

Understanding Women's Social Capital

2005 Global Exchange Forum Report

About the Partners

The Barrow Cadbury Trust

The Barrow Cadbury Trust is a charitable foundation that seeks to encourage a just, equal, peaceful and democratic society. As an independent body, the Barrow Cadbury Trust funds innovative, even risky community projects, that help provide solutions to local problems and drive social change. In addition to providing grants, the Barrow Cadbury Trust works in partnership with the groups it funds to provide them with the opportunity to share good practice at a national and international policy level. In this way the Trust is pursuing an approach to grant-making that is based on a solid understanding of relevant areas of social policy and a commitment to work with grantees to influence positive developments. Barrow Cadbury's funding is focussed on three distinct programme areas: Offending and Early Interventions, Inclusive Communities and Global Exchange.

The Foreign Policy Centre (FPC)

Established in 1998, the FPC is an independent foreign policy think tank with offices in London, Beijing and as of spring 2006, Washington DC. With Tony Blair as Patron, the FPC aims to enrich and inspire international foreign policy debate by creatively and pragmatically responding to existing challenges as well as anticipating future debates. The Centre's work endeavours to inform and promote alternative and innovative ideas which embrace the FPC's core organisational goals. These are: to contribute to effective multilateral solutions to global problems; to promote democratic and well-governed states as the basis for stability and development; to establish partnerships with the business sector to deliver public goods; to support progressive policy through effective public diplomacy; and to champion inclusive definitions of citizenship which underpin international policies.

Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS)

WAITS is a women's charity, building a network of women's groups and organisations across the West Midlands. It plays a key role in supporting and shaping women's social capital so that women can make change for themselves, their communities and their families. WAITS delivers a programme based on the principles of community organising and the development of individual leadership which enables women to identify issues of concern and bring solutions to the attention of policy makers and service providers. WAITS achieves this by supporting women to establish community based groups and projects, through workshops delivered in local communities and women-only courses at a local further education college. WAITS also helps women identify issues of concern, discuss and test solutions before brokering meetings which promote civic regeneration. WAITS has had an impact in supporting women to establish and deliver services on a wide range of issues, from setting up a befriending project for women experiencing domestic violence to launching Saturday schools that provide curriculum based activities alongside culture specific classes.

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Foreword



The Barrow Cadbury Trust has a track record in funding women's organisations both internationally and in the UK. Our work spans lobby groups such as the Women's Budget Group; national awareness programmes such as Oxfam UK's Women and Regeneration programme; and grassroots organisations, including Women Acting in Today's Society and Saheli in Birmingham, and the Trust for the Programmes of Early Childhood in Palestine.

Our central aim is to build avenues of collaboration between external agencies (NGOs, governments or foundations) and local women's organisations – the symbiosis which the paper refers to as the 'cooperative approach'. We are therefore committed to promoting approaches that help women become politically engaged and give them the tools which will allow them to swim in the 'policy-making pool'.

However, our experiences both nationally and internationally have made us aware of the fact that these types of interactions are complicated by issues of power and resources. We will therefore aim to continue developing expertise and practice regarding the checks and balances that can be put in place in order to pre-empt the three issues set out in the paper capture, overloading and instrumentalism. One of the proposals for follow up will be the publication of a 'tool-kit' which sets out some of the potential pitfalls for women's organisations and raises awareness among those working with them.

We will also seek to develop avenues for women's groups to act collectively across borders. The success of the Global Exchange Forum has made us more committed to the creation of other forums of this kind, spaces where women from around the world can thrash out the issues which they share in common. In 2006 we will be holding a session on Muslim Women and Political Participation in the UK Parliament and we also hope to continue building on the relationships which emerged from the 2005 Global Exchange Forum.

We are extremely grateful to all Forum participants, particularly our international delegates and outstanding speakers, many of whom travelled considerable distances to join us. We are immensely thankful to Maxine Molyneux who mentored the partner organisations and guided discussions throughout. We owe a debt of gratitude to our host for the second year running, His Excellency Mel Cappe, and many of his team at Canada House including: Christopher Berzin, Sylvie Duguay, Gillian Licari and Jamieson Weetman. In addition, Chantale Walker of Foreign Affairs Canada provided an invaluable level of support. We are also very grateful to all of the organisations which took part in the Birmingham workshops, including the Ladywood Credit Union, the Rover Action Community Trust (formerly Longbridge Women's Support Group), the UK Asian Women's Resource Centre, Saheli Women's Group, Agenda4Women, Inspire Black Country, Families for Peace and Birmingham Community Empowerment Network.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the contributions made by the UK Women's National Commission particularly their Director Janet Veitch as well as the support provided by the Women and Equality Unit. We are also very grateful to the team at The Foreign Policy Centre, including Shairi Mathur, Graham Banton and their Director, Stephen Twigg.

Sukhvinder Stubbs
Director, Barrow Cadbury Trust

Understanding Women's Social Capital

Maxine Molyneux¹

Social capital, understood as networks of trust and social solidarity, has entered public policy thinking and practice across the world. Although women's organisations often play a vital role in creating and maintaining social capital, they are all too rarely acknowledged for the work that they do. This article maps some key issues for policy actors and women's organisations and is structured in three parts: the first section critically examines the gendered assumptions that govern efforts to build social capital, identifying some common characteristics of women's social capital and analyses why these characteristics have led to women being largely rendered invisible in this debate. The second section explores some of the tensions that may arise when women's networks interact with policy actors, particularly governments and NGOs. Here the focus is on three specific problems that have arisen in such collaborations: instrumentalism, capture and overloading. The final section focuses on ways in which women's organisations might move from practical to strategic concerns by incorporating issues of ownership, self-esteem and empowerment into their practice. This section focuses on three areas of current policy concern: economic empowerment, communities under stress, and civic regeneration.

¹**Maxine Molyneux** is Professor of Sociology at the Institute for the Study of the Americas at the School of Advanced Studies of the University of London, where she directs and teaches on a Masters degree in Globalization and Latin American Development. She has previously held teaching posts at Essex University, and at Birkbeck College, London. She has written extensively in the fields of gender and development studies. Among her recent books are: *Women's Movements in International Perspective*, and *Doing the Rights Thing: Rights-Based Development and Latin American NGOs* (with Sian Lazar). Her most recent edited books include: *Gender Justice, Development and Rights* (with Shahra Razavi); *Gender and Democracy in Latin*

America (with Nikki Craske) and *The Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America* (with Elizabeth Dore). She is also the author of *Gender and the Silences of Social Capital* (Development and Change, April 2002). Maxine has served as External Advisor to a number of UN agencies and NGOs, most recently on the research and editorial committee for the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) report prepared for Beijing Plus 10, entitled *Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*. She is currently completing research on female poverty and cash transfer programmes in developing countries.

Introduction

In recent years the concept of social capital has entered policy debates in fields as diverse as community regeneration, health, migration, education, welfare, and development. Commonly understood as the social cement generated by associational life and by citizens' networks of trust and solidarity, social capital appears to have the potential to increase productivity, to provide support against poverty, to create stronger democracies, to help reconstruct war torn communities, and to enhance mental and physical well being. In a more general sense it is also hailed as the essential counter to the socially corrosive trends associated with contemporary economic life. The current interest in social capital reflects a growing awareness that the realm of social life matters not only for individual well being but because it has implications for government policy and service delivery. By enriching civic and social interaction and engaging in forms of co-operation to achieve common goals, citizens can not only enhance their quality of life but also make policy initiatives more accountable and effective.

