



Streams of Influence

Understanding our Influence on Gender, power and Sexuality

March 2015

Front cover

UN member states negotiated late into the night before reaching consensus on the agreed conclusions of the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women on 21 March 2014.

Photograph by UN Women/Jeca Taudte

Acknowledgements

This report for the “Gender, Power and Sexuality: Connecting Local Voices to Global Arenas for Equality and Rights” (GPS) programme has been written by Kate Hawkins with assistance from Hazel Reeves, Zahrah Nesbitt-Ahmed, Thea Shahrokh and Jenny Edwards. The purpose of this report is to support the programme in the process of learning about influencing, helping programme partners to unpack their understandings of change and where and how the programme has had influence.

The report draws on various types of documentation from the programme, including internal communications, workshop and meeting notes. Much of the discussion and analysis included in this report is based on a Stories of Influence Workshop which was held at the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex (IDS) from the 9-10 July 2014 and attended by: Jas Vaghadia, akshay khanna, Stephen Wood, Deepta Chopra, Jenny Edwards, Sohela Nazneen, Satish Kumar Singh, Julia Hamaus, Carol Smithyes, Mariz Tadros and Jerker Edström. The authors have drawn on their own personal knowledge of the programme for interpreting the discussions from that workshop for this report. Some quotes from the workshop included within the report have been anonymised. The authors hope to have done justice to all the workshop participants’ inputs.

The authors’ views have also been shaped by their own involvement in the project over a period of time. Jenny, Zahrah and Thea are staff members at IDS. Jenny works on the Pathways of Women’s Empowerment programme, Zahrah’s focus is on unpaid care, whilst Thea works on masculinities and participation. Kate and Hazel are former IDS staff members and have been closely engaged with the sexuality and social movement streams of work respectively.

The work of the programme is carried out across six streams and builds on long-standing partnerships and collaborations which have been exploring engaging men and boys for gender equity, pathways of women’s empowerment, sexuality and international development, making unpaid care visible, power and politics, and gender within social movements. Programme partners are deeply grateful to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for their support for the production of this report and the programme that informs it.

It has been a great pleasure and honour to be part of the reflective practice of interrogating the programme’s influence. One of the meeting participants suggested, ‘Influencing is a process – there is no beginning and there is no end - it is not about finishing the story’. With this in mind, the hope is that there are opportunities to engage with this work for many years to come.

Water does not resist. Water flows. When you plunge your hand into it, all you feel is a caress. Water is not a solid wall, it will not stop you ... Remember you are half water. If you can’t go through an obstacle, go around it. Water does.

– Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad*

Contents

List of Partners in ‘Gender, Power and Sexuality: Connecting Local Voices to Global Arenas for Equality and Rights’	4
Introduction	5
Main messages	5
Beginnings	8
Aims	8
Approach to policy and influencing	8
Monitoring, evaluation and impact	9
Learning Together	10
Tracking Paths of Influence: not always an easy process	10
Work within streams: A plurality of approaches	12
Lessons to Take Forward	16
Contribution not attribution	16
From knowledge producers to something else – mutual learners?	16
Seizing strategic opportunities (and planting some)	16
Building Bridges	16
Saturation	17
Stirring up critical consciousness	17
Braving the maelstrom: Purposeful political meddling	18
Flowing together	18
Future Directions	19
GPS role in a new spring of change	20

List of Partners in 'Gender, Power and Sexuality: Connecting Local Voices to Global Arenas for Equality and Rights'

ActionAid International

Patricia Ardon

Srilatha Batliwala

Sharon Bhagwan Rolls

Centre for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST) at BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), Bangladesh

Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA), Ghana

Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ), New Delhi, India

Civil Society Coalition for Constitutional Law and Human Rights, Uganda

Grace Chigudu

Jessica Horn

Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, UK

David Kelleher

Men for Gender Equality Now (MEGEN), Nairobi, Kenya

Nirantar, India

Nucleus for Interdisciplinary Studies on Women (NEIM) at the Federal University Bahia, Brazil

