Despite the widespread implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies, their effectiveness still needs to be discussed, as there is currently much debate on whether or not gender mainstreaming is an effective strategy for achieving gender equality. For gender mainstreaming to be successful in terms of incorporating gender analysis into policy areas, there must be political will and acceptance within an organization that women's issues are legitimate and that gender equality should start at home. This requires an organizational culture that is open to seeing gender issues as important to the organizational mandate and a legitimation of the knowledge that is developed concerning 'gender' and gender mainstreaming. The reality however, is that often times gender specialists are forced to argue for gender equality using other mainstream development discourse such as 'human-rights' or 'efficiency', instead of promoting gender equality as important in and of itself (Woodford-Berger 2004:67). Although this may be simply a strategy to ensure that women's issues are placed on the agenda, it risks making gender issues seem apolitical and ahistorical.

Another reason why promoting gender equality within organizations often proves difficult is that organizations have certain rules and norms, which limit their ability to promote gender equality (Rao and Kelleher 2003:143). As Rao and Kelleher point out, one of the main structures of organizations is that of 'exclusionary power', which limits women's ability to participate and protects the power at the top of the organization (ibid.). Von Braunmuehl (2002:63) attributes this power to a patriarchal structure, which inherently implies that the rules and norms are male-biased and difficult to change. This is difficult not only because it threatens the status quo that tends to favour males, but because often times the inequalities are difficult for decision-makers to recognize, due to the 'patriarchal dividend' (Greig, Kimmel, Lang 2000:1). Even at a more technical level of changing policies and laws, which is where mainstreaming has seen more success, the threat to male-biases has often proven to be too great a barrier for gender mainstreaming strategies to overcome (Mukhopadhyay 2004). As a result of these norms, rules and power relationships the amount of resources allocated for gender mainstreaming has generally remained minimal, despite the grand objectives of gender mainstreaming. Thus a transformation of

power relations within organizations must take place in order to 'rewrite' the norms and rules that guide organizational decision-making and cultural frameworks.

Claudia Von Braunmuehl states that "neoliberal structural adjustment and corporate led globalisation" (2002:63) are two of the main reasons for the lack of success of gender mainstreaming for the promotion of gender equality. Many feminists who have been evaluating the success of gender mainstreaming over the past 10 years reiterate this statement (Subrahmanian 2004, Batliwa and Dhanraj 2004). They show how neoliberal policies are not conducive to the promotion of gender equality. This is due in part to the many assumptions that underpin socio-economic policies of the state, including that of the benevolent 'male-breadwinner' who will provide for his family and ensure equal distribution of resources within the home.

The top-down approach to programming and planning is another area that has contributed to the limited effectiveness of gender mainstreaming. Hillary Standing points to this argument illustrating how the top-down approach, often applied by individuals with little experience in the area of social transformation, creates feelings of resentment, not only towards those at the top,⁶ but also towards the term gender (2004:83). Program planning is often thought of as a science whereby professionals are able to create a recipe for change, however without real commitment and a change in the various regimes, gender equality will be difficult to achieve.

Along with the top-down approach to planning as a possible limiting factor to the success of gender mainstreaming is the desire for quantifiable outcome oriented policy, planning and monitoring processes widely used by development practitioners⁷.

⁶ Those at the top can include funding or donor organizations, management staff, board members etc.

⁷ One of the most widely used feminist contributions to planning debates and practice was born from Molyneux's dual approach to women's interests. She called these practical and strategic interests. Practical interests are those which provide an immediate response to the perceived needs and wants of women while strategic interests are those which come from a thoughtful analysis of structural subordination (Braunmuehl: 2002, Wieringa 1994). Moser, in an effort to create a tool that was practical for development practitioners, changed interests to needs attempting to link research to planning. In her definitions "practical gender needs are the needs that women identify within their socially accepted roles in society while strategic gender needs are the needs women identify as arising from their subordinate position to men in their society" (Moser 1995:107 italicized word added). Moser's definitions for planning purposes have been widely criticized for their top-down approach by implying that analysis needed for addressing strategic needs be done by planners and policy-makers rather than by beneficiaries themselves (Braunmuehl: 2002, Wieringa 1994). This distinction between practical and strategic needs also has its limitations in that it provides space for policy and decision-

The rise in use of log-frame planning tools, often used as road maps for success but do not allow for an analysis of more qualifiable results and for individual agency to be viewed as a success, is a sign of the trend towards quick, goal-oriented planning. (Gasper 2000). As a result the positive effects that were hoped for through the gender mainstreaming process have been about “accessing as yet untapped resources of women’s labour, pulling women into a context that is anything but benign to them, and modernizing gender inequalities” (Braunmuehl 2002:67).

The second prong of gender mainstreaming is promoting projects that are directly targeted at addressing womens’ concerns and empowering women (and men) to be able to make decisions regarding their own strategic issues. In terms of project areas, there have been a number of achievements in gender equality, although the degree of achievement and whether or not it can be attributed to gender mainstreaming is often debated. One of the areas where there has been a notable improvement is the increased enrolment of girl children in primary education. Another is the increase in women’s participation in the public sphere, including formal employment and politics. However, it is difficult to tell if these are a result of gender mainstreaming or a result of efficiency discourse that is more prominent in neoliberal circles (Subrahmanian 2004:91). As well, the increased enrolment of girl children in education does not necessarily mean that the quality of education for girl children has improved, nor does the increased participation in public spheres mean that women have increased opportunity to equal pay for equal work nor that they have equal opportunities for similar positions in employment and politics. A final issue with the achievement of gender equality is whether or not this increase in perceived equality in the public sphere has also meant a decrease in the responsibilities of women in the private sphere or if women are now burdened with both employment and household duties.

Gender mainstreaming has been extremely successful in putting the term gender on the table of policy-makers and practitioners. In some countries, including Canada and

makers to focus on the more easily measurable practical needs while avoiding strategic needs altogether; or in other words dealing with the technical aspect of equality without having to step into the difficult terrain of the political and thus transformatory aspects of equality (Mukhopadhyay 2004:97). Despite the critiques, the concepts of practical and strategic needs are widely used in development circles as planning and decision-making tools.

the Netherlands, gender analysis of programs and policies has been the practice for many years while in others it has yet to make in-roads. Gender mainstreaming has also provided tools for monitoring, evaluating and planning projects and policies, helping development practitioners and researchers analyze the gaps that exist in the promotion of gender equality. However, despite the strides forward in the primarily administrative and technical domains of mainstreaming gender, as a political process the implementation of equality principles for gender transformation leaves much to be desired. In looking further at this issue, I will examine more closely the definitions of gender equality as the final goal in gender mainstreaming and different strategies used in mainstreaming to reach the goal of gender equality.

2.3. Gender Equality: Sameness, Difference or Transformation

Just as gender mainstreaming is a contestable strategy, so too is the concept of gender equality (Walby 2003:4). As equality is the goal of gender mainstreaming it is necessary to understand its various agreed-upon definitions. The first model of gender equality is based on sameness of women and men. In this model, policies are often reflected in equal opportunities for both women and men, especially in fields, that are male dominated and thus male-biased. The second model is based on difference, which would include affirmative action programs to value women's contributions despite differences between the sexes. The third and final model is that of transformation. Transformation looks at both sameness and difference but at the same time redefines gender relations through the setting of new standards for women and men (ibid 6-7).

There are different critiques of these models; the first two, sameness and difference, are often viewed as contributing to the embeddedness of inequalities by maintaining the status quo (Walby 2003:7). They are also critiqued because they either "presuppose male norms" (sameness) or "rely on essentialist notions of femininity, thereby reinforcing existing stereotypes" (Fraser 1997:44). The issues of sameness and difference may be better associated with the concept of equity "as a process of being fair to women and men" (CIDA 1999:7) as they seem to be more interested in correcting historical wrongs without changing existing paradigms that guide policies and practice. The concept of transformation, although seeming to be the most

promising for promoting 'real' equality between men and women may also be the most challenging because it implies changing the status quo and requires a much more political solution than the models of equality based on sameness or difference. Transformation "requires deconstructing gender" (Fraser 1997:62).

Nancy Fraser developed a theoretical framework to analyze different policy and programs with regards to their ability to promote social justice and equality. The framework examines the conflict between 'sameness' and 'difference' by distinguishing between economic and cultural injustices. "Fraser's 'perspectival dualism' attempts to 'finesse' the distinction between 'the material' and 'the cultural', yet to retain a distinction between 'the economic order' and 'the cultural order' that is institutionalised within status hierarchies, and between the injustices of maldistribution and those of misrecognition" (Lovell 2003). Although acknowledging that the two are interrelated, it is an attempt to clarify some of the current political dilemmas around issues of social justice. Economic injustices are rooted in political economy including exploitation, economic marginalization, and deprivation while cultural injustices are symbolic and include cultural domination, non-recognition, and disrespect (Fraser 1995). The dilemma which arises from these two types of injustices is that economic injustices are often remedied by acknowledging the **difference** in groups of individuals and providing 'special' benefits for those suffering injustices, while the remedy for cultural injustices requires deconstructing the underlying assumptions about identities thus blurring the lines between identities, thereby following an approach of promoting **sameness** (Fraser 1995). It is important here to note that Fraser's framework is analytical and not substantiative. It argues that when analyzing injustices one is likely to find that either maldistribution or misrecognition are the primary culprits of injustice but that most often the secondary culprit is also affecting the injustices and therefore both must be addressed when looking for remedies (Lovell 2003).

The remedies for the social injustices of redistribution and recognition are then divided into two different realms: those of affirmation, which support group differentiation, and transformation, which blurs group differentiation. The following table appeared in Fraser's article: "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a Post-Socialist Age".