Despite the extensive literature on social capital and its increasing visibility in public policy, there is a surprising absence of attention to the role women play in creating and maintaining social life through their own networks and forms of solidarity. Yet across the world, women are active in a wide variety of voluntary and community work, whether for charities, churches, kin groups, neighbourhoods or clubs. Women frequently have the strongest local and kin ties; they network and engage in reciprocal supportive relations, and they are often among the most active supporters of community activities and participants in local forms of associational life. They are to be found at the heart of voluntary self-help schemes whether in health, education or neighbourhood food and housing programmes, in cultural associations, supporting communities hit by sudden unemployment, running barter groups, childminding circles and safe houses for abused or marginalized women. This range of activities takes place in what some have called the 'social economy' understood as those forms of co-operation that citizens engage in without being driven primarily, or even at all, by material interest. The social economy can be important in helping to overcome social exclusion of various kinds, and can at the same time provide safe spaces for women, where trust based relationships can be built, and where skills and experience can be developed.

The broader significance of this kind of activity, beyond the contribution it makes to the quality of social life, is that neither states nor markets can provide for all social needs. As a result, citizens either choose to or are obliged to depend on some mix of formal and informal social institutions for their welfare, wellbeing and security. For those in precarious livelihoods, informal networks and the support they offer may be the only way to ensure that basic needs are met. Research on household livelihoods, social networks, and voluntary institutions has shown that there is a considerable reliance on informal arrangements and organisations that exist

independently of, or work with, the state. Women are commonly found in these activities, especially in those associated with caring, whether in the inner cities of the industrialised world or in the developing countries of the global South.

Across the world and in very different socio-economic environments women play a vital role in sustaining low income households, engaging in an informal economy of exchange, involving credit, caregiving and services. Childminding for neighbours, shopping, cooking and ironing, borrowing and lending, are all essential to household survival on the margins. Women also frequently engage in collective survival strategies. They have set up and managed successful credit unions, canteens, and small business co-operatives. They have also organised around service provision, demanding improvements in waste collection, road maintenance, security and community management. Women are very often engaged in projects designed to improve health, housing and education, sometimes working with NGOs, often self-supporting and frequently in collaboration with government initiatives. In times of severe economic hardship women's grass roots organisations have sprung up to provide low cost food for their neighbourhoods by creating urban gardens to grow food or setting up communal cooking facilities to supplement local needs. In Peru, for example, during the economic crisis of the 1980s some 800,000 collective canteens run entirely by women served more than two million people. Women's efforts have also been essential in conflict and post-conflict situations where by working on common agendas, women have helped to heal deeply divided communities as well as to participate in the difficult task of post conflict reconstruction.

Most starkly, and tragically, as Chancellor Gordon Brown noted on his return from Africa earlier in the year, women are those who are holding whole communities together in HIV/AIDs stricken parts of the region, taking care of the millions of orphans and the sick in a situation where more women than men are now falling victim to the pandemic.

Women's organisations also support vulnerable women who fall outside the safety nets or who suffer from exclusion of various kinds, such as asylum seekers, stateless women and those who live on the margins of the informal economy. In some cases, groups which do have access to public services turn to informal associations because they find them more sensitive to their specific needs, and easier to work with than government agencies. For example, some Muslim women's groups prefer to work with informal associations when they are unable to access key services due to cultural constraints or if they are unable to move freely outside their home or immediate locality. In other words, informal associations can meet needs that are not covered by state provision, but they also have the potential, especially if adequately funded, to provide a more satisfactory alternative to state managed provision.

Crossing cultural borders: FATIMA Women's Network

The FATIMA Women's Network is a regional women's network based in Leicester. It was established to support women, particularly those from diverse and disadvantaged communities. FATIMA has developed dynamic initiatives in personal development, support, information and training to improve its network's opportunities for economic empowerment through either employment or enterprise.

The Network was recently commissioned by the government to reach women from the most marginalised communities including those of Somali, Chinese, Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Malawian, Mauritian, East African, and African-Caribbean origin. This was achieved through the development of effective partnerships and strong grassroots networking.

The starting point for FATIMA is to respond to the specific needs of the communities they work with. For example, in the case of older Chinese women they won the trust and confidence of members by providing Chinese language services and internet access, which allows women to keep in touch with relatives at home. The fact that a Chinese speaker was available, allowed them to reach women who would not normally have had the confidence to engage in activities outside this very tight-knit community.

However, FATIMA's ultimate aim is to build connections between women across communities. In order to do this they run discussion events about issues which are not culturally specific but shared in common, such as pre-natal health. This is a useful method of establishing an initial rapport, as well as allowing women who come from more restrictive contexts to learn about issues which may not be discussed in their immediate family environment. For example, at an event about pre-natal screening, women from Somali, Indian, Iranian, Turkish and Bangladeshi origin were able to exchange their experiences and share common concerns. Not only did many of these women get to know each other and learn about their communities, the dynamic which resulted from these exchanges led to greater openness about issues which would not normally be discussed. The outcomes of these discussions were fed back to those in charge of delivering maternal health services. Without FATIMA's mediation, these statutory bodies would have lacked the inside knowledge about the needs of women who are often hard to reach and misunderstood by large public sector bodies.

As presented by Parvin Ali, FATIMA Women's Network



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1. Rushanara Ali, The Young Foundation
2. Maxine Molyneux, Institute for the Study of the Americas
3. Lucy Lake, CAMFED
4. Sian McClure, Inspire Black Country

“Social capital is a highly effective tool for interpreting women’s position within society. It can help us understand why often women’s very visible presence at grass roots level does not translate into political and economic clout. And by looking at those examples of women’s groups which have successfully gained influence, we can develop a better understanding of both the obstacles and solutions to female under-representation.”

Erica Cadbury, Barrow Cadbury Trust

Women’s social capital: common features

While women’s activities, networks and associations are important in sustaining social life in the ways already outlined, they are often

poorly resourced and supported. This can be explained in part by some typical characteristics of women’s social capital which are outlined in Box 1.

These differences imply that women’s networks are often found in different social spaces to men’s. Men’s networks are typically associated with the public world of work and politics, while women’s networks and ties are typically closer to home. For example, studies of the informal networks that sustain immigrant populations have tended to focus on the ways that men help each other to secure jobs and business contacts. Less research has been published on the ways in which women manage in such contexts. Women’s networks seem to be more concerned with resolving domestic problems than being directed at economic and employment issues. One example is groups working with migrant women. Women’s organisations have been important in helping migrant women to find ways of addressing their needs more broadly; there are a growing number of women’s groups working at local level with migrant communities, organising around health and education and legal rights. At the same time, groups of migrant working women – nurses and domestic workers – have formed associations to share their concerns, to secure better standards of employment and to promote knowledge of their rights.

Box 1

The characteristics of women’s social capital

Networks reflect social relations. They are governed by gendered social divisions and these affect the ways they access resources such as time, money and status. For all their forms of engagement, there are some common features of ‘women’s social capital’ and these tend to differentiate it from men’s.

Women’s social capital generally:

- > is based close to home, in the locality rather than in the public world of work;
- > involves exchanges of time and skills rather than money;
- > includes a significant proportion of voluntary and caring work;
- > often involves affective or ethical issues, a degree of altruism, and frequently mobilises sentiments associated with motherhood;
- > can bridge across community divisions;
- > but is often ‘bonding’ rather than ‘bridging’.