The Pleasure Project, UK

Queer Archiving Project, India

Marivic Raquiza

Refugee Law Project (RLP), Kampala, Uganda

Sexuality Policy Watch (SPW), Brazil

SMERU Research Institute, Indonesia

Social Research Center, American University in Cairo

Link to all others involved in the Bridge Social Movements work stream:
<http://socialmovements.bridge.ids.ac.uk/start-here/about-programme/contributors>

Introduction

Streams of Influence tells the story of how the Gender, Power and Sexuality programme that sought to bring about positive changes on gender equality imagined and then experienced the process of influencing. Along the way there were the positives in terms of actions and outcomes going to plan, there were also some unintended but nonetheless welcome effects, but there were also a few activities that didn't work as well as hoped. Programme partners also experienced periods of doubt, struggle and confusion.

This is not a 'How To' guide. It will not give you checklists, tools and handy hints on how to plan, execute, and monitor advocacy programmes. It does not claim to provide a review of the evidence or synthesise the knowledge base. It is not a 'success story' in that it seeks to trumpet the programme's achievements, but seeks to present a more reflective and self-critical assessment.

On the other hand, the process of exploring what was imagined by 'influence' and of writing this report has served as a useful exercise for the programme in unpacking dynamics of change. It has helped to foster collective learning and sharing among programme partners. We, as GPS, believe that our contributions are part of broader efforts that mobilise change on equality and rights in small shifts, towards social justice in new and different ways. The programme is coming to an end and GPS members have a thirst to do more, and to do it better. This report will help us think through the next phase of collective action.

Main messages

1. The process of influencing is fluid and does not follow a rigid trajectory

It is an emergent process. Contextual factors open up windows of opportunities that allow you to push an agenda. However this space is not necessarily something engineered. Even though some clear directions, issues and audiences to influence had been set out at the start of the programme, yet the influencing was flexible, engaged and emergent, through the different work streams running in tandem. Through this report and other learning processes programme partners are embedding a critical reflection of the influencing process in moving forward. This

knowledge is not necessarily explicitly captured in the outputs and programme partners are still thinking through how best to tell the story. In the future, the programme will need to dedicate more time earlier on to the design of a more dynamic influencing process working cohesively with partners across the different work streams, one which is flexible enough to make the most of unexpected windows of opportunity.

2. Flexibility leads to innovation and creativity

The GPS initiative was funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), a donor that has provided the programme with a great deal of flexibility and space in the way that it has been run. This enabled programme partners to think outside the more restrictive linear models of influence and policy change in a way that has had a positive impact.

3. GPS achievements were supported by strong foundations

As the programme developed, connections were made across the work streams and with work funded by other donors at IDS (most notably the UK Department for International Development (DFID)). This led to cross-fertilisation; building up a critical mass of team members and partners; providing a source of mutual support; fostering solidarity; and keeping up the momentum on gender issues. Similarly, partners drew on pre-existing programmes (many previously also funded by Sida), thinking and relationships to add considerable value to what GPS achieved at relatively low cost.

4. Politics, values and principles are central to this work

Those issues the programme focused on were selected because partners are passionate about them. They may be difficult, make some people uncomfortable or shake up the apparent established order of things, but the programme believes that they cut to the heart of much that is broken in

“We, as GPS, believe that our contributions are part of broader efforts that mobilise change on equality and rights in small shifts, towards social justice in new and different ways.”

“Personal commitment and investment has been critical for building and making the most of relationships within the influencing process.”

current societal systems. Personal commitment and investment has been critical for building and making the most of relationships within the influencing process. In particular, this personal engagement

provided support to the unpaid care stream’s ‘strategy of saturation’, in that the process of influence has become embedded in staff’s work and their lives. Creating change in the area of care is long-term and not amenable to technical, quick fixes. In part, this is because opposition to change is also driven by strongly held beliefs, socially rewarded norms, deeply embedded structures of constraint and institutions that resist change. Sometimes this opposition is even embedded within the very social justice movements that we would expect to be at the vanguard of influence, as evidenced from Bridge’s findings.

