CAP WOMEN IN PLANNING NETWORK: Progress report

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Introduction

Spalding (1998:3) asserts, "gender is relevant to planning because it attempts to redistribute the unequal market provision of goods and services within society and to control issues of design and environmental management. Women's access to these goods and services is affected by the way in which they are planned and delivered by their historical lack of a strong bargaining position". Women as custodians of the environment are more affected by these inequalities in the distribution of resources and are often marginalised or ignored in a male dominated profession like planning in decisions pertinent to them.

Greed (1998) shows that women's presence in the planning profession and education process is critical to mentorship. They are the role models to encourage more women to enter, survive and succeed in planning arena.

Moser (1993:101) outlines three reasons why women must be incorporated fully in development and planning processes:

1. Women's participation is an end in itself. Women as much as men have the right and duty to participate in the execution of projects that affect their lives.
2. Women's participation is a means to improve project results. The exclusion of women can negatively affect the outcome of a project, while their active involvement can often help its success.
3. Participation in project activities stimulates women's participation in other spheres of life. Participation in projects has been seen as an important mechanism to overcome apathy and lack of confidence and it can make women visible in the community.

Makan (1995) indicates that women possess highly useful localised knowledge and practical experiences that are different from men. It is also worth noting that

there is a trend towards feminization in the planning profession but male domination still continues. For example in South Africa gender shifts are notable in the composition of planning students' population. Badenhorst reported in 1994 that 49% of planning students in South Africa were female significantly up from 31% in 1977.

This paper intends to highlight the progress made so far in the effort to get a CAP women's network going. It also discusses the responses from a questionnaire sent out to relevant organisations to sensitise issues that could serve as focus areas in the women's network.

Progress

Since Belfast 2000, the following activities/actions have taken place with regard to the CAP Women in Planning Network:

- E-mail communication was sent to all members present at the Belfast meeting as well a few other planners known to be involved in women and planning issues.

- A draft questionnaire was sent to members to comment and respond to in July/August 2000. The questions asked revolve around the impact of planning on gender, impact of gender on planning, role of gender in planning and suggested roles of gender in planning.

- Responses to the above questionnaire were received from Uganda, Zambia, UK, Australia and South Africa. Individuals who responded did so on behalf of their Planning Associations/Institutes or in their personal capacity of being involved in gender planning issues. An article was published on "CAP Women in Planning Network" by the RTPI Planning Journal of 5 January 2001. The article specified the proposed aims of the network and the issues and challenges facing the women's network.

Responses

What follows are the responses from the various countries. Though, one has to sound a caution note here. The responses might not be an entire picture of what obtains in these countries because it is based on one or two respondents from each country.

Uganda

Issues that tend to affect women more than men are "the renewal programmes, which resulted in displacements. This is due to the fact that women (men) are forced to stay in more suburban areas with less density of development" (Byendaimira, 2000). Distance to these suburbs constitutes a security risk for women whose workplaces are far. Women's safety often cannot be guaranteed. There are a few women in the planning profession in Uganda. Thus, their male counterparts who do not understand the specific needs and problems of women take most decisions.

On the role of gender planning, in Uganda (as elsewhere-Nigeria/South Africa), it is women who do the children's school run, shopping, cooking and other domestic chores in addition to their professional tasks. The male dominated planning profession does not take cognisance of or often ignore this in planning decisions and implementation of projects.

South Africa

Women in planning is still an issue, though women are involved at the grass roots, in the professions especially, planning, men still dominate.

"We haven't reached the stage where the best person for the job gets it irrespective of gender but it is no longer a naïve dream" (Taylor, 2000). Citing his experience in the Winterveld and Mabopane areas of South Africa, Taylor (2000) indicated that women get involved in planning, are very effective and no one challenges the need to have women in the community committees. He asserts "a woman got up to say at a meeting that men were often away from home and it was the women who had their fingers on the pulse of what was going on…." This statement changed the composition of the committee to

reflect better gender balance.   There is thus positive news in terms of gender at grassroots and in terms of planning education (see tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: HSRC University graduate database: National qualification trends for Town and Regional Planning

Year	Total	Bachelor	PG Diploma	Masters	PhD	African	Coloured/ Asian	White	Male	Female
1991	148	75	15	57	1	6	6	136	93	55
1992	170	75	21	74	-	15	4	151	98	72
1993	113	59	4	48	2	9	4	100	70	43
1994	150	71	13	66	-	16	7	127	90	60
1995	161	60	23	78	-	34	11	116	86	75
1996	152	58	35	58	1	41	12	109	87	65
1997	157	59	38	60	-	39	15	113	88	69
1998	165	57	39	60	-	41	13	111	92	73

Source: HSRC 1999b

Table 1 indicates that in 1991, there were 55 female graduates of Planning and this has increased to 73 in 1998. The data is based on surveys of graduates, it would thus reflect those who responded to the survey and overall results are therefore likely to be distorted. But the indication from the table is that female graduates in planning are increasing as shown in table 2 as well.