Networks depend on resources to sustain them – time or money, usually both. Most women dispose of less of these resources since they have to combine work with family responsibilities. In addition, the pay gap in men and women’s wages works to women’s disadvantage. In Britain for example, the pay gap for part time work, itself heavily feminised, is a full forty per cent. As female networks tend to command fewer economic resources, they rely more on time and non-monetised exchanges (work, skills) that can be accommodated within their daily lives. Moreover, since relations of power and advantage are reflected in social networks, women can find themselves excluded from the kinds of networks that might bring them economic and political power. When women do form networks they often service the group (ie. they create ‘bonding’ social capital) rather than developing contacts with the wider world of economic and public power (‘bridging’ social capital). Yet the very fact of working together for a common goal can be a vital spur to developing leadership skills and bridging the power divide. Some women’s networks have been set up with the explicit goal of gaining more professional or government recognition, or changing policy, as in the case of working, business and professional women who have been able to advance their interests through organisation and co-operation.

The common features of women’s social capital described above help to explain why it has tended to be invisible and marginalised from mainstream debates. Women are still located within unequal power relations and occupy gendered social spaces. They generally dispose of less power in the public world and have fewer assets. Their work, for all the changes that have occurred in recent times, is still regarded as secondary to their family responsibilities. Indeed, much of what they do, whether paid or unpaid, is all too often seen as a natural extension of their family and domestic responsibilities and as such is invisible or taken for granted. Even when women are in paid work, what they do in their localities, as volunteers or activists, is often constructed as a ‘natural’ extension of their caring roles in the social division of labour – it is simply ‘what women do’.

One consequence of naturalising women’s work is that it is considered outside the sphere of economic relations; in short it is not paid work. We might ask, then why do women do it? In some ways the question itself is a problem: it implies that the only reason people do things is for self interest and for material incentives such as cash. Yet motivation is far more complex and involves identity issues and forms of reward that escape these material categories.

Caregiving is an example of an activity that has the potential to provide satisfaction and give meaning to people’s lives in ways that do not equate to cash reward, as is the case all too often with regard to women’s occupational status in nursing and teaching. Work of this kind can be associated with satisfaction, self-esteem, recognition and respect, but it remains the case that it is work that women tend to do, and as such it is often undervalued and taken for granted. However, as illustrated in Box 2, female identities have also been a basis for collective action.

The distinctive combination of characteristics that define most women’s organisations can make them particularly well suited to tackling social needs that other organisations ignore or cannot easily reach. Yet these same reasons help to account for the fact that women’s organisations so often find themselves struggling for resources and reliant to a significant degree on voluntary supporters.



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1. Angeline Mugwendere, CAMFED
2. Lynne Thomas, Barrow Cadbury Trust



1. Naseem Akhtar, Saheli Women's Group
2. Iram Khan, WAITS

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Box 2

Female Identity and Mobilisation

For many women, being a mother and a wife remain important primary identities that can govern motivation to engage in public action. We have only to think of the Mothers of the Disappeared in Argentina, ordinary housewives who took to the streets in a defiant protest against the disappearance and torture of their children in the Dirty War years when the country was governed by state terror. Similar examples can be found more recently in Sierra Leone. For example, an organisation called WOMEN mobilised thousands of supporters to confront armed soldiers in pro-democracy street protests. With no training and little experience of how to confront thousands of women protesters, the confused soldiers were told by the organisation's leader, Zainab Bangura, "We are your mothers, your sisters, your wives and your daughters... If you're going to shoot us, then do it now. But remember the whole world is watching".

Around the world, women's groups often become active in peace movements out of concern for their families and participate in campaigns against civil violence such as in Northern Ireland where they have worked in grassroots projects that seek to reconcile divided communities. Female solidarity around such concerns can be the basis for a kind of informal citizenship that relocates women's domestic concerns and activities from the isolation of the family into public spaces and public life. Grassroots organisations often have this transformative potential in which the experience of engaging in collective activity turns private actors into public citizens. In this process, the organisers of neighbourhood protests or support activists are transformed into community leaders, able to negotiate with local and even national governments on behalf of their communities' needs.



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The different modes of economic engagement: a Ugandan experience

In 2003 the World Bank undertook a two year pilot programme to analyse the dynamics which govern enterprises managed by women and those led by men. The research found that while Ugandan women were estimated to contribute equally to the nation's GDP, overall women's enterprises only comprised 39 per cent of registered businesses. Those women's businesses which were registered were small and employed few workers. However, even though these enterprises were generally more informal in their nature, the research also found that women's income was more likely to contribute to reducing household poverty, and, notwithstanding their purchasing power and income, female employment was more likely to yield additional economic and social benefits. Furthermore, women's networks were more likely to produce social enterprises.

Having consulted stakeholders in both the public and private sector and women's networks, the researchers identified a number of constraints which disproportionately affected female entrepreneurs: women were more vulnerable to onerous business regulations, had more difficulty in registering their enterprises and accessing licenses, were more burdened by taxation and had less access to key components including credit, land titles and access to the legal system.

As presented by Amanda Ellis, The World Bank

1. Amanda Ellis, World Bank
2. Cassandra Ballchin, Women Living Under Muslim Laws
3. Haleh Afshar, University of York
4. Parvin Ali, FATIMA Women's Network

Women's organisations and policy actors

"Women's organisations play a vital role in enabling women to influence public policy debates by developing informal channels of communication and creating the space and time to collectively meet and explore."

Janet Veitch, The UK Women's National Commission

The work that women do in groups and associations is increasingly (if still only partially, or problematically), recognised by policy actors. NGOs have found women to be natural allies in their efforts to develop community initiatives around health, education and service provision; governments have also increasingly called on women to help them to administer and service their anti-poverty, community regeneration or welfare programmes. This attention may be given a cautious welcome if it goes along with programmes that serve common aims, but are at the same time sensitive to women's needs. The latter unfortunately does not tend to be the norm. On the contrary, the accumulating experience of how outside agencies work with women's organisations and networks suggests that there are often tensions between the needs of women participants and the goals of the project. What are these tensions and what lessons have women's organisations and those who work with them, drawn from the experience so far? This section explores issues of instrumentalism, capture and overloading.

1. Instrumentalism

"The harsh reality is that the UK government takes Muslim women for granted. They are keen to consult with them but simply fail to recognise that these women are already resource scarce and as such need to be adequately compensated for their time, as well as the resources needed to operate their organisations." **Parvin Ali, FATIMA Women's Network**

The first problem arises where women's organisations and / or their voluntary work is not only relied upon as a central support for social policy but becomes a substitute for appropriate government action. In such cases women's groups face two kinds of risk: either struggling on without funding yet finding themselves with responsibilities which they are not adequately resourced to undertake; or being incorporated into government programmes on unacceptable terms, where their project is taken over by government agencies but administered in ways that depart from the original conception and good practice associated with it. For example, a women-centred and administered project which serves the needs of vulnerable women and provides safe spaces for them is likely to be far more successful in generating trust and self-esteem among participants than one administered by men and made to conform to government priorities and guidelines. The lesson here is that outside agencies working with women's organisations need to help strengthen them, respecting their experience and autonomy rather than simply making use of them to plug gaps in provision.