5. The GPS programme is part of intricate and wide ranging networks of people working for change

The power and importance of working collectively is central to the work streams’ theories of change. The programme’s inputs can only contribute to the efforts of others and attribution of influence to our interventions is challenging and/or impossible, whereas the contributions of programme ideas and analyses are often more visible. For example, if you are working in very large countries (such as India) or at the global level, direct influence on policy is almost impossible without a very large alliance of other powerful actors (which in itself can bring several other challenges, such as dilution and/or co-option). In contrast, working with diverse networks of like-minded stakeholders co-constructed critical analyses can bring real energy, influence and traction to diverse struggles and processes for gender justice in sometimes unexpected ways. This was experienced across the work streams, for instance where Bridge in working with a range of social justice movements, for many of whom gender justice was not a fundamental issue, were able to initiate inter-movement dialogues around gender justice issues. The men and masculinities stream also found traction on issues in bringing together diverse interest groups.

6. There is a need to make marginal narratives visible
Part of the work of the programme has been to try and unmask and make visible marginalised narratives on gender, power and sexuality. This has helped to

create a shared identity and shape the programme’s goals and aspirations for change. For many in the programme, the crystallisation of this vision as a collective narrative grew from strong partnerships, but also built trust and further understanding. The evolution of this vision, over time and through critical reflection, enabled mutual learning and the establishment of new alliances for change. For the sexuality stream, this was about creating spaces for movements and marginalised people to create counter-narratives for certain global policy messages which were more reflective of their lived experience. For the unpaid care stream, it was the issue itself that was marginalised and hidden, which the programme helped make visible. In the men and masculinities stream, partners focused on challenging dominant narratives about men and boys within the sector for lack of critical engagement with core issues of patriarchal oppression.

7. Beyond the use of ‘evidence’ in formal policy spheres

Strategies for creative expression have been used within the programme to enable people involved in complex social and political processes of change to share messages in ways that are most meaningful to them. With regard to policy influencing, this can mean a certain level of risk where decision-makers are forced outside of their traditional (often male-ordered) conceptions of knowledge and evidence. Strategies of creating visual products such as films were in themselves processes of empowerment which contributed to the changing nature of activism for equality and rights for those involved. Engaging in public discourse through film and story-telling using less conventional communication outlets such as the arts and popular culture media, as Pathways of Women’s Empowerment did, created alternative pathways for influencing. This contributed to highlighting whole system changes needed for challenging stereotypes and for breaking down structures of constraint for gender equality.

8. The global policy space is changing and is not always of relevance

Whilst it was initially thought that this work should be about linking the local to the global, understandings of the importance and relevance of this shifted over time. There are a number of ways that people imagine ‘the global’ and increasingly this has little to do with Europe/ North America. For example, work on sexuality in the BRICS countries is bringing activists and academics together in an attempt to tackle an emergent aggressive masculinity in these settings. In time, the BRICS bank will surpass the World

Bank, creating a new focus for influencing. For some in the programme, the streams of work narratives created in the global policy sphere were problematic. This led some national and local partners to disengage or to resist being co-opted into the policy processes, which were so unreflective of their experience. For others, conceptualising change was most useful, and likely to happen at the national, sub-national and community levels and so this was where they focussed their efforts.

9. There is a need to improve processes and tools for capturing stories of influence

Critical reflection was embedded in the programme; it was something discussed and engaged with from the outset. However, this became more implicit than explicit, and was not sufficiently or evenly documented along the way. In part, it was felt that this was related to insufficient space for engagement or on-going 'conversations' across the streams at the early stages (due to the nature of how the programme came together from diverse strands with moderate resources). In the future, better ways are needed to generate this reflexive conversation in order to capture and document

learning around influence and to ensure that this is a shared endeavour among all partners.

This report is split into four sections: Beginnings, Learning Together, Lessons to take Forward, and Future Directions. In Beginnings, you can read about the background to the programme – the aims behind implementing the different activities and what influence it was hoped these activities would have. In Learning Together, the report explains how the process actually unfolded and what was learned together as a programme. In Lessons to take Forward, some key lessons about what worked and what might be done differently in the future are outlined. Future Directions describes how we as a programme will aim to alter our practice as we continue to take this work forward and explores future areas of focus for the programme.

“Work on sexuality in the BRICS countries is bringing activists and academics together in an attempt to tackle an emergent aggressive masculinity in these settings.”