	Affirmation	Transformation
Redistribution	<i>the liberal welfare state</i> surface reallocations of existing goods to existing groups; supports group differentiation; can generate misrecognition	<i>socialism</i> deep restructuring of relations of production; blurs group differentiation; can help remedy some forms of misrecognition
Recognition	<i>Mainstream multiculturalism</i> surface reallocations of respect to existing identities of existing groups; supports group differentiation	<i>deconstruction</i> deep restructuring of relations of recognition; blurs group differentiation

Source: Fraser (1995) *From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age*

Nancy Fraser (1995:89) then gives examples of different types of policies for each of the four quadrants, which can be used to analyze the programs of governments and other institutions to see what type of equality they are promoting. I summarize her argument as:

	Affirmation	Transformation
Redistribution	affirmative action, ensuring women have fair share of placements in jobs and education	socialist feminism
Recognition	Cultural feminism Revaluation of femininity	dismantling of androcentrism

Thus as Fraser points out, the key to equality is in the deconstruction of gender not in the reaffirmation of differences between men and women nor in the promotion of sameness between men and women but rather in the transformation of social relations and underlying policy paradigms (1995:89-90). In this way there can be both differences and similarities between men and women, bringing together remedies of redistribution and recognition; yet the premise upon which policies and programs are designed are based on completely different sets of rules than those that currently exist. Fraser then goes on to identify a third area, which is perhaps the most culpable in creating inequalities – lack of ‘participatory parity’ (Lovell 2003). Because of injustices which stem from misrecognition and maldistribution, individual citizens are not able to fully participate in society (ibid). “Participatory parity provides the single overarching principle of justice that both status and class orders of subordination/domination violate” (ibid). To counter this lack of ‘participatory parity’ one needs a form of deliberative democracy which works to ensure that all citizens regardless of race, class or gender have equal opportunity to participate in society.

Squires (in Walby 2003:17) argues that “the debates on gender mainstreaming demand a resolution of the tension between liberal individual egalitarianism and the politics of group recognition” for gender mainstreaming to move forward. Thus, there needs to be a link between the dilemmas of recognition and redistribution in order to achieve social justice. The difficulty however is that people, including women are “far removed from the immediate interests and identities of most women, as these are currently culturally constructed” (Fraser 1995:89-90). So the question then moves onto culture and how to negotiate gender equality in very different and constantly changing cultural contexts.

2.4. Culture in North/South Partnerships

One of the ways that gender mainstreaming manifests in development is when donors want to include gender issues into their own policies and practices. However, it can prove to be quite complicated in the context of North/South partnerships. With the influential post-modern discourse of cultural relativism, Northern partners are often faced with the dilemma of: taking a moral stand on gender issues; leaving the status quo in order to preserve and respect traditions; or, possibly the worse option of all, doing nothing for fear of doing the wrong thing. The Southern partner is likewise in a similar quandary in that they may also want to promote gender equality in their program areas but fear the repercussions of challenging the status quo in the communities where they work. This dilemma is not new, however in discussing the successes and failures of gender mainstreaming over the past decade it is important to look at the issues that face Southern and Northern partners even when their intentions are noble.

In development work an oft-used term is cultural sensitivity. Programs must be culturally sensitive; development practitioners must be culturally sensitive and even take courses in how to be culturally sensitive. Cultural sensitivity can be interpreted in different ways. Many who lean towards a more relativist sense would understand it to be biased towards interventions that do not disturb cultural norms and traditions thus purporting to value the other and avoid western essentialism. Those who consider themselves more universalistic would look at how cultural norms and

traditions change and adapt to new situations; and their focus would then be on the needs and priorities of individuals as human beings and how culture and tradition may be hindering their ability to reach their full potential.

As knowledge is embedded in practice and intersects with 'culture' and norms of 'human capabilities', it is important to explore the debate between universalism and relativism and how it relates to the promotion of gender equality. I will begin with some reflections on cultural relativism and the strengths and weaknesses of such arguments as they pertain to gender mainstreaming and follow with a look at universalism and how it can contribute to the promotion of gender equality.

2.4.1. Cultural Relativism

Feminists who argue in favor of cultural relativism are often justified in their concerns that the universalistic notions of what is right or wrong and how things should be, are largely based on the perceptions of the individual(s) who are deciding the definitions and is often a political exercise (Nussbaum 1995:71). Throughout history it has often been the elites and mostly men who set rules and norms for how things should be, including who is or is not included in their norms and rules. In opposition to the creation of knowledge and the setting of rules and norms came the various feminist stand-point theories, which essentially state that women are in a better position to create knowledge about themselves than men. However, one must remember to ask the question of whose experience is being drawn on, looking at the historical and spatial contexts in which this knowledge is built? It cannot be assumed that the experience of one woman or even a group of women will adequately reflect the reality of women in another time or place. Ever since women have entered into the production of knowledge, they have been largely located in western societies and their writing has often contributed to "legitimise mainstream definitions of modernization and development." (Udayagiri 1995:160). In fact, one of the main critiques by third-world women on feminism of the West was that Western feminist framed the root causes of women's oppression as discrimination, while third-world women framed the cause of their oppression as being the result of exploitation of the South by the North (Friedman 2003:318). As Friedman points out, the issue of framing was one of the major challenges of the transnational feminist movement, which shows how critical it

is to not homogenize womens' experience but to acknowledge that women have different experience depending on their social realities of time and space (ibid.).

Another critique of universal essentialism is that by predetermining what it means to be human and what every human being needs to lead a life of dignity, it negates the ability of the individual to choose for themselves what type of life they want and what their priorities will be. This predetermination of what is right and wrong, bad and good is seen as imperialistic and a reflection of colonialism (Nussbaum 1995:73). On the other hand, post-modernist discourse risks being merely academic and culturally relative and can thus "evade the moral issues of poverty, hunger, inadequate health care and lack of literacy" (Udayagiri 1995:175). That being said, post-modernist and post-structuralist discourses are important in countering historical discourses that view third-world women as the 'other', and as mere victims. By focussing on unique experiences of individuals, post-modernist discourse, can help to deconstruct and challenge mainstream knowledge that has been largely legitimized by Western science and technology and therefore the policies and practices that come about as a result of this knowledge. Focus on individuality and difference is an important analytical tool for breaking down mainstream notions of 'other'. Specifically, in terms of gender mainstreaming the post-modernist discourse can be important in pointing out how different definitions of gender can influence policy and practice and provide policy-makers with an analytical tool to look at the priorities, history and realities of those with whom they are working.

2.4.2. Cultural Universalism

Universalists, on the other hand, feel that there are certain aspects of life that are common for everyone. This concept does not come from an underlying belief that there is some higher power that determines the way the world is, which is a concept often used by those in favor of cultural relativism to criticize the realism in universalism. Rather it comes from a belief that there are certain characteristics that all human beings share that allow them to relate to one another. These characteristics transcend culture and traditions and include the desire to live, the fear of death, the need for adequate nutrition and shelter (Nussbaum 1995). Martha Nussbaum has developed a list of ten universal characteristics that all humans have and that she

believes are necessary for individuals to have the capability to function (Nussbaum 1995:68).

When working in development, another term which is often used for project is 'intervention'; this implies that the project is intervening in the lives of others. Many development practitioners are then concerned with the extent to which a project should intervene in the lives of others. History has shown that some interventions have proven to make individuals worse off than they were previously while other interventions seem to be beneficial for individuals involved. Promoting gender equality through various interventions is also a risky business and in many instances there will be a great deal of resistance from both men and women of a given community. Men and women often internalize inequalities, believing that the norms and traditions are from a natural order of the world. Despite the strong argument for the biological differences between men and women, including the "natural" ability of women to care and nurture children, there is a need to change the rules and norms that govern traditional male and female responsibilities. This not only means giving women the opportunity to meet their full potential within the labour market and public sphere which has often been advocated for reasons of economic efficiency, but rather a complete revaluation of care work such that it is rightfully compensated and shared by both men and women in society (Fraser 1997). Martha Chen pointed this out in her study of employment in India and Bangladesh when she showed how some castes or classes would try to copy those who were in a higher social position. This included keeping women out of the public eye and by observing purdah (Chen 1995). Often men and women aspire to be in higher social strata and believe that the traditions of the rich are the way things are meant to be (ibid).

It is important to remember that traditions change over time, often to accommodate the needs of the more powerful members of society (Chen 1995:51). Therefore when looking at tradition and whether or not development interventions go against tradition it is not enough to use tradition as an argument in itself, one must look at where tradition comes from. How changeable is it? Who sets the rules and norms of tradition?

Another argument often used against interventions that would seem to challenge culture and tradition is that of Western Imperialism. History has proven that often Western countries impose their norms and values on those of the South, but that is often because they are powerful and therefore want to influence traditions to their benefit. It is also true that many in the South aspire to be 'like' those of the North. This trend seems to be confirmed by the influence in clothing that people wear and number of Northern fast-food chains that are becoming so popular around the world. However, the North does not always threaten tradition; in some instances it is a "response to changes in local culture and tradition" (Chen 1995:55). This is often the case in extreme situations like wars or natural disaster when circumstances dictate changes in traditions. In some instances women are forced to become bread-winners in the family because the male is unable to provide for the family, in other instances where family members fail to live up to tradition of caring for in-laws or other relatives, need dictates whether or not traditions will be followed.

The dilemma of choosing interventions that may challenge traditions and cultures is very real among development agencies. The expression "do no harm" has become the mantra for many. Unfortunately this often means maintaining the status quo or do not get involved. However, if development practitioners can agree on some kind of universal norms such as the ten capabilities of Martha Nussbaum as a framework for designing policies and projects, they may improve the possibility of achieving gender equality. The importance is to be able to take a moral stand on issues and be able to justify those issues through rigorous scientific experiment.

The next section will look at the experiences of policy transfer of gender mainstreaming by global feminist networks, as the movement had some success in crossing cultural barriers for a common goal of gender equality. The purpose is to see what contribution the experience from the networks can make towards the process experienced by Northern non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in their gender mainstreaming policy.

2.5. Power in North/South Partnerships: Experiences of Transnational Gender Mainstreaming

One of the factors that contributes to power relation between those who are higher on the aid chain with those lower down, and the strategies they choose to use to reach their missions, is the flow of capital. Capital can be a powerful determinant of strategies since institutions are often in a situation where they have to be concerned about their survival, which is highly dependant on their financial resources (Biekart 1999). This may be especially true in the relationship between Northern and Southern Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)⁸, where the latter is faced with increased competition and financial insecurity. However when looking at the case of gender mainstreaming and its implementation around the globe, we see that the transfer of policy is not merely from powerful countries to weaker ones “but takes a more horizontal form that hybridizes according to local conditions” (Walby 2003:22). In other words, the ‘local’ plays a role in defining policy and practice in order to make it relevant for their own context. Gender mainstreaming also vary greatly depending on the policy domain and country in which the strategy is being implemented (ibid:21).