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1. Senator Mobina Jaffer, Canadian Committee on Women
2. Janet Veitch, Women's National Commission

Tackling instrumentalism through income generation: the case of Mama Cash

Mama Cash is an independent foundation funded by its own members. It provides resources for work which promotes women's rights by dispersing strategic grants to support pioneering groups around the world including in the Global South, Central and Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union.

A key principle of Mama Cash's mission is the support and sustainability of women's funds working around the globe. Since 1998, in partnership with organisations in the US and the UN Global Fund for Women, Mama Cash has provided seed funding to 14 members of a network of independent women's foundations.

Although their activities do not centre on income generation, these women's foundations have achieved high rates of sustainability. For example, three years after establishing a fund in Mongolia, the original organisation (supported by Mama Cash) was able to support other fledgling women's organisations in the same region. In the case of groups in Nepal, 70 per cent of the funding for grants is raised in Nepal itself. Mama Cash has demonstrated that through entrepreneurialism, funding can be mobilised even in the poorest of countries and regions.

Mama Cash is part of the International Network of Women's Funds (INWF) which is committed to expanding the resources available to women's rights organisations around the world. The INWF promotes the financial independence (from foreign donors) of women's groups and networks in the Global South, in order to redress power relations between the regions and provide women in the developing world increasing autonomy to prioritise women's issues, generating their own funds locally.

Through this organisation, Mama Cash has lobbied governments and donor organisations to develop a best practice standard of grant provision. The INWF's priority is to encourage funding strategies that are flexible and sustainable.

As presented by Diana van Maasdijk, Mama Cash



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1. Shazia Awan, Barrow Cadbury Trust
2. Shanti Koshti, SEWA
3. Rani Johal, WAITS

2. Capture

A second and related problem involves the capture or co-optation of grass roots organisations, where women's participation is secured to make use of their efforts for direct political gain. Where governments, political groups and parties are prone to practice forms of clientelism and seek to co-opt women's organisations for their own ends, the latter might experience short-term gains in recognition and reward, but as a result can rapidly lose legitimacy in their communities and among the women they seek to serve. The use of women's organisations for political purposes is common throughout the world. One example is the popular canteen initiative in Peru noted earlier, which started as a women's grass roots project, but was gradually taken over by government agencies, with the women leaders entering into a close and public association with government. As government popularity waned, the women's

organisations suffered by association and lost public confidence. In the process they had also lost their autonomy and sense of purpose.

In the UK, similar, if less extreme cases can be found where community groups have become a cornerstone of the government's local development initiatives. Change Up is a £72 million government initiative set up to support the development of the voluntary and community sector. While the injection of resources has been welcomed, there has been mounting concern among women's organisations over the paperwork burden placed by increased government bureaucracy on participating organisations. Many women's groups feel that this hampers their ability to campaign and that the pressure to align themselves with government priorities distances them from being more responsive to local needs.

Avoiding the capture trap: the case of the Ladywood Credit Union, Birmingham

The Ladywood Project was established by a group of women who were affected by poverty and the challenges encountered by single parent families. The founders established a drop-in centre that provided women with a place to meet. As the project grew, a need emerged to provide credit and resources and as such the Ladywood Credit Union was established as an autonomous entity (supported with some grant funding from the local city council).

Ladywood Credit Union is funded by the local city council and as such has recognised the benefits of collaborating with the authorities. By having local government agency support, they have access to a larger pool of resources and can build in greater stability within their operations, which benefits their clients.

However, they have also worked hard to keep their independence. Because the local authorities recognise and value their services in this community, they have been able to secure a number of concessions that help them maintain flexibility. Ladywood Credit Union has maintained the liberty of 'thinking out the box' in a relatively unconstrained way. This has allowed them to shore up their legitimacy amongst user groups as well as building the trust and confidence of those they serve.

As presented by Geraldine Giblin, the Ladywood Credit Union



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1. Huda Jawad, Forward Thinking
2. Shairi Mathur, Foreign Policy Centre

3. Overloading

A third problem concerns the kind and quantity of work that women are often asked to do by NGO or state run initiatives. In many cases they are expected to do jobs that men will not do, such as cleaning schools and tidying up neighbourhoods, and jobs that offer little satisfaction or reward for their efforts. The assumption appears to be that women have the inclination and the time to do these tasks whereas men do not; yet in reality many of the women drafted into these programmes are time-poor, juggling household survival with childcare, as well as with their efforts to generate income. Project managers rarely investigate the circumstances of the women on whom they are relying and make unrealistic assumptions about their availability and willingness to undertake the work assigned. This can lead to a rapid turnover of volunteers and participants with negative consequences for the stability and efficiency of projects.

There are a considerable number of cases where women and their networks are targeted and drafted into projects or programmes principally to service the needs of the programme, without the needs of the women themselves being taken into account. If the work that women do is valued, and it is understood that women are juggling difficult lives, they should not to be overloaded by the extra demands made upon them, but instead should be given the support they need to ensure their participation. In particular, flexible childcare arrangements need to be part of the programme, training in marketable skills should be provided and health provision and education should be readily available. This question of women's needs is all too rarely posed by those who develop programmes that depend on women's social capital, despite the long term beneficial outcomes that such attention could deliver.

Organisational principles:

A cooperative approach between autonomous organisations and external agencies

In the light of the dangers of instrumentalism, capture and overloading we can now move on to consider what kinds of relationship women's grass roots associations might develop with external agencies. A fundamental issue in any organisational structure and its relationships with others is who decides the agenda?

The question of organisation is one that women's movements and activists in political parties, trade unions and grass roots organisations have long debated. Two issues have been particularly contested; that of autonomy and that of the principles which should govern internal organisation. Over time there emerged strong arguments in favour of autonomous all-women spaces where participants could elaborate programmes of action, debate goals and develop strategies free from outside influence. Flat, non-hierarchical organisational structures were often considered more appropriate ways of ensuring democratic principles, allowing greater debate and increased participation in the formulation of objectives.

To the question of who decides the agenda there are three classic answers – the collectivity decides; an external agent decides, or the decision is taken on a shared, co-operative basis. The first of these tends to be associated with autonomous organisations in which women themselves set their own goals and decide their own forms of organisation and objectives. Here the organisation is a self-governing association that recognises no superior authority and is independent of other political agencies. Authority here resides in the membership. Examples of this kind of organisation are those that emerge from independent initiatives such as rape crisis centres, barter movements and credit unions.

In contrast, where an external agency sets the agenda, authority and initiative come from outside and stand above the collectivity itself. The control of the agenda, the purpose of the organisation and the development of the women's group is subject to this external authority – it may or may not coincide with what the membership itself determines.

The third possibility is a co-operative approach where an external agency, such as an NGO works with the women's organisation and together they set the agenda, agree the style of working and take decisions on a democratic participatory basis. This kind of link represents a different type of organisational principle and a different conception of authority; it is co-operative and associational in the sense that independent women's organisations with their particular goals and institutional autonomy choose to form alliances with other organisations with which they are in agreement on a range of issues. These forms can be called 'associative' in recognition of their quasi independent status within an alliance of interests. They are not directed by a superior power, and they are not completely independent, but the collectivity remains in control of its own organisation and sets its own agenda. In this arrangement women's organisations may choose to delegate power to outside agencies such as NGOs or government departments, an arrangement which if it is to work, has to be based on trust and established procedures of accountability. Power and authority in this model are negotiated, and cooperation is conditional on some or all of the women's demands being incorporated into the organisation with which co-operation is established. This kind of linkage escapes the polar dilemma of autonomy versus integration which has long divided the different currents within women's movements and it has the potential to be an effective means of securing concrete agendas. However, if the women's organisation loses the capacity to set the agenda it runs the risk of co-optation. To minimise this danger, women's movements need to set conditions on the organisation with which they are prepared to cooperate. Clearly in such cases, the outcomes depend on the strength and negotiating capacity of the women's movement concerned.