▼ During the World Social Forum in Dakar, 2011, families demand equality.



Marie Deviers

Beginnings

Aims

In 2011, IDS and a broad group of partner organisations and networks embarked on an ambitious process to understand and advocate on issues of gender, power and sexuality. The central aim of the programme was to influence norms and institutions at global, national and local levels to more effectively tackle the challenge of achieving gender equality. The work was organised around:

- Challenging stereotypes, values and structures that hinder gender equality.
- Understanding the structures of constraint that limit the achievement of gender equality and what is needed to bring about and sustain change.
- Building alliances between actors, networks and movements in different policy arenas, to become more effective in influencing global and local policy processes.

The programme hinged on the idea that we are entering a new phase of the struggle for gender equality, which requires new arguments and

tactics. One of the challenges identified was the need to engage more actively with the cultural, structural and power dimensions of gender inequality and critically address stereotypes within development cultures, the media and development agencies' own policies.

The programme had distinct streams of work: Pathways of Women's Empowerment; the BRIDGE Programme on Social Movements; the Sexuality and Development Programme;

Men and Masculinities; Making Unpaid Care Visible; and Power and Politics. It was expected that one of the strengths of the programme would be its ability to convene stakeholders across these issues.

Approach to policy and influencing

The programme's approach to influencing is based on a number of assumptions:

- Gender intersects with other axes of inequality – such as those based on sexuality, disability, class and race.
- Alliances and coalitions, which bring together different social justice actors are key to the change process. This is because by working together, alliances and coalitions can help place gender equality across their agendas and mobilise around common objectives in national and global arenas.
- Change is not a linear process from evidence to policy-making, implementation, gender equality and poverty reduction. Political and socio-economic realities change through multiple, emergent pathways and processes.
- Influencing work should amplify the voices of communities and marginalised individuals (marginalised for example, by sexuality, disability, social class or race), which should lead to new and more appropriate policy questions and solutions at multiple levels.
- Successful influencing needs to be mindful of the dominant actors who have a stake in maintaining the status quo, and support the strategies of champions, movements, and 'networks of interest' working for change.
- IDS is in a position to amplify the impact of the programme's outputs by identifying pathways into international policy processes, spaces and events.
- IDS can improve advocacy and influencing by convening international debate and dialogue, engaging in action-learning, and supporting mutual capacity development.
- The process of influencing must cultivate a context of reflexivity where programme partners engage self-critically about their power and positionality, being conscious of the way in which the power exists and is used in relation to others.
- Engaging in a process of continuous and adaptive learning will help the programme to improve influencing throughout this process and also help in responding and reacting to opportunities.

“The central aim of the programme was to influence norms and institutions at global, national and local levels to more effectively tackle the challenge of achieving gender equality.”

Monitoring, evaluation and impact

Understanding how to improve influence was built into the programme's activities. The aim was to monitor the programme and document lessons about influencing change. As part of this, representatives from each programme stream (women's empowerment, sexuality, unpaid care, social movements, and masculinities) came together in September 2013 to plan the collective approach for documenting a series of stories of influence case studies tracking our potential/intended influence - and documenting this report.

Rosalind Eyben, Emeritus IDS Fellow and former member of the GPS programme, played a key role in shaping the programme's thinking in this area, providing peer support and a conceptual framework to follow. She suggested that monitoring and evaluation for the programme was viewed as an integral and iterative element of implementation: that by integrating learning about the effects of programme actions into future plans, we as the programme hold ourselves accountable to our collaborators, to our donors and to each other. This was not so much about discovering and reporting 'results' as it was about learning from them on how we can respond more effectively (i.e. have an influence) on the conditions which shape our capacity to make a difference.

A critical reflexive approach to monitoring and evaluation required programme partners to make

their strategic assumptions, and the deeper beliefs that led to making these assumptions, explicit. The process was reflexive because (1) the plan was to intermittently check and challenge the strategic assumptions (theories of change) in relation to the experience of implementing the work plan and (2) through a further 'learning loop' it was planned to use that experience to enquire into the characteristics of the positionality, which had influenced these assumptions and their underlying beliefs.