Despite the hybridization of gender mainstreaming within different contexts, there has been a proliferation of common vocabulary, standards, rules and norms developed by feminists around the globe. Kardam explains the emergence of the gender regime as being based on three sets of explanations, the leadership of the global women’s movement and NGOs which helped in the codification of norms and the collective understanding of them, the UN forums, which provided a platform for agenda and norm setting and the financial support of some of Northern governments (Kardam: 2004: 92-93). However, including this new vocabulary in policy, receiving funding and matching gender concerns with mainstream policy has been a challenge that has yet to be overcome. When looking at the case of Ireland, Carney has shown how there is a disconnection between gender mainstreaming language and mainstream policy-making language seeming to create a gap between feminist theory and action (2003). This gap may be in part due to the fact that institutions have different notions of what gender and gender equality is.

Kardam proposes using a constructivist perspective to analyze how norms are socially constructed and that “we need to go beyond classifying all resistance to gender

⁸ NGO can be defined as those organizations, not directly tied to the mandates of governments or private sector organizations, that are formed for promoting the good of others.

equality as stemming from 'traditional and cultural norms' and examine where those norms come from, and what types of power relations underlie them" (2004: 98). Thus we see that the international regime can have influence over the agreed upon 'rules' within an institution, however the way these rules are then played out varies greatly depending on interpretation and context. In this way too, Northern NGOs may be able to work with their Southern partners for the promotion of gender equality. However, the priorities, degree of commitment and strategies of the Southern partner may be different than the Northern partner expected, creating a need for understanding, flexibility and understanding by both parties.

In short, reaching the goal of gender equality through mainstreaming has been a challenge for governments and development organizations. Neoliberalism, male norms and biases, strong arguments from post-modernists questioning the 'Westernness' of gender equality norms, and an overall resistance to change has limited the extent to which gender mainstreaming has been successful. Where there has been success is in the creation of a transnational gender language and international conventions and policies. There has also been success in the development of monitoring and evaluation tools to analyze the extent of success in gender mainstreaming.

Development organizations and governments that are just beginning the process of gender mainstreaming are in the fortunate position to take advantage of a growing body of literature dealing with the success and failures of gender mainstreaming. Therefore they can begin the process of critically analyzing the potential constraints and opportunities that exist. They can also clearly define what they mean by gender mainstreaming and gender equality in order to have a more firm goal in mind. To be certain, many of the constraints that are identified in the literature will also be faced by even the most well-meaning organizations; however, possibly by understanding the political, economic, and cultural values that underpin the resistance, those promoting gender equality through mainstreaming can arm themselves with sufficient information to slowly break away the layers of resistance.

Chapter 3 IKV and Gender Mainstreaming: Emerging Opportunities and Challenges

3.1. Introduction

This chapter traces the process by which gender issues were placed on the agenda of IKV as an organization and the key forces behind its gender mainstreaming efforts. I show that the transformation of IKV and a change to its mandate in peace building efforts is by and large shaped by a transformation of politics and war on a global scale, from open confrontation between nation-states to protracted conflict within states, demanding recognition based on a variety of claims (e.g. territorial control, ethnic autonomy, religious freedom). In this regard, working for peace no longer means campaigns against war but also working with partners in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction. As women have become acknowledged as more important political actors in many areas which are undergoing conflict or are in a post-conflict moments, and as gender issues have gained momentum in conflict resolution and peace building, new opportunities are opened for organizations such as IKV to work with women and also to address the gender-dimensions of conflict and post conflict-reconstruction. Gender mainstreaming of its activities becomes a necessity owing to efforts at the level of the European Community, as they are then passed down to member states and thus to organizations like IKV. Finally I illustrate some of the cognitive, normative and political obstacles that IKV is facing in its gender mainstreaming efforts as a result of political will and economic and administrative commitments.

3.2. History in Conflict and Peace: Shifting Strategies

IKV is considered a liberal, forward thinking organization. This view has been expressed not only by IKV staff members but also by those outside of the organization who are familiar with its projects and Calvinist work ethos. As a liberal, forward thinking organization it is defined as being up-to-date on political and economic issues that affect both those living in the Netherlands and in the countries where IKV is active. It is an organization that takes a stand against the status quo, fighting for rights of those who are oppressed. IKV challenges governments to improve governance structures to ensure that everyone in society has equal rights and

opportunities, no matter their ethnic background or religious and political affiliations. In theory and in formal documentation this is 'who' IKV is, how it thinks and how it gets things done. However, when looking at the behavior of IKV within its own office towards gender equality, we see a story that is not quite so liberal or so forward thinking.

In 1966 IKV became established as an organization to provide education to Dutch churches and at the same time encourage them to take a stance on issues such as security, peace, development and poverty. In the late 1970's, during the height of the cold war, IKV shifted its priorities to one of campaigning against the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Netherlands. This shift was significant for placing IKV at the centre of the Dutch debate on war, peace and democratization, helping to make it a recognized, reputable organization in Dutch households. This shift also created the opportunity for IKV to learn about and take a critical approach towards Eastern European regimes and to make contacts with various political dissidents and churches in Eastern Europe in an effort to bridge cultures, and create awareness around common issues (IKV 2005:25).

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the end of the Cold War in the early 1990's again challenged IKV on many fronts, providing them with the opportunity to reflect on and shift their strategy in the light on the unfolding realities of war and peace. The collapse of the Berlin Wall meant that a bi-polar world order has been transformed. Perhaps 'underground' civic groups in Eastern Europe, with whom they had made contact in previous decades initially dealt with issues of democracy building and minimization of stereotypes that were strong within Europe, now to change their focus from organized anti-war protests to conflict resolution and peace building. Thus, over the past four decades IKV has transformed itself from an advocacy agency working against the proliferation and sale of nuclear weapons, to a Northern NGO partnering with NGO's in countries on the borders of Europe, the Moluccas and Kashmir, in conflict prevention, democratization and peace-building (IKV 2005:25-28). One of the primary objectives of IKV is the promotion of democracy, seen as pivotal for the prevention of conflicts and promotion of peace. IKV's policy document *Persistent in Peace* (2005:42) states that "democracy is not possible without the participation of women" which infers that empowering women is crucial for the promotion of peace.

The post-Cold War period saw a rise in conflicts within nation-states in which gender dynamics have become more transparent. For example, the formal and informal roles of women within their communities during conflict is increasingly becoming better documented (Abdela 2004, Rees, 2002, Bouta, Frerks and Bannon 2005). Women are no longer labeled as victims of war due to rape, loss of family members, loss of employment etc; although still a reality for many, the view has broadened to include women as participants in both conflict and the subsequent peace-building efforts. In the informal sector, women in conflict situations are organizing themselves, taking on the roles of many public institutions including schools, clinics and care for the elderly. Women are also trying to maintain a feeling of normalcy in their communities by keeping households running smoothly despite limited resources and maintaining links with women of other ethnicities, religions or cultural backgrounds. Women also are politically active during conflict by hosting demonstrations, hiding dissidents and protecting males from being forced into joining military actions.

During conflict, womens' political participation often increases and is carried over into the immediate post-conflict period; although in the long-term women tend to be 'squeezed' out of formal politics. As noted by several researchers, despite the strong role that women play in the informal sector during conflict, when it comes to formal peace initiatives women are overwhelming excluded (Bouta, Frerks and Bannon 2005). This exclusion has been explained in terms of the cultural construction of women as the stewards of family and of 'traditions' and therefore are encouraged to play active roles outside of formal politics in the area of carework (ibid: 51). There is sufficient ground to believe that women's exclusion from peace negotiations may have also stemmed from the gender-blindness of many of the actors in the international community who are charged with facilitating the peace process but who fail to recognize the contributions of women in managing communities during the conflict stage. The case of Kosovo documented by Lesley Abdela (2004) serves in illustrating this point.

Madeleine Rees (2002) illustrated the costs involved when not including gender in peace processes and the importance of learning from past mistakes. The costs include: excluding 'minor' domestic violence, often seen to increase in post-war

periods, from being considered a criminal act under the new legal system; not taking into account the transition women would have to make from a “mixed economy with a large element of state intervention to a radically privatized market economy”(2002:56) which often increase the marginalization of women; and most starkly the trafficking of women and children for enforced prostitution (ibid: 60-65). Gender issues in Bosnia-Herzegovina were largely ignored, despite political awareness of the importance of including gender in peace processes as illustrated in the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and at the Beijing Platform for Action which was held in the same year that the ‘Dayton’ Agreement⁹ was drafted (ibid. 56).

In sum, the gendered reality of conflict and peace in the last decade has fostered new initiatives by non-governmental and governmental organizations to shift focus from the international and national levels to more local, community levels (Hilhorst and van Leeuwen 2005). For organizations supporting womens’ groups this has meant a shift from ‘protecting’ women as victims of conflict to empowering women within their communities. IKV’s recent mission statement¹⁰ states that it “promotes political solutions for crisis and war situations” and it “invites the society in general and more specifically the churches to participate and speak out” (IKV 2005: 27-28). This statement provides an opportunity for IKV to include women and men as part of society to be able to participate in political solutions to conflict and peace.

3.3. Donor Influences on Policies and Strategies

“Gender mainstreaming is an international phenomenon” (Walby 2003:2). Gaining importance at the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995 it became a strategy for many governments and transnational organizations in over 100 countries around the world (Carney 2003:52). Part of this momentum is attributed to the rise of transnational networks which are part of the larger phenomenon of globalization (True and Minstrom 2001:28). Through meetings, discussions, and funding by international

⁹ The ‘Dayton’ Agreement is the General Framework for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina which helped bring about the end of the 4 years of war in the region. It was drafted in Dayton, Ohio.

¹⁰ IKV’s Mission statement is “By order of the Dutch churches, the Interchurch Peace council promotes political solutions for crisis and war situation. It initiates projects and invites the society in general and more specifically the churches to participate and speak out. IKV focuses on the conflict area at the borders of Europe, e.g. The Balkans, the Caucasus, Northern Africa and Middle East, but has also activities in the Moluccas and Kashmir. Moreover IKV promotes European civil integration.”

actors an international gender regime was developed. A neoliberal analysis of the gender regime which surrounds gender mainstreaming may be useful in demonstrating how states agree to and cooperate with international treaties and conventions regarding gender (Kardam 2004:105). The European Union was one of the first transnational groups to adopt gender mainstreaming and the regime that it loosely adheres to. It then has attempted to diffuse this regime on member states through funding, training and by making the development of gender equality policies a prerequisite for entering the Union. However, the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies within the European Union it has been found to be an uneven process. Thus the diffusion of gender mainstreaming policies has brought about the debate of the issues of globalization, transnational politics, international regimes and the transfer of policies and practice between different locations (Walby 2003: 18).