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1. Marcia Lewinson, WAITS

2. Rani Johal, WAITS

Towards a collaborative approach: the case of the UK Women's National Commission

The Women's National Commission (WNC) is the official independent advisory body that represents the views of women's organisations to the British Government. It provides a voice in public policy debate through its coalitions and partnerships across economic and social sectors representing over 400 UK women's networks and coalitions. It is the only organisation of its kind in the UK.

The WNC is funded by the government through the Department of Trade and Industry. However, in order to guarantee its ongoing independence it has put in place a number of checks and balances which make the organisation accountable to its members rather than government. The WNC has a board of non-governmental Commissioners which provides a strategic steer. It has also created alliances with the formal political opposition, parliamentary lobby groups and select committees, trade unions, universities and other research institutions (including think tanks) and the Citizens' Advice Bureau (an organisation which provides members of the public with free and confidential legal advice).

An example of the impact of WNC's work can be demonstrated through its work on violence against women and in particular female genital mutilation. By lobbying government both from within the decision making structures and through public campaigns. The WNC were responsible for the establishment of an effective working relationship between grassroots organisations, which formed the WNC Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Sub-group in partnership with the Home Office official responsible for developing the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (then a Bill). This relationship made it possible to extend the remit of the law beyond UK nationals to also cover third country nationals living in the UK. The WNC enabled the Home Office to engage with traditional communities (where FGM remains widespread) to raise awareness of legislation, gain access to their expertise, and build support within the community for the passing of this law in 2003.

As presented by Janet Veitch, UK Women's National Commission

Transformative interventions: why the nuts and bolts of women's organisations matter

"For the most part women's organisations are neither donor-driven nor ignorant of the political context in which they exist, as is often claimed. On the contrary, they are often more effective because unlike most top-down initiatives they successfully meet civil society objectives because they tend to develop decentralised, participatory and grassroots deployment of very scarce resources." **Valentine Moghadam, UNESCO**

Beyond these questions of organisation there are several important issues that have to be taken into account if women's projects are to work to greatest effect for the women concerned. Positive effects can be understood as those processes that enhance women's

capabilities in ways that enable them to challenge relations of inequality and subordination in both the public and private spheres. Here three principles are helpful in thinking of ways this might be achieved. These are: ownership, self-esteem and empowerment.





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1. Stephen Twigg, Foreign Policy Centre
2. Rushanara Ali, The Young Foundation
3. Parvin Ali, FATIMA Women's Network
4. Ann McGeeney, Barrow Cadbury Trust
5. Nabil Yasein, Trust for the Programme of Early Childhood
6. Sukhvinder Stubbs, Barrow Cadbury Trust

Why ownership matters: the case of CAMA

CAMA is a network of more than 4,700 young women across Africa established by the Campaign for Female Education, a leading NGO working to improve access to education for young African women in rural areas. The aim of this group is to reach women to help them transform their lives from a position of social exclusion to sharing a platform on an equal footing with domestic and international decision and policymakers.

CAMA acts as a support network that enables young women to work together and create an environment that celebrates women's achievements. In addition, CAMA engages with organisations and policymakers at a local, national and international level. It frequently negotiates complex social and economic issues which young women in sub-Saharan Africa encounter, in order to encourage investment in girls' education and young women's leadership. This work has included working with the Public Service Commission in Zimbabwe to review legislation to protect girls from abuse. Government ministries in Zimbabwe such as the Ministry of Gender and Women's Affairs now refer to CAMA as a strategic partner in informing social policy and practice.

As presented by Angeline Mugwendere, CAMA

1. Ownership: One lesson that can be drawn from the experience of working with women's organisations is that the question of 'ownership' is central. Organisations work best when their projects are not imposed from above but develop on the basis of an organic relationship among participants. Social capital can rarely be created merely by external intervention, so the question of the 'ownership' of projects and goals as well as participants' identification with the values of the project are all critical to its success. Some of the questions that can be posed of projects are, for example:

- >Are projects sensitive to women's constraints?
- >Are projects 'family friendly'? Do they acknowledge care-giving, childcare arrangements, time management issues?
- >Do participants have a voice in programme aims, design, evaluation and management?

2. Self-esteem: A second vital ingredient of successful projects concerns that of whether they promote the self-esteem and respect of participants. This follows from ownership but it has to do with the internal organisation of the project and how the goals of the project are formulated. One of the most important benefits to those involved in the not-for-profit sector is their impact on self-esteem, and this can often outweigh other factors such as time burdens. For participants, whether helping as volunteers or for beneficiaries, the project can be a place where they are valued, where the work they do among others is experienced as positive. Where projects work with groups who normally suffer stigma and exclusion these questions are vitally important since building self-esteem and confidence is often the first step in realising other goals. If projects and programmes are to take this question seriously they need to ask:

- >Are equality principles built into the design of the programme?
- >What principles govern internal organisation and assignment of responsibilities?
- >How are participants treated in the project?
- >Is rights awareness built into the programme?
- >Are training and resources allocated to enhance women's capabilities?
- >Are economic independence and wellbeing (health, both mental and physical, freedom from violence) a priority?

"It's about looking beyond the day-to-day of fire fighting that often preoccupies women's time and resources. Increasingly we are keen to develop a structured approach to sustaining our own organisations in a strategic attempt to influence a wider sphere and more importantly empower and transform our own lives and the lives of the women we support." Sian McClure, Inspire Black Country

3. Empowerment: A third important question to ask of projects is whether they are able to contribute significantly to the empowerment of their members. Project goals can be broadened in ways that enhance participants' knowledge base and marketable skills rather than simply satisfying immediate needs. Here the tough question to ask of any project is what do participants gain from the project on their own account? They may gain certain material benefits, they may gain subjectively through enhanced self esteem and companionship, and they may feel that the rewards of working together on a project that they believe in is sufficient. But if the project can also enhance their capabilities through education, language instruction, rights awareness, leadership skills or other training, then it will have succeeded on a broader spectrum. Those working in projects need to see the results of their efforts, and need to feel that something tangible is being achieved by the project; those who benefit from the efforts of the project ideally need to leave it with an enhanced set of life chances.

One way of ensuring that this dynamic built into the project is to establish clear lines of downward accountability, that is, to establish ways of ensuring that the project is responding to its active members' needs and concerns, by asking, for example:

- >Is the social and economic empowerment of women an explicit goal with definable impacts?
- >Are women being equipped with leadership skills and the knowledge to negotiate in the public sphere of work and politics?
- >Is transforming gender relations central to the programme, including the possibility of involving men in ways which help to bring about more gender equity?



Ambika Rajvanshi, Asha Community Health Development Society

A model of empowerment: the case of Asha

Established in 1988, Asha Community Health and Development Society in New Delhi, responds to the acute needs of over 250,000 urban slum dwellers. Asha's core activities are to improve the health and living environment of these communities.