It was hoped that by explicitly tracking and documenting this process it would help the programme in a number of ways:

1. To encourage partners in monitoring and ensuring that they were doing as much as possible to achieve the influencing objectives (single loop learning).
2. To allow work streams to re-visit the processes, relationships and events they had been involved in and to ask themselves what they were learning in relation to the change strategy (double-loop learning).
3. To provide the basis for discussing with partners/collaborators the IDS 'added value' to what was being achieved – and to also enquire with them about the opportunities and limitations of IDS positionality in relation to that added value.¹

¹ This text is adapted from an internal paper authored by Rosalind to support one of our monitoring and evaluation meetings.

“This was not so much about discovering and reporting 'results' as it was about learning from them on how we can respond more effectively.”

Learning Together

Demonstrating its importance to the project, mutual learning and reflection on influencing was a topic of discussion at project planning meetings, used for monitoring purposes and also featured in regular reporting. Reflections on progress were also aired during meetings with partners convened within the separate streams.

It was initially suggested that work streams regularly document their influencing (i.e. keep a field journal) to create a process of self-enquiry about how change happens. Work streams also planned early on to collect impact evidence in a systematic way (i.e. through requests to feed into decision-making processes). In practice, however, this collection of evidence was uneven and there was no centralised mechanism for capturing and analysing information, apart from annual reporting.

Collective reflection was, however, also made possible by joint events, which straddled the work streams. In late September 2013, representatives and partners from every stream came together for an international symposium on “Undressing Patriarchy”.² This was a rather unusual encounter

“For some people, unpacking the tacit knowledge of why they preceded the way that they did was a challenge.”

in terms of holding unconventional dialogues across a kaleidoscope of perspectives of feminism, men and masculinities work, sexual rights and other social justice struggles. It was a chance to discuss some of the dilemmas, new thinking, interactive processes, analyses, as well as future

possibilities and challenges identified in these social justice debates. In March 2014, the programme hosted a panel at the Commission on the Status of Women, which built on these discussions and brought them to a wider audience.³

In July 2014, the streams reunited in a workshop,

² For more on this meeting you can read the meeting report at <https://www.ids.ac.uk/publication/undressing-patriarchy-redressing-inequalities> or the IDS Bulletin that arose from it <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/idsb.2014.45.issue-1/issuetoc>

³ For more on this see the Participation, Power and Social Change blog <http://participationpower.wordpress.com/tag/csw/>

which provided a supportive space for: sharing each stream’s draft of their reflective case studies of policy influence; discussing the differences and commonalities in generating influence between and across themes; and also created an opportunity to formulate the overarching analysis and story of how the programme has worked to achieve influence so that – to quote the logical framework – ‘global policy, programming and practice is influenced in multiple ways, favouring updated approaches to gender equality’. Meeting participants were primarily based at IDS although two partners from the South also attended.

Tracking Paths of Influence: not always an easy process

We are going through a ‘rainy phase’ in the project ... First, there is the assumption that change happens in a linear way – factors a and b lead to c. Second, the idea that we are an important player – as we hold strings and are essential to the picture. BUT we need to humble ourselves. Third is that [demonstrating the influence we have had] runs against the idea of ‘contribution not attribution’. It is always a constellation of factors and many are unknown. Fourth, the talk about impact is always policy impact, it always goes together and not sure that the way we talk about policy is how things happen in the real world or is necessarily where change will make the most difference.
– Workshop Participant

At the Stories of Influence Workshop in July 2014, as an exercise, participants drew their journey in influencing and unsurprisingly people had experienced ups and downs during the process.

Not all programme members were comfortable with the idea of measuring and attributing changes in the external environment to work carried out through the programme. This was partially in reaction to overly rigid demands related to tracking and reporting. Many staff had been closely involved in the Big Push Back meeting in September 2010 (and subsequent Big Push Forward movement).⁴ This movement was set up as a direct response to the new ‘audit culture’ of donors and government ministries. This new culture often fails to recognise

⁴ <http://bigpushforward.net/>

the complexity of development and thus risks losing the voices and knowledge of local actors in light of an increased pressure for quick 'wins' to demonstrate that aid works. This is not to say that programme members saw Sida as falling within this category. In fact, many participants at the workshop were glowing about the way that the grant was managed, with flexibility being one of its key strengths:

This is one of the initiatives at IDS that has given us maximum flexibility in ways other funded work has not. The ability to think outside of a regimented way has given an indirect positive impact in that we have started thinking about influence and our positionality in relation to partners and policy influence differently.