The European Union began to mainstream gender issues within their own organization as well as to promote and provide training to member and candidate states (Verloo 2001:3). Although the Netherlands as a member of the EU began acknowledging the need to take women and men into account when designing policies as early as the 1970's (ibid:4-5). According to the Netherlands Development Assistance Evaluation Report on Women and Development, the Netherlands commitment to mainstreaming gender concerns in all policy and program areas became a political priority in 1990 (1998:1). This last statement concerning political priority is a key ingredient for the success of gender mainstreaming. As Verloo points out "the political will to start gender mainstreaming is the most basic prerequisite, and one of the hardest to influence" (2001:5). Even in the Netherlands, which is viewed as one of the leading nations in terms of the promotion of gender equality, there is much criticism regarding the success of the strategy and questioning of the political will to influence its success (Koekebakker and van der Tol, 2005).

Despite the limited success of promoting gender equality and the level apparent lack of commitment by the government to be the forerunners of the process, the mainstreaming strategy has been promoted within all ministries of the government of the Netherlands, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is through this Ministry that the co-financing agencies receive their funding and to a degree their mandates. This passing on of the mandate is part of the trickle-down effect that has brought IKV

into the 'business' of promoting gender equality. As IKV receives a portion of its funding through the Dutch co-financing agencies, they have been encouraged and given funds to implement a gender mainstreaming strategy within their organization.

Although donor-led strategies are often criticized for their top-down nature and potential lack of real commitment by recipient institutions, they can also provide an opportunity for broadening the scope of an institution and provide a learning opportunity about other issues that may be pertinent to an institutions mission. In the case of IKV, the obligation they have to their donors to implement a gender equality strategy has proven an opportunity for staff members who believe that addressing gender issues is crucial to the fulfilment of their mission. This has also proven to be a challenge, however as not all staff and board members feel that gender is relevant and therefore view this new mandate as a further burden on their already limited time.

3.4. Gender Mainstreaming at IKV: Normative, Cognitive and Political Challenges

With the changing strategies of IKV, the increased understanding of the importance of involving women in both formal and informal peace process and democracy building, the push from donors to make gender an integral part of IKV's policies combined with the new literature regarding the successes and failures of gender mainstreaming over the past decade, it seems like the perfect time for gender concerns to be put on the table and into practice at IKV. Almost four-years has elapsed since IKV received funding to implement a gender equality policy to the time that it actually initiated the process. The impetus to finally begin the process was in part due to the hiring of a new executive director and in part to the belief by a few staff members that gender equality was important for meeting the organizational vision of the organization.

The process began at IKV by having two staff members receive training regarding policy and planning for gender equality, culminated in the writing of a draft gender equality policy for the agency. About 10-months after the process began, IKV hired a gender expert, circulated the policy draft for comments and has added a line item in the budget specifically for gender issues. However, despite the seemingly successful, if slow start to the implementation of a gender mainstreaming strategy, there are a number of cognitive, normative and political issues at play that can affect its success.

Among the cognitive issues is the very definition that IKV staff gives for gender. Some staff members feel very strongly that 'gender' as a term should be replaced with women. One staff member said that by using the term gender, people get confused and even worse resist any discussions about gender equality. They feel that 'gender' is too nebulous and masks the real need, which is 'women'. Gender as a term may also be viewed as 'radical', 'feminist' or 'extreme', which leads to more resistance. Other staff members are adamant that 'gender' as a terminology must remain in policy and discussion as they view it as a tool with which to analyze the way different individuals or groups experience policies and programs. They feel that using the word 'woman' risks putting all women into one category and all men into another, without acknowledging the differences that exist *within* different groups of women and men. In fact, in the IKV office the understanding of 'gender' as being related strictly to 'women' is apparent when the men begin joking about gender when there is a group of women discussing various issues, when there are comments made such as 'gender is for women', or at a deeper level when they say 'I don't understand what gender has to do with peace'. Thus the 'patriarchal dividend' that exists in IKV allows men and even women to "dismiss 'gender' as a woman's issue", rather than make an effort to acknowledge the existence of gender regimes in conflict and peace and the social costs of this dividend (Greig, Kimel and Lang 2000:1). The patriarchal dividend allows individuals to marginalize women's issues to such an extent that even those who work for peace and democracy are unable to make the link between these areas and women.

Culture is another cognitive area that is providing a challenge to IKV's ability to gender mainstream. Some staff members feel that the patriarchal cultures in which their partners operate are so ingrained in society that these cultures are unable to change. What is perhaps a greater obstacle is that they do not feel that they have the right as an outsider to analyze their partners programs from a gendered perspective, fearing a colonializing action and imposing the views of IKV on their partner agencies. Thus the cultural contexts in which partner agencies work are able to provide a strong reason to not incorporate a gender equality policy beyond the walls of IKV's offices in the Netherlands. This phenomena is not unique to IKV but some of their partners are facing similar quandaries. One participant at IKV partner

conference who heads an umbrella organization is Isreal asked: “What can we do to address gender issues when one of our partners won’t hear of it and we don’t want to isolate them?” This illustrates how the issues of culture and tradition are deeply embedded in many societies and therefore may be a challenge that IKV faces throughout their policy implementation.

Gender mainstreaming as a concept is also largely misunderstood in IKV. Some staff members are concerned that gender mainstreaming implies working exclusively with organizations that focus on gender issues and therefore only on ‘women’s’ issues. Others understand gender mainstreaming to be a one-track strategy, which implies including gender within all objectives, without having separate policies or programs, which relate directly to women. This is an understandable misunderstanding as many organizations have taken this approach to gender mainstreaming, though the recent literature illustrates the importance of maintaining separate objectives and initiatives for women.

On a more subtle level, one can also witness resistance to the concepts of gender and gender equality. One of the ways that resistance is seen is through the interactions among staff, which include joking about gender and belittling of the issues that gender brings up. As well, when the Gender Policy draft was circulated among the staff members, only two people replied with comments. This of course may be due to the workload of the staff or the fact that IKV has generally been an organization that works on an *ad hoc* basic without formal policies and procedures, but I feel it also reflects the priority that staff place on gender. Yet another moment when IKV staffs’ lack of commitment to gender became apparent was in the gender focus group at the partner conference, where no IKV staff participated other than the facilitator. As well, it was reported that in the interview process for the gender expert, the interviewers did not explicitly bring up gender; rather they focused on the other areas that are in her portfolio. This of course may be due to the lack of understanding among staff members concerning gender issues, however this could also lead to a lack of commitment.

Among the political issues that can limit the effectiveness of the mainstreaming strategy is the place of importance that gender is given within the priorities of IKV.

Although IKV has allocated funds for gender mainstreaming in its budget, the amount is remarkable low at only 2,000 euros. For success to be achieved IKV staff will need training on gender issues (although there is no gender training policy or requirements for staff), reporting, monitoring and evaluation criteria will need to be developed and policy guidelines will need to be developed for all levels of the institution. The amount allocated in the budget is not enough to even begin to cover these costs, nor hint that IKV is serious about their gender mainstreaming. To compound the problem, the gender expert has been given other items in her portfolio which take up her time and energy, when the reality of developing and implementing all the gender tools would require at least one full-time position.

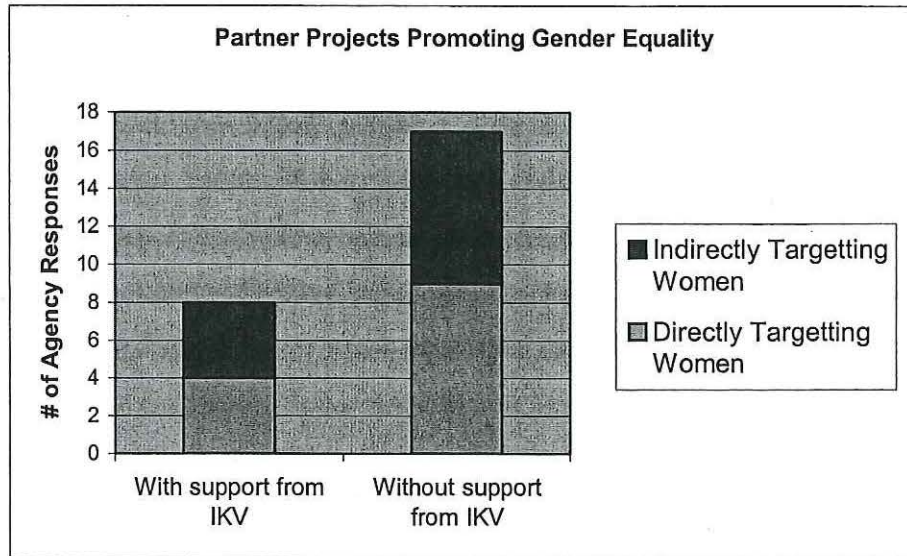
Finally, one can test IKV's commitment to gender equality by examining the concept of mainstreaming itself. IKV deals with issues of human rights and democracy building. Within these concepts there is an underlying belief that women and men are automatically included; in this sense gender is already mainstreamed. However, when we look at the budget allocation for gender-related projects and the percentage of programs that IKV supports that have a gender focus we see a story showing that men and women are not automatically included. The budget for gender equality projects is only about 7% of the overall project budget, showing that it is not a priority area.

IKV partners are involved in programs that promote gender equality, however IKV's participation in them is limited. The following table denotes the percentage of agencies that are actively involved in promoting gender equality through their projects, as reported in the surveys, differentiated by whether or not they receive IKV support:

Type of Support	Programs that Directly Target Women	Programs that Indirectly Target Women
Supported by IKV	31%	33%
Not Supported by IKV	69%	67%
Total	100%	100%

Interestingly, staff have indicated that partner agencies do not discuss their gender programs with them because they believe that IKV is not interested in promoting gender equality.

Looking at it in a different way, following chart serves to illustrate the difference in scale of support for gender projects (sample based on programs reported in survey responses):



Another example illustrating a lack of gender mainstreaming is how gender was not discussed at all in one of the focus groups at the partner conference, despite the presence of gender issues as a topic on the agenda.