Having identified that women were the principal providers of basic services in slum settlements, Asha recognised that women very rarely had access to the decision-making process. In light of this fact, Asha set itself up as a catalyst, developing and mobilising the strengths and capabilities of women in their own right as well as women as agents of social change within their own communities.

Programmes are operated from local associations (which are legally recognised entities). Volunteers, most of them women, have overall responsibility (including basic healthcare, sanitation and community development) for no more than 50 households in their locality. Basic training and development provided to association volunteers enables them to undertake a range of activities from delivering simple primary healthcare services (detection, monitoring, advice and education) to lobbying government and local officials for improved public service delivery.

As a result of the success of their work and the fact that there have been significant reductions in the rates of morbidity and mortality in slum areas, where they operate, Asha programmes have been incorporated into the city council's housing strategy through the provision of housing co-operatives (shanty dwellers are now able to obtain legal tenure over the land they occupied). In addition, Asha's overall initiative has been instrumental in informing the state's National Slum Policy.

As presented by Ambika Rajvanshi, Asha

Social capital: Zones of engagement

While the generic issues of project design are a fundamental part of making transformative interventions and ensuring accountability, in order for them to be effective they need to take into account the context in which these programmes operate. These will have a direct impact on the organisations' dynamics as well as on its aims. Below, three current areas where women's social capital has been of interest to policy actors are briefly considered.

1. Economic empowerment

As noted earlier, women's networks tend to command fewer economic resources and rely on time and non-monetised labour exchanges. However, in recent years, poverty-reduction or social inclusion programmes that address women's income needs, and work with women's groups have enjoyed considerable success. Micro-finance schemes for example, depend on group-lending techniques which draw on women's kin and community ties to secure loan repayments. Similar ideas inspire the development of community funds which mobilise resources through women's social ties, for investment in local development programmes. Co-operative, informal organisations can also support activities such as credit unions which aim to provide more control over economic resources on better terms than those available through informal or commercial agencies. In India, the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) helps poor women obtain credit to start their own small enterprises. SEWA was established over thirty years ago and is now a large organisation with a membership of over 700,000. It helps to establish cooperatives for women who work on the margins of the economy, and runs its own bank for savings and credit. In addition, it offers a primary health care programme and has just started an insurance scheme for its members. SEWA's success has made it a model for similar initiatives across the world.

Such initiatives help to answer questions about the ways in which women's social capital can help to strengthen their access to economic resources in an overall context in which their command of such resources is weak. Women can, with well conceived projects, move out of poverty and secure livelihoods; they can work together to create small businesses, acquire skills and access markets for their products and services. In turn, economic empowerment can be a step towards political empowerment if it provides the basis for secure livelihoods, generates organisational strength, and enables those involved to see themselves as full citizens of the localities and societies in which they live.

2. Communities under stress

Conflict of all kinds, whether in the form of war or neighbourhood violence, impacts heavily on social life. However the fact that it affects women in particular ways has only recently been recognised both in international law and in community regeneration work. Women, along with children, are exposed to the effects of violence and social breakdown – in extreme cases becoming its victims through rape, robbery or kidnapping – but more generally as those who have to manage families' emotional needs as well ensuring single-handedly that the more routine necessities are met. Women have in many different contexts, become important actors in healing divided communities and helping in efforts at post conflict reconstruction; sometimes it is only women's groups that are able to rise above communal or political divisions to find ways to co-operate for the common good. However, while women are widely acknowledged as having a history of involvement in peace movements and can be valued as peacemakers and bridge builders they are all too rarely involved directly in community or peace negotiations or in policy concerning post-conflict reconstruction. Many of their organisations emerge out of their own experience, sometimes out of a personal tragedy, and for this very reason they can acquire the trust and respect of the community that they are active in. Indeed, more generally, this is an area where women's organisations can sometimes play a vital role and can gain considerably more trust than conventional government interventions.

Conflict situations however reveal the dual character of social capital. In communities under stress, social capital can strengthen community ties but at the same time can deepen existing divisions, create exclusive identities and exacerbate tensions. Where resources are at stake and where minority needs are successfully claimed and addressed, accusations of preferential treatment can arise, heightening tension and causing further retreat into group interests and identities. In such circumstances, women's groups also often find themselves under considerable pressure to surrender their own interests to what are claimed by community leaders to be the general interest. Autonomy is difficult to maintain and they can become vulnerable to capture by political forces aiming to use them for their own purposes. Women's organisations in conflict situations often find that they are walking a tightrope, trying to balance loyalty to their particular community with work that involves challenging some of its leaders' assumptions about women's place in society. Careful strategising, learning from the experience of others in such situations, and forming wider, regional and national networks have been important in the work of such organisations. Networks also have the potential to become effective advocates in the policy world and, provided they can agree on common principles and a common agenda, can achieve considerable visibility and impact.

3. Civic regeneration

At neighbourhood level, as noted earlier, it is not uncommon to find that women's informal networks are involved in supporting domestic and caring responsibilities, and in providing services that help meet needs in health and education. These are crucial resources for communities, especially for those in particular hardship. But while such activities can provide practical relief they do not necessarily promote the changes that bring women into public life to participate in decisions that affect both their communities and their lives as women. Community regeneration programmes offer women's groups and networks considerable potential for advancing new ideas about the social and spatial organisation of services, but to take advantage of the opportunities on offer such programmes have to make a serious effort to involve women. This can take many different forms, involving not only government agencies and NGOs, but also the private sector where appropriate. One step is to encourage community organising and to recognise informal networks that can participate in decision-making. NGOs can promote women's involvement through awareness raising, leadership and political participation programmes which are a crucial component in ensuring that women's networks become meaningful actors in decision-making processes. At the same time, the linking of women's concerns to wider policy issues helps to ensure that organisations do not remain inward looking and exclusive.

Conclusions

The accumulating store of experiences from around the world has begun to suggest ways in which women's networks and organisations have worked to best effect, and how they have confronted some of the problems that arise when they work with NGOs and governments. The critical question remains that of how working with women's social capital can bring about positive change in reducing poverty, inequality and injustice, and how to identify effective strategies to help women overcome the various forms of gender injustice that they are subject to. With regard to the policy implications of social capital, on the basis of the evidence so far three main lessons can be drawn: first, that we need to be attentive to how a focus on social capital can support 'sticking plaster' approaches to deeper structural issues, notably inequities in the distribution of power and assets and the social (and gendered) costs of public policies. Social capital in the form of networks and associational activity can be an important resource in tackling poverty and social disintegration and in assisting in the effective delivery of social welfare. But it is no substitute for policies designed to achieve a more socially integrated society through redistributive measures and sound policies.

Second, in developing projects and policies designed to enhance social capital, a critical gender perspective is essential if social divisions and existing power relations are not to be strengthened. One way of countering this is to ask what social capital resources do women command and what do these resources allow women to do and to be? Whether women can deploy 'their' social capital to enhance their leverage over resources and policy depends crucially on whether they can develop their capabilities, political as much as economic, collective as much as individual. Women's organisations have been aiming to do just that through training programmes, 'empowerment' strategies and by helping to enhance women's collective and individual claims on citizenship. Social capital approaches need to consider the diverse ways in which women's networks and associations in different parts of the world have sought to build new forms of social capital, in ways which are not at variance with, but are in sympathy with, efforts to enhance women's human rights and citizenship.