– Mariz Tadros

Over almost three years, this project has given us flexibility without having to fit one particular issue. Issues have stemmed from political economy to law to race to homo-nationalism, these have developed substantially.

– akshay khanna

As many programme members were drawn from a background of participatory practice, adopting a self-critical approach to their place in the world and what impact a programme like GPS might have is natural and built into their ways of working.

For some people, unpacking the tacit knowledge of why they preceded the way that they did was a challenge, 'It is hard to write stories of influence because it is embedded especially in our work on making care visible. There is no list on what we can do. We just feel our way'.

Others found the idea of talking about an influencing case study with partners uncomfortable. There was a sense that IDS was trying to appropriate something much larger than themselves or the ideas, energy and work of partners:

Often IDS was present in a policy space in which our partners were interacting, sometimes IDS was not even facilitating, they were just being present (but not like a piece of furniture!) This is a convening role but we are not necessarily the 'movers and shakers'. Workshop Participant

Others found attribution of responsibility for change difficult because much of the work drew on pre-existing projects, partnerships and networks. So much of the work may have occurred without the programme's intervention and the value of these relationships and links is improperly budgeted and appreciated when it comes to measuring impact:

We were already part of Pathways so we had existing relationships and we took up the unpaid care work because Naomi [Hossain] approached us. The money was small and the work was a lot. And that's where the relationships really help. Relationships matter in a big way especially in big projects when you are trying to feel your way through.

– Sohela Nazneen

Although all streams contested any representation of change as linear and easily measurable, and instead reaffirmed its complex and lengthy nature, the importance of developing alliances and coalitions to catalyse change was recognised. Across the streams, the programme takes a collaborative approach to change seeing the importance of building coalitions of both like-minded groups, but also bringing together actors from different interests and specialisms in order to mobilise to create the conditions for change.

Some programme members felt that the programme needed to think through linking influence at the community and national levels with that at the global levels. This was due, in part, to a belief that change at these levels may be more powerful.

Linking the national to the international, we have had international workshops organised by Action Aid, bringing people together on unpaid care, which was interesting. However, when you are talking about the Commission on the Status of Women the national teams are not sure about how relevant this is for them.

– Workshop Participant

Within the programme, people saw and imagined global policy spaces in very different ways.

For example, for some, such as the Pathways of Women's Empowerment, influencing the media or the creative arts was one way of indirect influence, rather than purely focusing on interventions that directly target decision-makers in policy-related organisations. For Pathways of Women's Empowerment engaging in visual communications fulfilled the dual purpose of influence within the creative arts and media, but also provided products which gave more accessibility into debates within policy-related organisations.

For others, the scale of the endeavour and the levels at which the programme sought change was challenging:

Even in India claiming policy influence is difficult... At village level we can see people are doing things.

 Within the programme, people saw and imagined global policy spaces in very different ways. 

But at government level we would need a bigger campaign and regular engagement. India is such a masculine state, parliament is so aggressive and powerful, it is very difficult to lobby. Even a City Government is very big. But [national and international] is the donor definition of what policy is.

– Workshop Participant

In the sexuality stream of work, rather than translating local voices, the team worked directly to engage with local activists and supported them, including with training, to document and develop their own narratives. This approach was based on the learning that, for many marginalised groups, an outside framework does not necessarily fit what goes on the ground and there is a disjuncture. For example, researchers in this stream worked with film-makers and men who had been raped and who took a different approach to documentary production. They made a four-minute short film with a very rich narrative without ever pointing to victimhood. This moves away from the victim narrative these marginalised groups normally occupy within policy spaces. As a result, this stream has invested energy in supporting the groups to develop their own voices, which offer an alternative to restrictive policy narratives.

We have moved away from that kind of a framework to one where we are participating in the process through which local voices come to be formed... that are reflective of their own experiences. Through peoples' experiences in their everyday lives you get the understanding of the issue in its whole, human form.