When taking a look at the actual positions held by men and women within IKV one can see that there is a lack of equality. This is not to say that the individuals hired for various positions are not capable, talented or right for the job; rather it is simply to say that it is more than just coincidence to see the various hiring trends emerging. For example, on the IKV Board of Directors (made up of 14 individuals) one could define equality as seeing seven men and seven women. However, the actual distribution between men and women is 12 men and three women.

A similar situation is occurring within the executive committee of IKV, which is responsible for development and implementation of IKV's policies, where there are eight men and two women. However when we look at IKV staff who are primarily responsible for the implementation and execution of the various policies we see a distribution of seven men and 17 women. This provides an illustration of who has decision making power and who carries out the decisions. In fact, in a recent IKV meeting to discuss the importance of implementing a two-track strategy towards gender mainstreaming, staff was informed that despite discussions going on in the

meeting, at the end of the day it is the Board who will decide what the strategy will look like. In this situation it is primarily men in the decision-making positions and primarily women in implementation positions. However, even in the implementing positions there is some concern that the male project officers are viewed as having more expertise than their female counterparts despite actual levels and degrees of experience (IKV draft Gender Policy, 2005:5).

Although decision-makers in IKV have agreed in principle to support the promotion of gender equality in policies and programs, there is a considerable amount of resistance from both the same decision-makers as well as from IKV staff. The resistance is visible when, for example a staff person for gender is hired but not given a budget to work with, or when cultural relativism is used as a reason to not promote gender equality at the level of the partners, despite the fact that many of the partners are already implementing programs that work towards gender equality. However, the commitment to promote gender equality is not the only barrier that IKV potentially faces for a successful strategy. The very definition of 'gender' needs to be carefully defined and understood in order for an appropriate strategy to be developed. If IKV defines 'gender' as being synonymous with women, it risks implementing policies that focus on 'sameness' or 'difference' without analysing the paradigms that underpin policies. Thus IKV risks losing the ability to implement a transformatory strategy that can include both 'sameness' and 'difference' yet can deconstruct gender within the strategy.

There are a number of interesting points that can be drawn from the experience of IKV when analyzing opportunities and challenges they face in trying to mainstream gender issues. The first is how gender issues were placed on the agenda, through various historical and political processes that extended beyond the walls of IKV. For IKV, as with other organizations including the European Union, arriving at the decision to promote gender equality through gender mainstreaming was part of a larger transnational historical, political and economic process. The increased push for gender mainstreaming was combined with changing needs of regions where IKV works, subsequently leading to a change in mandate for IKV.

As well it is interesting to note that the normative, cognitive and political challenges that IKV faces in the promotion of gender equality are similar to the challenges that are being recorded in different countries and contexts. This potentially indicates that gender mainstreaming as a universal strategy may be relevant, as the challenges also seem to be universal.

While it is important to note that there are staff members at IKV who fully support the concept of implementing a gender equality policy and mainstreaming it through a two-pronged strategy, and that there is increased understanding of the importance of addressing peace and democratization through a gendered perspective, there are still a great number of challenges to achieving gender equality within IKV as an organization and promoting gender equality through their partner agencies. To overcome these challenges IKV will have to take advantage of the opportunities provided to them, yet at the same time will have to work at engendering the cognitive, normative and political processes that guide the institution. This is no simple task and will require more than just the training of staff as to the importance of gender in the fulfilment of their mission. It will require a change in mindset at all levels of the institution, a challenge to the comfort zones of staff members and the implementation of clear policies that promote gender equality with appropriate evaluation and monitoring tools that are put into practice, not just given lip service.

Chapter 4 Promoting Gender Equality in Program Areas: Diversity in Context, Vision and Implications for Partnership

4.1. Introduction

Each of IKV's partners has its own mission and works within its own political, historical and 'cultural' context. This makes the design of a gender equality policy complicated, as it must be flexible enough to address the various contextual needs that the partners are working while at the same time being rigid enough to hold onto the 'moral' values that underpin the overall goal of the gender policy. In this chapter I will illustrate some of the different contextual factors that contribute to the reason why some IKV staff are hesitant to promote gender equality at the level of the programs of their partner agencies. I will then show how the partner agencies provide opportunities for IKV to promote gender equality at the program level and draw on key ideas gained from my review of gender mainstreaming to illustrate how IKV could approach the issue of culture in ways that can strike a balance between a universal standard for equality and the respect for contextual differences as a reality faced by its partners.

4.2. Partner Agencies: Differing Contexts

The partner agencies of IKV come from countries with very different political, economic and social backgrounds. Partners come from countries that are traditionally Muslim, Orthodox Christian, Jewish and Roman Catholic (CIA, 2005). Some of the countries have been engaged in peace and democracy-building for almost 20 years while others are currently afflicted by war. The level of commitment to gender equality by the governments of the countries also varies widely, with some having committed to CEDAW others not (United Nations 2005). Beyond this, the degree to which interpretation of and adherence to the conventions varies (*ibid*). The extent to which women play an active role in governments also varies. Some of the countries, such as Israel and Croatia have national machineries for women, while countries including Azerbaijan, Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq have no such machineries (*ibid*). A final note regarding government commitment towards the promotion of gender equality is the quota system used to 'ensure' more women gain access to positions in government. For example, Bosnia-Herzegovina has no quota

system for ensuring that women are represented in government while Kosovo, uses a quota system, though women are typically in lower positions than men. In Iraq, on the other hand women comprise 31% of those on the new national assembly (UNIFEM, 2005).

Country diversity is also seen in the experiences of women during war and peace. In Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo for example, there was wide spread rape and torture of women as a means of ethnic cleansing, whereas in Palestine women were (and to a degree still are) actively involved in the war through protests, funeral processions, taking on the role of many public services and even becoming suicide bombers (UNIFEM 2005). Thus for Palestinian women the restrictions placed on their movements are actually reduced during conflict because men are away fighting (ibid). Likewise in peacetime, the experiences and involvement of women varies from country to country. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, acute traumatization combined with cultural restrictions on movement has made women's ability to participate in the peace process limited (ibid). In contrast, in Iraq, where women are rarely invited to participate peace processes they are actively fighting for their voices to be heard; in Palestine women are actively involved in the peace process, not only working among themselves but also joining forces with like-minded Israeli women (ibid).

The ability of "fundamentalists" or "conservative groups" to impact society also varies from country to country. For example, in Morocco, despite a strong Islamic movement which is opposed to gender equality, in 2003 women gained right to be their own guardians (though religious traditions may cause them to yield this right) and in 2005 women married to non-Moroccans received right to give citizenship to their children (United Nations Development Program 2005). In Iraq, where women gained greater rights and freedoms as men were away at war in the 1980's, in the 1990's, they found themselves loosing rights and honour killings were legalized as religious "fundamentalists" gained power (UNIFEM 2005).

4.3. Partner Agencies: Moving Towards Gender Equality

IKV has limited experience working on gender issues and their support of projects that deal with these is often due to either chance or the will of the individual program consultants rather than on an institutional gender policy. However, many of IKV's partners have experience working on gender issues addressing gender in their organizations and programs. The partners who responded to the survey have an average of 3.5 years of experience working on gender issues and 34% of respondents are considered gender specialists within their organizations, with an average of approximately 5-years experience working on gender issues. This shows that partners have begun to address gender needs before IKV received funding from donors to pursue a gender equality policy. Besides practical expertise, 73% of partner staff reported having received some gender training. This too is substantially more than the staff at IKV, where only 3 members have received formal training on gender. Within their own organizations 100% of agencies reported having a gender equality policy and 73% of the agencies reported having a gender training policy although 27% and 63% respectively of respondents from those agencies were unaware of the policies. In addition 30% of respondents feel that promoting gender equality is very important for their work and 61% said it was important. The level of commitment of partner agencies was made evident at the partner conference, where more participants attended the two-hour workshop dealing with gender issues than IKV had anticipated; one-third of the participants being men. As well, participants lamented not having more time to discuss gender issues as they felt the topic was interesting and relevant for their work. One participant approached me after the workshop asking "will IKV run a whole conference on gender? There is just too much to discuss in such a short amount of time."

Despite partner agencies having more experience and training in gender issues than IKV there are still a number of challenges to be faced with regards to gender mainstreaming in program areas of IKV. One of the main cognitive challenges that IKV will face is that 30% of survey respondents feel that gender is simply the biological difference between men and women. This was illustrated clearly in the surveys by one comment that gender equality is when men and women have the "same rights and opportunities for careers, social life and family life, with respect for

the factual differences (biological, like pregnancy, physical strength etc.)” As well, at the partner conference one participant stated that “gender inequality is mostly the fault of women because they do not raise their children to respect one another”. This illustrated to me that this participant was not questioning the role of women in child rearing but rather placed increased expectation on the woman’s ability to impress morals and values on the children. Another participant at the conference referred me to his female colleague when I asked if we could discuss gender issues. A final area which caught my attention was that when discussing the ‘Root Causes of Conflict’ in one of the focus groups, women (of all ethnic groups) were only referred to as victims of conflict without acknowledging agency of individual women and the important roles they played in maintaining society during conflict. This view of gender not only limits the ability of a gender analysis to see the intersections between race, class, ethnicity etc. which is so important when dealing with conflict areas, but also makes it difficult to analyze the different spheres in which gender operates including power, production, emotions and symbols that exist, not only between male and females but also depend on societies’ definition of masculinity and femininity (Connell 2002).

Definitions of gender equality also vary between partner agencies. Many of the organizations define gender equality as based on treating men and women the same. When asked in the survey how to define gender equality the majority of definitions dealt with equal opportunities or rights for men and women, which does not address the structural issues that define opportunities. Some of the partners however defined gender equality based on the respect for “factual differences” between men and women or premised around affirmative action policies.

4.4. Policy Implementation: Four Pillars

There are four pillars upon which IKV can build its gender equality policy with regards to program areas. The **first** is Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach, proposing universal norms while at the same time allowing for freedom of choice of the individual. This is relevant in addressing the concerns that IKV staff have with regards to avoiding a ‘colonial’ approach to partnership and for working within the vast historical and cultural diversity of partners for setting guidelines to defining gender and gender equality. The **second** pillar is Nancy Fraser’s framework for social democracies to promote equality. It facilitates analyzing the issues of political-

economic and cultural injustices and their remedies as either based on 'difference' or 'sameness' and bring them together to form one remedy to social injustice which addresses the need for 'participatory parity'. The **third** is the strengths that the partners have in promoting gender equality and their desire to work with IKV in this area. The **fourth** is the understanding that the partners will not necessarily follow an IKV policy blindly but will adapt and modify it to fit their own situation, as has been done with gender mainstreaming transnationally.