Third, social capital begs a number of questions as to the purposes it is designed to serve, who benefits and why? Fostering women's social capital is not usefully understood as restoring some ideal traditional 'community' – women's interests are all too often submerged in appeals to community. Supporting women's social capital is helpful if it implies allowing women to find voice and presence within and across their collectivities in ways that strengthen rather than weaken their claims on citizenship.

In sum, if from a gender perspective social capital has an ambivalent potential, its positive appeal depends on being brought into alignment with ongoing efforts aimed at building up citizens' movements, and supporting co-operative and democratic forms of associational activity in ways that strengthen local initiatives and help confront the negativity of modern societies – whether this be in the form of criminal gangs, ethnic segregation corrupt public administrations, exclusionary elites or authoritarian communities. There are no set formulas for working with social capital as its potential depends on the socio-economic and political relations in which it is forged. But public policymakers would do well to avoid taking women's social-capital for granted, and to give more support to those engaged in constructively working in this area. Effective policies will only result from a critical and more finely grained approach to social capital, one which takes both women's organisations and gender relations more seriously.

An overview of the Global Exchange Forum

Phoebe Griffith and Josephine Osikena²

The Global Exchange Forum is an annual event which brings together practitioners and policy experts from the UK and developing countries. This year the aim was specifically to use dialogue to advance understanding of how working with women's social capital can bring about positive change in reducing poverty, inequality and injustice. In particular we wanted to consider what strategies are effective in empowering women to help them overcome the variety of forms of gender injustice that they are subjected to, and to make an impact on political and policy processes. By learning from the experiences of grass roots and policy actors from widely different contexts we wanted to draw lessons and encourage creative reflection on these ongoing debates.

From the outset, one of the questions which troubled the conference organisers was whether there could in fact be meaningful exchange between organisations working in such a different set of countries. Was it too ambitious to expect those working in contexts of extreme deprivation, such as rural Zimbabwe or the slums of Delhi, to establish avenues of exchange with those operating in the relatively prosperous UK? During the course of the Forum it became clear that these concerns had in fact been unfounded. The diversity of experience among the participants was in itself the main avenue for new insights.

Overall, the discussions were a fruitful opportunity for those running women's organisations to share many common concerns. All of them identified in particular with potential pitfalls of collaborating with policy actors set out in Maxine Molyneux's paper on instrumentalism, overloading and capture. Questions which emerged time and again included: What are the dangers of relying on the goodwill of female volunteers? Could this get in the way of their family and professional responsibilities? Can the constant quest for innovation (often a prerequisite of funding) come at the expense of providing for the basic needs of women? It became clear that these questions do cut across borders, itself indicative of the similarities which underscore women's organisations working in different contexts

Through these comparisons many of the UK participants were able to challenge their own preconceptions about the developing world. How is India able to achieve high levels of women representatives in local government? What factors have enabled gender budgeting to become more developed in parts of Africa compared to the UK? More importantly, it helped shed new light on some of the problems which persist in the UK. By setting British reality against the extremes that exist in developing nations, the contrasts acted as a powerful reminder of the ongoing need for action in the UK. What became apparent was the fact that in the UK we are faced with a problematic dichotomy. On the one hand, the women's movement benefits from influential national campaigning groups and feminist professional networks which are extremely successful and have played a central role in ensuring that gender becomes a key consideration among policymaking circles. On the other hand, grass roots women's groups continue to operate in very adverse conditions. As in the developing world, most are forced to rely on the army of female volunteers within the community to survive, many of them already overloaded with caring responsibilities within the home. The exchanges which took place during the Forum allowed us to shed new light on this situation and in particular helped us develop a better understanding of the needs of groups working with the most marginalised women in the UK.

² **Phoebe Griffith** is Senior Development Manager at the Barrow Cadbury Trust.

Josephine Osikena is Programme Manager for Development and Good Governance at the Foreign Policy Centre.

Insight from Southern delegates also informed the activities undertaken by the UK groups. For example, during a visit to a project set up to provide employment advice, questions were raised about the potential provision of enterprise courses focused on activities such as hairdressing and dressmaking. Shanta Koshti from the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India pointed out that they often supported women to break some of these conventional stereotypes by, for example, teaching women how to lay bricks. Female workers from even the most seemingly humble sectors, such as rubbish picking, are also encouraged to unionise and defend their interest vis-à-vis employers. Likewise, the delegate from Argentina, Graciela Di Marco, asked why discussion regarding 'feminism' had been largely absent in the UK, arguing that one of the unintended consequences of the severe economic crisis in her country had in fact opened a space for more radical debates about women's rights at the grass roots.

Delegates also called on UK bodies to do a lot more to share and celebrate the processes which led to some impressive achievements: how had the Welsh Parliament become the first ever to secure 50 per cent female participation? What led to the creation of the Women's National Commission (a semi-autonomous unit set up to represent grass roots views across government and one of the partners of the project)? In particular, groups expressed a strong interest in an international dissemination of the techniques developed to promote rights awareness by groups such as WAITS, Saheli and others working at grassroots level in the UK.

In turn, for the Southern delegates learning more about the experiences of exclusion and deprivation which exists in the UK proved to be an eye-opening experience. Even though the grand Victorian buildings of Handsworth in Birmingham were far removed from the slums in which many of the Southern delegates operate, the members of the organisations which they housed – mothers concerned about safety on the streets or young girls escaping abusive relationships – didn't feel alien at all. In the words of Dr Ambika Rajvanshi from Asha:

"Through our stories of struggle and success, as women, we have learnt not to take ourselves and our work for granted. We are striving toward universal goals."

Beyond the exchanges of information it became clear that forums of this kind can act as an important platform for developing more concerted action around issues which cut across borders and which affect the most marginalised women. Unlike most international initiatives which tend to be top down and which only consult rather than involve women's groups, these meetings could facilitate the cross-border collaboration which emerges from the grassroots. Some groups which were identified as a priority included women working in the informal sector and female migrant workers, women in conflict and marginalised Muslim women. Organisations like Women Living Under Muslim Law, Mama Cash and Home Workers Worldwide, all of whom were represented at the Forum, were considered to be an important asset when it came to building coalitions which could help raise international awareness about the issues affecting women.

In terms of priorities, participants concurred that more concerted action was required to ensure that women's organisations develop in a way which allows them to negotiate from within the structures of power, building their capacity to challenge policy makers while ensuring that their key asset – the women that they represent – continue to be at the heart of their work.

The Agenda

Plenary Session 1: Valuing women's social capital

Chair: **Erica Cadbury**,
Trustee, Barrow Cadbury Trust
Professor Maxine Molyneux,
The Institute for the Study of the Americas, University of London
Valentine Moghadam,
Head of Gender Equality and Development, United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
Baroness Anita Gale of Blaenrhondda,
House of Lords

Plenary Session 2: Women's organisations and policy actors

Chair: **Sukhvinder Stubbs**,
Director, Barrow Cadbury Trust
Baroness Pola Manzila Uddin of Bethnal Green,
House of Lords
Hon. Mobina S.B. Jaffer, Q.C.,
Canada's Special Envoy for Peace in Sudan
Amanda Ellis,
Head, Gender Entrepreneurship Markets, World Bank

Social capital Zones of engagement:

Working group 1: Economic empowerment

Convenor: **Professor Ruth Pearson**,
Homeworkers Worldwide (HWW) and University of Leeds
Shanta Koshti,
Co-ordinator, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)
Adrian Davies,
Manager, Community Banking Partnership for Brighton & Hove
Respondent: **Louise Tilbury**,
Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT)

Working group 2: Communities under stress

Convenor: **Professor Haleh Afshar OBE**,
University of York
Parvin Ali,
Founder, FATIMA Women's Network and the UK
Muslim Women's Network
Respondent: **Cassandra Balchin**,
Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)

Working group 3: Civic regeneration

Convenor: **Professor Rosalind Edwards**,
London South Bank University
Marcia Lewinson,
Manager, Women Acting in Today's Society
Dr. Ambika Rajvanshi,
ASHA Community Health & Development Society
Diana van Maasdijk,
Director, Mama Cash
Respondent: **Sue Cohen**,
Director, Single Parent Action Network (Span)

Plenary Session 3: International experiences of gender and social capital: what are the models for the development of effective women's networks?