– akshay khanna

Work within streams: A plurality of approaches

The significant flexibility within the Sida grant allowed each stream of work to develop its own approach to influencing. There were often overlaps

Using care in the policy struggle

Policies are instruments of power that classify and organise ideas and social relations to sustain or change the current social order. Policies frame how the world is or should be and as such are subject to resistance and contestation. The policy process is a power struggle. Evidence is not enough. To get care onto the development policy agenda requires working within the institutional rules of the game so as to change these rules, both drawing on existing discourses and creating new ones.

For more on this streams approach read 'Getting unpaid care onto Development Agendas' <https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/IFPB31.pdf>

in the ways that streams thought about the task at hand, but there were also differences, which enabled the programme to trial a number of approaches and to learn from each other.

- **'It's the politics, stupid!'**

We are 'debunking evidence'. It is not about evidence based policy making; it is about how politics and micro politics inform evidence. It is about the politics of this. It is allies and opponents, and finding windows of opportunity.

– Workshop Participant

The unpaid care stream of work was influenced by a political economy approach, which focused on context, interests, actors (potential allies and opponents), power and discourse. Within this, attention was paid to the negotiation, bargaining and resistance that occur within the policy/political realm. For this stream, the key driver of change was not evidence: after all, a large body of work exists, which demonstrates the negative impacts of women's unpaid and unrecognised role in care and this has not been enough to significantly shift policy. Instead, politics and a thorough understanding of the spaces within which this interplay happens were considered key drivers of change. This meant that the work stream considered the micro politics of the political process, for example, the national action plan and the relationship with the women's ministry. Within this process, attention was paid to: potential leveraging power; understanding resistance and how to overcome or neutralise it; and working with insiders to capitalise on insider knowledge. In Bangladesh, there was a national workshop on unpaid care. Policymakers brought predictably patriarchal views into this space, but by engaging in the process, these views were being challenged and changed. As a result, officials – particularly younger men – understood the arguments for recognising unpaid care and were able to reflect them to others, which was extremely powerful.

However, it was not all plain sailing. An unintended consequence was that some of the stream's work faced resistance from feminist economists, who questioned the legitimacy of their approach asking, 'Where is your data?' Understanding resistance from this unexpected quarter, and finding ways to work in concert, will be key to the work moving forward.

- **Changing gender orders: Discourse and networks**

But how does influence and change happen? Not through a linear process, but by engaging in the world and challenging the elements of policy

that have an influence on maintaining the male order. By challenging stereotypes we are not only challenging the discourse directly, but we are trying to shift the culture of the sector and challenge ideologies.

– Workshop Participant

Within the masculinities stream of work, the focus was on changing gender orders and ‘undressing patriarchy’ – working toward a vision of a better world without so much male supremacy, discrimination and privilege rather than thinking about equality in general. Again, the stream rejected the linear and positivistic idea that evidence influences policy and as a result the world is changed. Understanding discourses – and how actors and networks use them – was central to the work. They tried to better understand the material interests and politics that underpinned these discourses. Their work was underpinned by the idea that change happens when you engage in the world and challenge and contest stereotypes, ideologies and the normative ideas that shape culture (including people working on men and boys and the feminist sector). As part of this work they tried to understand the structures of constraint, which prevent change. Alliances across movements was central to their approach and it led to the focus on ‘undressing patriarchy’ as a methodology for engaging more politically in the conversation about men and gender equality.

There were challenges that needed to be overcome. For example, much of the masculinities sector is characterised by a male centeredness,

which is a real problem. Reductionist binary thinking in these realms reinforces patriarchal thinking and closes down opportunities for change. Through repeated convergences, reaching out at international events and convening dialogues partners carry their evolving analysis and discourse into the international policy spheres, importantly targeting the MenEngage network and Men and Masculinities sector itself, as illustrated in a flip-chart from the workshop, pictured below.