It is in the area of vast cultural diversity that Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach can be useful in guiding organizations like IKV in the development of their gender equality policies. Nussbaum's ten capabilities provide a moral grounding on which one can premise the concept of equality. It does not purport to set priorities for different groups but it does make a claim that there are certain principles that every individual has a right to as human beings¹¹. As Nussbaum states "...capabilities protect, and do not close off spheres of human freedom" (2000:241). Nussbaum's capabilities approach defines the combined (basic and internal) capabilities that all people need to live lives that are truly human without setting priorities and without necessarily assuming that cultural norms are bad or harmful (2000). The ten capabilities allow individuals, groups (like IKV and their partner agencies) and governments to make judgments about which cultural norms are worth protecting and which are worth changing, acknowledging that cultures are "dynamic, and change is a very basic element in all of them" (ibid:225).

The second pillar deals with Nancy Fraser's remedy to social injustices as rooted in the political economy and culture. Since one of the primary objectives of IKV is to support 'southern NGOs' in their efforts in democracy building, it is important to look at what kind of democracy they want to build and on what premise gender will be based. The partners are working under different political, cultural, and economic circumstances and their definitions of gender and gender equality are primarily based on either 'sameness' or 'difference', this could lead to fighting for democracies based on either Marxian redistributive politics or Weberian recognition politics. However,

¹¹ In this sense it is necessary to distinguish between 'capabilities' which are the ability to choose and 'functionings' which include the choices individuals make. Nussbaum (2000:235) gives the example of a person choosing to fast as opposed to somebody starving or that of a person choosing to be celibate as opposed to an individual being denied sexual pleasure.

Nancy Fraser argues that neither is sufficient for promoting justice (and therefore true equality) on their own, but rather a combination of the two is needed (1995:92). When looking at the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming across 157 nation states Jaqui True and Michael Mintrom (2001:49) see that “the degree of democracy...is found to be highly significant as a factor supporting the adoption of gender mainstreaming”. Therefore if IKV wishes to promote gender equality through gender mainstreaming, it should analyze the degree and types of democracies their partners wish to promote. IKV should also review the types of programs partners are implementing, whether they promote ‘sameness’, ‘difference’ or ‘deliberative democracy’ in which practices of deliberation on cultural differences can take place within the protocol of mutual respect, and with the shared objective of enhancing justice as recognition and redistribution.

The third pillar on which IKV can build its gender mainstreaming policy deals with the strengths that the partners have and their general eagerness to promote gender equality in their program areas. As stated above, many of the partner agencies began addressing the issue of gender inequality in their work even before IKV received funding to begin the gender mainstreaming process. In the survey, partners were invited to provide comments to IKV regarding the promotion of gender equality and suggest ways in which IKV could accomplish this within the partner areas. The comments that were given include providing training and workshops in the area of gender equality and information on best practices in the Netherlands¹². As well, since some partners have not been telling IKV about their gender programs, as they were under the impression that it was IKV that was not interested in the promotion of gender equality IKV could use the existing programs as a springboard for beginning their program implementation. Therefore, if IKV decides to provide support for gender equality in partner program areas, it need not be something imposed upon the partners but rather something that enhances the work the partners are *already* engaged in and are eager to improve.

The final pillar that can enhance IKVs confidence in the promotion of gender equality at the level of partner agencies has to do specifically with the concern from IKV staff

¹² To see exact comments from surveys see appendix 2

that they will be imposing their views, definitions and policy priorities on their partners. This is a very real concern, and one that was demonstrated at the partner conference where IKV presented their new policy document 'Persistent in Peace'. Partner agencies were invited to provide feedback and although generally agreeing with the points made in the document expressed their concern over the top-down process in which it was presented. Partner agencies were brought into the process only at the end of the drafting process to provide comments, instead of being given opportunity to be active participants during the whole process. However when looking historically at the implementation of gender mainstreaming in different regions, it is interesting to note the diversity in experiences and implementation, as opposed to all organizations following one top-down strategy (Walby 2003). This does not mean that IKV does not need to be aware of the potential for imposing their view, but rather they should enter into dialogue with their partner agencies with an openness and willingness to adopt differing strategies

Another point that should be made is that the imposition of views is not always negative. By stressing the importance of Nussbaum's ten capabilities and noting the similarities in implementation of gender mainstreaming (True and Milstrom 2001:27) one can often hold a moral ground by drawing on the experiences of others. One participant's question at the conference: "how is gender equality promoted in the Netherlands?" could be an indication that partners are also willing to learn from and absorb other's experiences into their own policies and programs - actually the opposite of imposition.

Thus for IKV to develop a policy to promote gender equality at the level of partner agencies, where there is diversity in culture, history and religion and where partner's understanding of gender and gender equality differs, it would be recommended that they define what type of democracy they and their partners want to encourage and try to reach a consensus on what universal norms will allow individuals to have the capability to live up to their full potential. IKV should also draw on the strengths and experiences of their partner agencies, facilitating the sharing of experiences and providing encouragement and training on the topic of gender and gender equality. IKV should also be willing to engage in open dialogue with partners as each decide what their priorities and strategies will be in terms of promoting gender equality.

Chapter 5 Conclusions

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I first summarize the key practical and theoretical issues surrounding gender mainstreaming, reflecting on the transnational nature of the strategy that is at play within various international and local contexts. I then look specifically at the case of IKV and the opportunities and challenges they face when attempting to develop a gender equality policy and strategy for their work. I will then provide some theoretical and practical grounding for gender specialists at IKV on which they can argue the case for promoting gender equality through a gender mainstreaming strategy. I conclude with my own reflections on the efforts and successes of gender mainstreaming for promoting gender equality.

5.2. Gender Mainstreaming: Issues and Challenges

Gender mainstreaming as a strategy to promote gender equality has been transnational from the start. It was discussed, formulated and agreed upon through international forums and dialogue involving civil society and state actors. The transnational nature of gender mainstreaming has provided many opportunities for sharing experiences, lobbying international bodies, and building international norms around gender issues. The onus for nation-states has also been largely transnational with pressure coming from bodies like the United Nations and the European Union. The concept of gender mainstreaming has also been contested at a transnational level, with various actors choosing slightly different strategies for implementation based often on differing definitions of what gender mainstreaming is. The strategies chosen for gender mainstreaming have tended to vary from looking at policies through a gender lens to analyzing the paradigms that underpin the policies. The various definitions of 'gender equality' have also played a role in determining the gender mainstreaming strategy. For some, gender equality refers to treating women and men the same, for others it implies acknowledging the differences between women and men, and still for others it is a combination of the two but attempts to transform the notion of gender within the sameness and difference debate. The variations in understanding of 'gender' and 'gender mainstreaming' contribute to the ways in which policies and programs will be designed.

Besides the cognitive understanding of terminology, gender mainstreaming has proven to be a difficult strategy to implement, as it implies challenging the status quo, which is often male-biased and understood to be deeply rooted in cultural norms. This, combined with the dominant neoliberal agenda, which is often built upon male-biases, and currently requires short-term quantifiable achievements, makes gender mainstreaming an up-hill battle. Gender specialists are charged with the task of promoting programs where success is not easily measured, countering widely held views regarding economic efficiency and profit that take policy-makers away from the types of social policies that can promote equality.

Where gender mainstreaming has been successful is in the development of implementation, monitoring and evaluation tools. These tools have been useful for analyzing policies and programs in order to understand the paradigms upon which they are built. They have also been useful in providing counter arguments for mainstream policies. Gender mainstreaming has been useful in analyzing power relations which underpin policies and programs. It helps policy-makers and feminists in analyzing the resistance to the promotion of gender equality. Thus as an analytical tool gender mainstreaming has been helpful for identifying where and why policies and programs often foster inequalities as opposed to equality.

5.3. Gender Mainstreaming in IKV: Organizational and Cultural Contexts

Although the Netherlands has been acknowledging gender issues in policies and planning before gender mainstreaming became an official strategy for the European Union, their entrance into the Union has more solidly embedded gender mainstreaming into their strategy. As a result, organizations that receive funding from the government of the Netherlands are also strongly encouraged to promote gender equality in their policies and programs, as is the case with IKV. Thus gender mainstreaming was brought onto the agenda of IKV through a transnational process. However, despite having the mandate to adopt a gender equality policy in the organization, it was not until four years later when a new director came on board and a few staff members began to push the issue that IKV began the process.

For the past year IKV has been discussing and debating on how to promote gender equality within their own policies and with the programs they run with their partners. This discussion is taking place regardless of the fact that many aspects of gender mainstreaming have already been agreed upon by the European Union and the government of the Netherlands. This illustrates that notions of gender equality and gender mainstreaming do not necessarily trickle-down, step-by-step or verbatim to different organizations but are contested within different contexts. IKV, is trying to work out the importance of promoting gender equality within its own organizational mandate of peace and democracy building, as well as challenging some of the organizational cultural issues embedded in the organization.

In the same way that gender mainstreaming is a transnational strategy which has 'trickled-down' to IKV, so too is IKV discussing how to diffuse its gender equality mandate to its partner organizations in different regions of the world. This discussion has brought up passionate debates amongst IKV staff about the cultural relativity of the different regions and how the concept of gender equality and reasons for inequality are different in the various regions. Although cultural relativity can be a hinderance to the furthering of a gender mainstreaming strategy used in such a way as to negate the possibility for universal equality norms, it can be an opportunity for discussion and analysis by IKV and its partner agencies. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that gets acted out in various contexts and is used to analyse policies and programs in a wide variety of contexts. Thus, using a gender mainstreaming strategy to promote gender equality with its partner agencies can prove to be useful in analyzing and designing programs that are region specific, dealing with the priorities of women in the different regions, instead of developing universal policies and programs from IKVs offices.

5.4. Anchoring Points for IKVs Policy Development

As IKV is in the infancy stage of the development of their gender equality policy, it is an opportune time for analyzing the opportunities and challenges that they face in their policy development. Using feminist contributions to, gender mainstreaming and social justice debates can provide anchoring points on which to ground their policy. Through these anchoring points it is hoped that they will be able to successfully

analyze opportunities and challenges and use them in favor of promoting gender equality within their office and in their program areas.