Chair: **Stephen Twigg**,
Director of the Foreign Policy Centre
Zimbabwe: **Angeline Mugwendere**,
Director of CAMA, an association of Campaign
for Female Education (CAMFED);
Argentina: **Professor Graciella Di Marco**,
Universidad Nacional de San Martin, Argentina
China: **Professor Jude Howell**,
London School of Economics and Political Science

Feedback from working groups and closing remarks

Chair: **Phoebe Griffith**,
Senior Development Manager, Barrow Cadbury Trust
Economic empowerment: **Louise Tilbury**,
Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT)
Communities under stress: **Cassandra Balchin**,
Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)
Civic regeneration: **Sue Cohen**,
Director, Single Parent Action Network (Span)

The Speakers

Parvin Ali

The Founder and Director of FATIMA Women's Network.

Haleh Afshar

Tutor of Politics and Women's Studies at the University of York. Visiting Professor of Islamic Law at the Faculté Internationale de Droit Comparé at Strasbourg.

Cassandra Balchin

Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML).

Erica Cadbury

Trustee of Barrow Cadbury Trust and Lead Trustee of the Global Exchange Programme.

H. E. Mel Cappe

Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Sue Cohen

Director of Single Parent Action Network (Span) UK.

Adrian Davies

Manager of the City of Brighton & Hove Credit Union.

Graciela Di Marco

Professor at the Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Argentina.

Rosalind Edwards

Professor in Social Policy and Director of the Families & Social Capital Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Research Group at the London South Bank University.

Amanda Ellis

Leads World Bank's work on gender issues in private sector development in developing countries.

Baroness Anita Gale of Blaenrhondda

Member of the House of Lords and Commissioner for Wales at the Women's National Commission.

Phoebe Griffith

Senior Development Manager at the Barrow Cadbury Trust.

Shanta Koshti

Senior Organiser and Coordinator at the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Academy.

Jude Howell

Professor and Director of the Centre for Civil Society, London School of Economics and Political Science and Director of a five-year ESRC research programme on Non-Governmental Public Action.

Hon. Mobina S.B. Jaffer

Canadian Government's Special Envoy to the Peace Process in Sudan.

Marcia Lewinson

Manager of Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS)

Valentine Moghadam

Head of Gender Equality and Development in UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector.

Maxine Molyneux

Professor of Sociology at the Institute for the Study of the Americas at the University of London.

Angeline Mugwendere

Director of CAMA, the pan African network of young activists (an association of Campaign for Female Education, CAMFED).

Ruth Pearson

Director of the Centre for Development Studies at the Institute for Politics and International Studies at the University of Leeds.

Dr. Ambika Rajvanshi

Senior Programme Coordinator at ASHA.

Sukhvinder Stubbs

Director of the Barrow Cadbury Trust.

Stephen Twigg

Director of the Foreign Policy Centre.

Louise Tilbury

Senior Policy Analyst at HM Treasury.

Diana van Massdijk

Director of Development and Communications at Mama Cash.

Baroness Pola Manzila Uddin of Bethnal Green

Member of the House of Lords.

The Participants

Haleh Afshar
University of York

Naseem Akhtar
Saheli Women's Group

Rushanara Ali
The Young Foundation

Parvin Ali
FATIMA Women's Network

Fully Ali-Begum

Melanie Allison
Embankment Associates

Helen Animashaun
Community Development
Foundation

Amanda Ariss
Equal Opportunities Commission

Shazia Awan
Barrow Cadbury Trust

Cassandra Balchin
Women Living Under
Muslim Laws

Graham Banton
The Foreign Policy Centre

Rosemary Bechler
Open Democracy

Janet Bedford

Jill Bedford
Working for Change

Chris Berzins
Canada House

Monica Beural

Jan Bros
Tower Hamlets Partnership

Irene Bruegel
Women's Budget Group

Nicola Cadbury
Barrow Cadbury Trust

Erica Cadbury
Barrow Cadbury Trust

Sue Cohen
Span UK

Barbara Collins
Women and Equality Unit

Adrian Davies
Community Banking Partnership
for Brighton and Hove

Graciella Di Marco
Universidad Nacional
de San Martin

Kumuda Dorai
Foreign Policy Centre

Rosalind Edwards
London South Bank University

Amanda Ellis
World Bank

Vanessa Erogbogbo

Katrina Fialkova
Czech Embassy

Rokhsana Fiaz
Muslim Women's Advisory
Group

Phil Fiske
Foreign Policy Centre

Baroness Anita Gale
House of Lords

Fiona Grant
Foreign Policy Centre

Phoebe Griffith
Barrow Cadbury Trust

Roberta Guerrina
University of Surrey

Ceri Hayes
Womankind Worldwide

Jude Howell
London School of Economics

Vivien Hughes
Canada House

Mobina Jaffer
Canadian Committee
on Women

Huda Jawad
Forward Thinking

Rani Johal
WAITS

Sue Kennedy

Iram Khan
WAITS

Shanta Koshti
SEWA

Lucy Lake
CAMFED

Erin Leigh
Women's Budget Group

Marcia Lewinson
WAITS

Gillian Licari
Canada House

Suzanne Long
United Nations Association

Janis Makarewich-Hall
Women and Equality Unit,
Department of Trade
and Industry

Raghda Masahla
Trust for the Programme
of Early Childhood

Shairi Mathur
Foreign Policy Centre

Sheena Matthews
What Works?

Sian McClure
Inspire Black Country

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The Forum

"The 2005 Global Exchange Forum was an opportunity to engage and reflect deeply and honestly as activists, policy makers, academics and, most importantly, as women. It represented an occasion to recognise and celebrate the inspiration and energy of women's unfailing commitment to transforming their own lives and communities as well as changing their societies."

Angeline Mugwendere, Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED)

From 14 – 16 September 2005, the Foreign Policy Centre and the Barrow Cadbury Trust, in partnership with Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS), convened the second Global Exchange Forum. The conference brought together over 80 participants, including representatives from governments, civil society, the media, business and the academic world across Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Speakers ranged from Canada's Special Envoy for Peace to Sudan and the UK's first female Muslim peer to representatives from the UK Treasury, the World Bank and the UN.

The forum in London was preceded by a two-day workshop in Birmingham. During these preparatory sessions a diverse group of international civil society partners, including the Self-Employed Women's Association (India), the Campaign for Female Education (Africa), Asha (India) and the Trust for the Protection of Early Childhood (Palestine), engaged with a number of women's groups working in some of the most excluded communities in Birmingham. This report sets out some of the key outcomes of these discussions.