Table 2: Gender profile of students

Programme	Percentage female (of sample)
N.Dip and B.Tech at ML Sultan Technikon	40
B.Sc (TRP) Wits University	58
B.Sc (TRP) University of Pretoria	55
MTRP, University of Natal	62
M.SC (Development Planning) Wits University	67
Masters in Environment and Development Natal (Pietermaritzburg campus)	44
Postgraduate Environment programmes Natal (Durban)	50
Masters in Devlopment Studies Natal (Durban)	69
Masters in Public Administration at University of Durban Westville	31

Source: HSRC, 1999b

Though, a few women professional planners in South Africa are making a difference. Most project allocation procedures in South Africa since 1994 openly discriminate against white men because they were deemed favoured in the past as consultants. Women are been given preference in project allocation by the authorities but significant issues remain on the professional level.

United Kingdom

Planning certainly reinforces inequalities if it is not considered at the early stages. In the UK like in South Africa and Uganda, the decision-makers are predominantly male. In the planning profession, 75% are male and 25% are female.

Many people have a dismissive approach to the role of gender (women) in planning. "It is disregarded by others who see social inclusion as the catch all" (Reeves, 2000).

Zambia

Planning has an explicit impact on gender in ensuring equal access to facilities and services. Unfortunately, many women are unaware of their rights due to socio-economic and cultural reasons, and gender issues remain largely ignored. Institutionalisation of a new paradigm that would focus on women empowerment in housing, land distribution and the categorisation of facilities and services.

Women are far less well represented than their male counterparts. The ratio in Zambia can be put roughly at 1 to 8 or 10. Zambia, like most developing countries have not made much progress in this regard. It can still be proved that socio-economic and indeed psychological barriers, given the hazardous nature of the built environment professions, hinder women from been involved" (Babarinde, 2000).

Australia

According to Hillier (2000):

- Planning can serve to isolate women with young families in outer suburbs of cities by mono-zoning residential developments. First time home-buyers who have little money struggle to purchase two cars (one for each adult) may find that women who remain at home during the day lack access to public transport and hence, to services and facilities.

- Poor urban design may increase women's fear in urban areas.

- Lack of decent home occupation policy may mean that women are unable to work from home and may be denied a source of income.

- Lack of understanding of different needs for Muslim women, play space for children and assumptions that everyone can use public parks.

Most planners are male and plan in a gender—blind women-ignoring male-oriented manner (Hillier, 2000). For example, mono-zoning, lack of regard for safety, lack of public toilets (for pregnant women and women with children), lack of planning for frail aged (most of whom are women).

"In Western Australia we are at the stage of making women more visible by informing planning officers that women have different needs from men in the built environment and women experience the built environment differently. We have not yet begun to enter the stage of celebrating women's diversity and considering the different needs of different groups of women-aged, pregnant, ethnicity etc" (Hillier, 2000).

"Too often women loose their gender awareness when they enter the planning office at the start of the working day. They are taught (in education and practice) that planning is neutral and too often blindly accept this and continue to plan in what is effectively a male stream manner" (Hillier, 2000).

Suggested role of gender in planning by respondents

1. Gender needs to be explicitly mainstreamed into all aspects and stages of planning.
2. A safer city for women is a safer city for all
3. The pursuit of sustainability ideals and public policies focusing on conjugal rights, equal access, equal rights, and conjugal roles that are consistent with the progressive (not retrogressive) cultural revival in human settlements. This would allow for a meaningful collaborative-inclusionary planning at all levels.

Making women more visible in planning

From the above discussion it becomes imperative to say that:

- There are few women planners whose efforts are not visible enough because of male dominance in the profession. Thus, more intensive action needs to be initiated by women in the profession as well as in planning education.
- Women experience the impact and burden of decisions that do not recognise their needs (e.g. displacement/relocation/eviction more because they are the pillars of the communities) more than men.
- There are certain barriers such as, partriachy, culture, submissive attributes and regressive policies that hinder women's maximum involvement in planning, professionally and in their communities.
- Isolation/neglect of the fundamental needs of women especially in the location and design of human settlements. Needs in terms of distance, in- and out-house facilities such as water, schools/crèches, sanitation, cooking, laundry and bathing facilities among others.

Women planners have the knowledge, skills and potential to participate in policymaking, decisions and project implementation. To consolidate and make the network sustainable, a **CRED** approach is suggested in moving the CAP Women in Planning Network forward.

CRED Approach

- **C**ollaboration

Collaborating with existing women in/and planning networks e.g. London and Australia. Organising a CAP Women in Planning workshop could facilitate this collaboration.

- **R**epresentation

Representation of women planners in all planning, decision-making, project implementation and policy at all levels.

- **E**ducation and awareness through marketing and mentorship programmes

'Catch them while still young'. Marketing the profession to attract young women into training.

- **D**atabank through research

The approach would be to have a databank of all women planners in the Commonwealth. This could be achieved by the various planning organisations involved in CAP.

As reiterated in Olufemi (2001:23), This is not just another 'women's thing'. Let us join hands, minds and brains together to reinvigorate and mainstream women into the CAP agenda.

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