The first important point that IKV can use in developing a gender mainstreaming strategy is acknowledging that the strategy is not a concrete tool for setting hard and fast rules about achieving gender equality. Rather it is a tool that can be used to analyze policies and programs to determine what are the gender biases and underlying paradigms on which programs and policies are built. As such, gender mainstreaming is useful in the cross-cultural context in which they work, as it allows IKV and their partners to analyze context-specific issues that they each face.

Despite the fact that IKV and their partners promote gender equality within their own contexts and under separate regimes, there are some universal criteria which can be used to ground the concept of gender equality. Martha Nussbaum's contribution of ten fundamental capabilities is useful in this argument. The capabilities, like gender mainstreaming, do not set hard and fast rules for how to define gender equality, but rather leaves space for the individual to choose the type of life they want to live. What Nussbaum's approach does is provide a basic minimum criteria that policies and programs should have to allow the individual to make choices about their lives.

Staff at IKV is concerned that they will be imposing the concept of gender equality and the need to promote it in program areas on the partner agencies. However, based on the surveys received from partner agencies, it is clear that many of the partners are already engaged in activities to promote gender equality and that the majority of these programs are not being supported by IKV. As well, partner staff has indicated the desire to learn more about gender and gender equality and would like IKV to partner with them on these issues. As such, IKV need not impose on their partner agencies but can rather build on what the partners are already doing and take up the opportunity to provide training and learning on gender issues. Also, when examining the theoretical debate on gender mainstreaming it is clear that organizations do not follow blindly the top-down approach to policy implementation. Rather, they contest ideas and concepts redefining them for their own specific contexts. This has been the case with gender mainstreaming in different government machineries as well as with IKV

itself. Therefore, if IKV is aware of the risk of imposing their ideas, they can open themselves up for discussion with their partners to define context-specific strategies.

Finally, as IKV's primary objective is peace and democracy building and they have acknowledged the need to empower women and bring them into decision-making positions to reach this goal, then having a gender equality policy matches their objectives. Deliberative democracy requires that people of different genders, races and classes be brought into dialogue with each other to "resolve the tension between individual egalitarianism and the politics of recognition" (Walby 2003:12). This follows with Nancy Fraser's concept of combining recognition and redistribution for new policies and programs that deconstruct gender and contribute to real equality.

The process by which IKV has come to put gender equality on their agenda was a transnational process largely passed down by the European Union, followed by the Netherlands. However, IKV is still going through a process of defining concepts, determining if there is political will to change and identifying technical tools in which they can promote gender mainstreaming within their office and with their partner agencies. IKV gender staff hopes that the promotion of gender equality will extend beyond the walls of IKV to their program areas through the partners. To achieve this they must overcome the barriers brought about through belief in cultural relativism, in order to understand the broader concepts that define relativism and the flexibility of universalism. As well, with the partners already engaged in the promotion of gender equality and asking IKV to support them on their initiatives, together with the mandate from IKV donors and with the internal push from IKV staff, IKV is in a good position to start evaluating their performance in the promotion of equality and making the necessary changes so that their work can be more inclusive for all.

5.5. Final Remarks

Beyond IKV, development institutions and government ministries that work cross-culturally can also use the broader findings of this research to help formulate their gender equality strategies and policies. Gender mainstreaming is not a homogenous strategy but one that has many definitions, contested and acted out in numerous contexts. Even within the same government or organization, different departments

may define gender mainstreaming differently or use different tools to analyze the paradigms on which policies and programs are formed. What is important in gender mainstreaming is that it addresses the need to unpack policies and programs to determine if and how they may foster inequalities and look for subsequent remedies for those inequalities. By starting with a basic premise that every individual has the right to meet their full potential, but leaving open the ability for the individual to make choices about their own lives, organizations can begin to develop an equality policy.

What has been clear in watching IKV struggle with the promotion of gender equality is that it is not an easy road to travel. There are many barriers including the deeply imbedded power relations that exist in society and the strong forces of neoliberalism and efficiency discourse. The result is that for gender specialists, the work of promoting gender equality is a constant challenge and the successes are not forthcoming as quickly as one would like. However, at the same time small changes are accomplishments. Even if there is still a long way to go in achieving gender equality, the fact that gender is being talked about, ministries are being formed and organizations are being encouraged to promote it, are all steps in the right direction. I hope that the process of promoting gender equality can lead to enhanced learning and capacity of IKV and its partner agencies.

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Appendix 1 IKV Partner Survey

IKV is in the process of formulating a gender mainstreaming policy. This means that they will promote gender equality within IKV as well as within IKV's projects and areas they work. As your input is of the utmost important to IKV in designing relevant policies they want to learn about your organizations understanding of gender and gender equality and the ways in which your organization promotes gender equality in programs and projects.

To gather this information IKV is working with a student at the Institute of Social Studies who is doing her research on cross-cultural gender mainstreaming. The students name is Tracy Apoll. She will be at the conference in June to present her findings from the surveys and to meet with conference participants.

We would like to have one member from the board of directors, the president/director of your organization and one staff member (if possible a gender specialist) to fill out the survey in order to get a broad idea of the understanding of gender within your organization. Please return the completed surveys no later than June 10, 2005 in order to give Tracy sufficient time to compile the data before the conference. You can return the survey by emailing it to Tracy at wgd0401@iss.nl or by mailing it to:

Tracy Apoll
PH 110
Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. If you have any questions please contact Tracy at wgd0401@iss.nl

1. What is the name of your organization?

2. What is your position in the organization?

- Board of Directors
- President
- Management
- Project Coordinator/Promoter
- Support Staff
- Other (please specify): _____

3. Have you benefited from gender training?
 Yes No

If yes how many courses/workshops have you received?

4. How many years experience do you have working with gender issues?

5. Are you a considered a gender specialist in your organization?
 Yes No

6. Does your organization have a policy of staff training and capacity building on gender?
 Yes No

7. Does your organization have a gender equality policy?
 Yes No

8. How do you (as an individual) define gender?

9. How do you (as an individual) define gender equality?

10. Does your organization have any programs in partnership with IKV that directly target women?

Yes No

if yes please fill in the following table

Program Name	Program Description

11. Does your organization have any other programs (not in partnership with IKV) that directly target women?

Yes No

if yes please fill in the following table

Program Name	Program Description

12. Does your organization have any programs in partnership with IKV that promote gender equality without directly targeting women?

Yes No

if yes please fill in the following table

Program Name	How does it promote gender equality?

13. Do you have any other programs (not in partnership with IKV) that promote gender equality without directly targeting women?

Yes No

if yes please fill in the following table

Program Name	How does it promote gender equality?

14. How important is it for your organization to address issues of gender equality in your projects?

- Not important at all
- A little important
- Important
- Very important

Comment:

Appendix 2: Summary of Responses IKV Partner Survey

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey. The information gathered will be very useful for IKV as they work to promote gender equality in their own organization as well as in their project and areas where they work.

We received 22 responses from 13 organizations!!!

1. What is your position in the organization? (please put an X beside the one which applies for all of the questions with boxes)

4 respondents	Board of Directors
4 respondents	President
4 respondents	Management
3 respondents	Project Coordinator/Promoter
1 respondents	Support Staff
6 respondents	Other

2. Have you benefited from gender training?

9 out of 22 respondents indicated that they have received gender training

If yes how many courses/workshops have you received?

A total of 18 courses were taken by respondents

3. How many years experience do you have working with gender issues?

Respondents have an average of 3 years experience working with gender issues

4. Are you a considered a gender specialist in your organization?

7 out of 22 respondents are considered gender specialists

5. Does your organization have a policy of staff training and capacity building on gender?

5 out of 13 organizations responded that they have a policy of staff training and capacity building

6. Does your organization have a gender equality policy?

9 out of 13 organizations responded that they have a policy of staff training and capacity building

7. How do you (as an individual) define gender?

Gender is the social role of women and men. Family, education, society culture formulates the stereotypes. Sex is unchangeably, but gender is changeable.

Gender understanding belongs to personal relations, character, roles, beliefs and views, defining, what means to be man or women in society.

Gender characteristics and the roles are not caused by a biological sex. They were generated during historical and social development and can be changed.

In part biologically, and in part as a social construction, i.e. a categorization of people with associated implied status and power differentials

Gender refers to a set of qualities and behaviors expected from a female or male by society. Gender roles are learned and can be affected by factors such as education or economics. They vary widely within and among cultures. While an individual's sex does not change, gender roles are socially determined and can evolve over time.

The classification of people according to sex (males and females)

Only physical difference and nothing more. I don't feel discriminate, first I describe myself as a person which has all the possibilities as any other male person, but however I think we have to work more on this in the Balkan where the women are still marginalized.

Male or female

as a sex (man and woman)

Female and male

I think that within my organization and in my surrounding gender issue is not so popular topic to be discussed (no hidden thoughts). Although if I look around I see that on different positions in society gender balance is pretty ok. I do not feel that any extra discussions or efforts should be done, because in my country we need experienced people regardless gender.

Gender is a socially determined category - behavior and characteristics that a certain culture (society) expects from or imposes to individuals depending of the fact whether they are born as women or men. This way the society influences and models its members as well as the relation between sexes, which reflects in all segments of our lives (household, economy, public work, decision making, human rights violations etc.)

Gender is a balance of social roles of women and men in concrete historical period and concrete geographical place

For me that one takes in all projects and organizational/staffing issues of our own organization the role of the women/men into account (how they perceive decisions, regulations, decisions etc.)

The differences between women and men within the same household and within and between cultures that are socially and culturally constructed and change over time. These differences are reflected in: roles, responsibilities, access to resources, constraints, opportunities, needs, perceptions, views, etc. held by both women and men. Thus, gender is not a synonym for women, but considers both women and men and their interdependent relationships

Cultural ways of defining roles and relations between the two sexes

the issue of (in)equality of rights and social position and tasks between men and women (usually compared between societies)

8. How do you (as an individual) define gender equality?

Equal opportunities for man and women

same rights and opportunities for careers, social life and family life, with respect for the factual differences (biological, like pregnancy, physical strength etc.)

That the role of men and women in all aspects of the organization and the projects in which the organization is involved, are taken into account on an equal basis. Means for example equal representation in staffing, participation, chances etc.

In our concrete case of Georgia gender equality means creation of specific conditions that assist to promote real equality and empower women, creation of gender sensitive legislation and raising of understanding and awareness of this issue among population

means that women and men enjoy the same status. Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results

Gender equality is equally participation and solving of problems and in decision - making of both sex members without discrimination.

Gender equality is one of the main principles of human rights and purpose for development. Gender equality requires redistribution of power between men and women that concerns to economic recourses, legal rights, participation in political processes and personal relations.

Gender equality gives the women the large freedom and independence in acceptance of the decisions concerning sexual life and birth of child.

Equal opportunities for men and women, girls and boys

Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national political, economic, social and cultural development and benefit equally from the results. Equality is essential for human development and peace.

It is giving equal chances for males and females.

Gender equality for me is define as ideology that we as a people of the world want to succeed for each part of the earth. Can we do that?? Only matter of time.

Recognition of male and female identities and establishing a balanced distribution of responsibilities between women and man.

Equall oportunities in live for both sexes. In getting job, level of sallary, family, society, decision making...

From my personal experience I know that on many positions including my organization gender equality is not under question. My boss is women and even our president too. On many positions persons that we are cooperating are mainly women e.g. Minitry, local authorities, another NGO's etc. Even in most cases there are even more women than man. Personaly I do not have any problem with that, but I do not understand why people push that question all the time.

Gender equality would be a state of equal opportunities for all, men, women, sexual minorities in all segments of our lives. Individuals would not be judged by their sex, sexual orientation or related behaviour.

equal opportunities in every walk of life for both men and women

9. Does your organization have any programs in partnership with IKV that directly target women?

Yes No

if yes please fill in the following table

Program Name	Program Description
Women Centre in Miner Hill, North Mitrovica:	the women wanted a place to meet up, with friends and neighbours of other ethnic groups; 'society' (= men) wouldn't let them visit eachother anymore. The centre provided neutral ground. On top, we could provide lectures on health and social issues and activities.
Women Organisation 'Prehja' in Srbica/Skenderaj	war-traumatized women of different ethnic groups work together to generate some income by means of an internet cafee, production and markeling of bed sheets and carpet weaving. They also provide psycho-social help and distribute medicine to the remote villages.
Women group	looking to set up commercial initiatives to cooperate across the ethnic division, since commercial ties tend to be the most sustainable. Respect and understanding will in most

	cases naturally follow from this.
Children Assembly, and just about any other project	boys and girls (men and women) are treated equally, selected primarily on the basis of their skills. We usually look for a gender-balanced group (e.g. teenagers going to Italy, etc.)

10. Does your organization have any other programs (not in partnership with IKV) that directly target women?

Yes No

if yes please fill in the following table

Program Name	Program Description
Support for women, who face with violence	Legal, moral, physiological support Education on Women Rights and gender
	Our main gender-related activity is a strong women's group who have weekly sessions about peace/value education, and in which there are often woman/gender-related topics discussed. We expect this group (30 women) to become also more active externally, in film-making, representing Palestine abroad, and locally activating women.
Women's group	General knowledge English communication skills Peace spirituality Weekly meetings Photography and film production Communicating Palestine
Women's Group	In their weekly meeting discussions they deal with women's issues, peace and non-violence, values, reflection and meditation and communication.
Democratisation project	Political education of woman candidate for local elections
Your voice is your future	Analyze the needs and prepare non-party voters education and motivation for women so they can make their own choice and give their own vote To encourage women candidates and raise their capacity in order to include them in the Municipality Councils Inter-ethnic cooperation and promotion of forming a women network The project activities consisted of organizing tribunals in 8 villages and 4 in the city of Kumanovo where the population is mixed. The tribunals were held on topics: For equity in decision making process, Prejudices and stereotypes in the women and using the own right to vote. The second part of the project was a training with the women candidates for the members of the council (30-35). The foreseen topics were: appearance in front of the public, communication techniques, techniques and strategies for negotiation, leadership, running public work and contacts with the media.
Training on NGO Management for Women NGO's	In order to increase capacity of women NGOs in Kumanovo, promote women leadership, increase visibility of women issues and foster women involvement in community decision-making and development IPK organized an 8 days training for Women NGO's active in Kumanovo region. Members of more than 12 women NGO's from different ethnic background attended this training
Women library	In 2000 multiethnic women Center named "21 st Century" was initiated by 12 women NGO's from different ethnic background. The main goal of the center is to improve the position of the women by involving the women in the democratic process. The members of the women center undertook many surveys in the Kumanovo region, the results showed that a project like a women library would be more than welcome. There is a city library but the titles are old, there are few books in languages spoken by the other communities and there is no reader's room or activities to attract readers. The multiethnic women library will have books in different languages and foreign literature as well as organize different activities (book of the month, recitals, presentation of own poems) to bring the women from different ethnicities in one place.
women emancipation and gender equality	where the women were directly involved through different activity, workshops, seminars in field of women democratization for more women in politics, cosmetics project
	yes we have promoting gender equality without directly targeting women, in every our project we are very careful in gender balance, in different ways like having the same obligations during the project, reports etc

11. Does your organization have any programs in partnership with IKV that promote gender equality without directly targeting women?

Yes No

if yes please fill in the following table

Program Name	How does it promote gender equality?
	Our projects with school and university students provide opportunities for (young) women to participate in various intercultural activities, since those students are in majority women. However we do not target them as women
Sharing stories	Students boys and girls participate in it, the coordinator is female.
Sharing stories	Almost half of the participants (students, teachers) from the school network in Bethlehem are females
Stories from abroad	From three participants one was girl attended on trip to Holland
Capacity building	

12. Do you have any other programs (not in partnership with IKV) that promote gender equality without directly targeting women?

Yes No

if yes please fill in the following table

Program Name	How does it promote gender equality?
All AEI groups	They include males and females
High school, university, new graduates and young employees groups	The gender equality is being observed when sending representatives from local, regional and international workshops and seminars. We do also take gender equality into consideration during all AEI activities initiatives, intercultural, youth and communication.
Time out	It's a magazine which support and woman journalist to make articles
Youth Bridges	Cross-border magazine which encourage the woman journalist from different nationalities to write articles
Programs of women's leadership for IDP leaders and for women politicians	It gives better knowledge and almost equal chances to women to participate together with the men in elections, in decision making, in negotiations in track two (in public diplomacy)

13. How important is it for your organization to address issues of gender equality in your projects?

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| 0 responses | Not important at all |
| 1 response | A little important |
| 12 responses | Important |
| 5 responses | Very important |

Comment:

Solving of any problems men and women should participate equally. Since today this aim especially in Azerbaijan is not achieved.

It is very important for me personally in shaping and developing my personality as a general director as well as my coordinators-staff regarding this issue. It is also important for us as Palestinians in building our community for a future independent state where women, girls will share equal rights and duties with males and boys.

cannot fill in the form above. So:

we work with women groups, because:

- women are more vulnerable (e.g. war widows)
- women are more inclined to peaceful coexistence
- women tend to look more towards the future, realistically, hoping for a better life for their children
- women generally work harder (as a general scientific fact, not as discrimination)

More or less the same goes for youth, who also tend to be looking towards the future; but who can also be more radical in the negative sense, which needs to be avoided

Our first aim is to bring the war-torn communities of Albanians and Serbs back together. Gender issues are an instrument in this, or even a 'side effect' - one that we highly value, but not the main goal. If people start killing each other again, but on a gender-equal basis, well, they are still killing each other

We take care that in any activity women will get the opportunity to actively participate and that women perceptions will be addressed in our activities

I can only say that we are giving the same opportunities to the woman participant to our project, also we insist to our local partners to make the same practice.

I am a member of Gender Equality Council, created from 6 NGO representatives and 6 members of the Parliament of Georgia under the aegis of Speaker of the Parliament. We try to ensure gender sensitive legislation in the country, for this we conduct gender expertise of legislation, propose to Parliament commissions and committees amendments and changes. This work is very important for increasing of gender culture in politics and society.

Gender issue is of importance, but sometimes it is very difficult to put the policy in the real life, not because there is no will to do so, but because there are real life obstacles in doing it (e.g. there is not enough qualified people to be hired or there is no interest in doing specific job no matter of our gender policy and inclination to get more balanced position - in our organization there are more women than men for example as well as in many other organization that are in the field of education, non-governmental work and similar interests.

In process of employment, recruiting students or volunteers we are looking at gender and ethnic equality. Unfortunately, from two years ago gender equality is not present between employees in our organisation. It appeared that most employees who remained are women. It was not act of positive discrimination, but decision based on experience and competence in work.

In all projects we are trying to reach balance between genders. But if we look at the structure in my organization than we will find out 20 % man and 80 % women. That is not question about gender, than about professional staff who know to do his/her job good, and that's why they are employed.

In every project from a partner organization or own initiated projects we take the gender balance into account.

14. Do you have any suggestions for IKV about what they should do to promote gender equality?

Preparation of women leaders

Increase the activity of women in social – political life of region / country

Working on the nexus women/peacemakers, which is also an interest in our women's group.

We need more training about the gender issue for all our groups (from High School group, the university group, the new graduates and young employees group, the women's group and the family group).

Workshops: local, regional and international for exchanging experiences and principles

Planning workshops on gender equality and inviting AEI groups to participate and encouraging and supporting AEI groups (especially Women's group) in its plan activities related to such themes.

Here in Macedonia we are still working with percentage when it is about woman in politics, which I don't agree. I also can add that the 20 percentage off woman in politics it's little respected.

Different actions on the theme: Equal opportunities for the man and women at the local level (national policy and situation at the local and regional levels in areas IKV works)

To give examples of positive practice from The Netherlands and other countries.

As far as I know IKV doesn't have an official gender policy document, which has been officially accepted by the organization and has been distributed also to all its partner organizations. It would also be good, especially for local partners abroad, where gender awareness is little developed, to have a 2 or 3 days training on gender issues as an integral part of the capacity building programme of the local staff. I am sure that in each country where the partner organization is based some training institute can provide this, so financially it should be possible. In our training programme for the local staff of IPK, IPG and CBM (all partners IKV) we have recently on our own initiative included a training "Gender and Development". This will be given by a local organization in Macedonia (with good reputation).

Just to have more initiatives like conference, seminar for the different organizations in area of gender equality

Policy on gender in the IKV

- Bylaws that promote gender equality.
- Strategic plan to promote gender
- Raising this issue with IKV partners in a special workshop aiming to promote gender equality in the work of all the partners.

To include in the evaluation of projects indicators which will show how projects are sensitive to gender issue.

To support more projects, which deal with inequality and methods of combating of gender violence, especially in such communities, as post war communities, IDPs, refugees, where gender violence usually is very high.