• Ruptures and assemblages

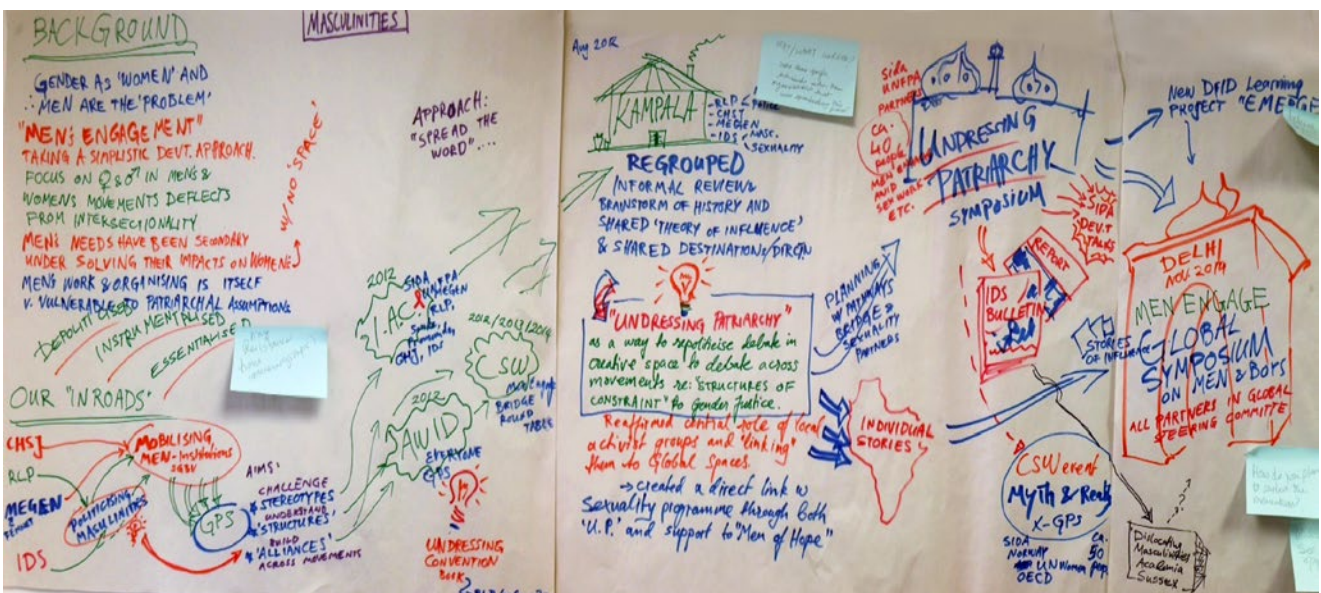
The idea of assemblage is important here: actors and networks coming together almost accidentally and when they come together we are able to see a certain truth, when we establish a relationship of fidelity with that truth we become new political subjects.

The sexuality stream also looks at a non-linear view of influencing, stressing the uncertain and unpredictable nature of the change process. Latour’s Actor Network Theory⁵ helped shape their understanding of the change process – the idea that you cannot affect change in a vacuum and that surrounding actors and infrastructures help shape the outcome. Deleuze and Guattari’s

“Change happens when you engage in the world and challenge and contest stereotypes, ideologies and the normative ideas that shape culture.”

⁵ Latour, B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social – An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

“Journey to Delhi” – through local places and global spaces for influencing policy and practice on men and masculinity in gender



notion of the assemblage was also important.⁶ Sometimes assemblages cause a rupture (or what Badiou calls an event⁷), which enables people to see the truth about a particular situation and a

“BRIDGE’s approach focused on the process of developing positions collectively as opposed to the outcomes of influencing.”

new way political process will arise. In Egypt, for example, Mubarak would refer to citizens as ‘my children’. There was a heteronormative relationship of kinship between the state and citizens. A radical shift occurred when the people said, ‘You are not my kin,

you are not my father’. It was a rupture that few had predicted. The sexuality stream’s work does not seek to predict ‘ruptures’ but instead to help

generate the conditions in which they might occur by supporting people in speaking the truth of their situation and coming together.

The relationship between the state and marginalised queer folks cannot change overnight, as these are longstanding relationships of hierarchy. In South Africa, there is a ... progressive constitution, but rights are not realised. Where the state has been the oppressor, it cannot be expected that people will quickly embrace the state. So these are the long term processes of social change where we are trying to intervene.

• **A focus on process and the ripple effect**

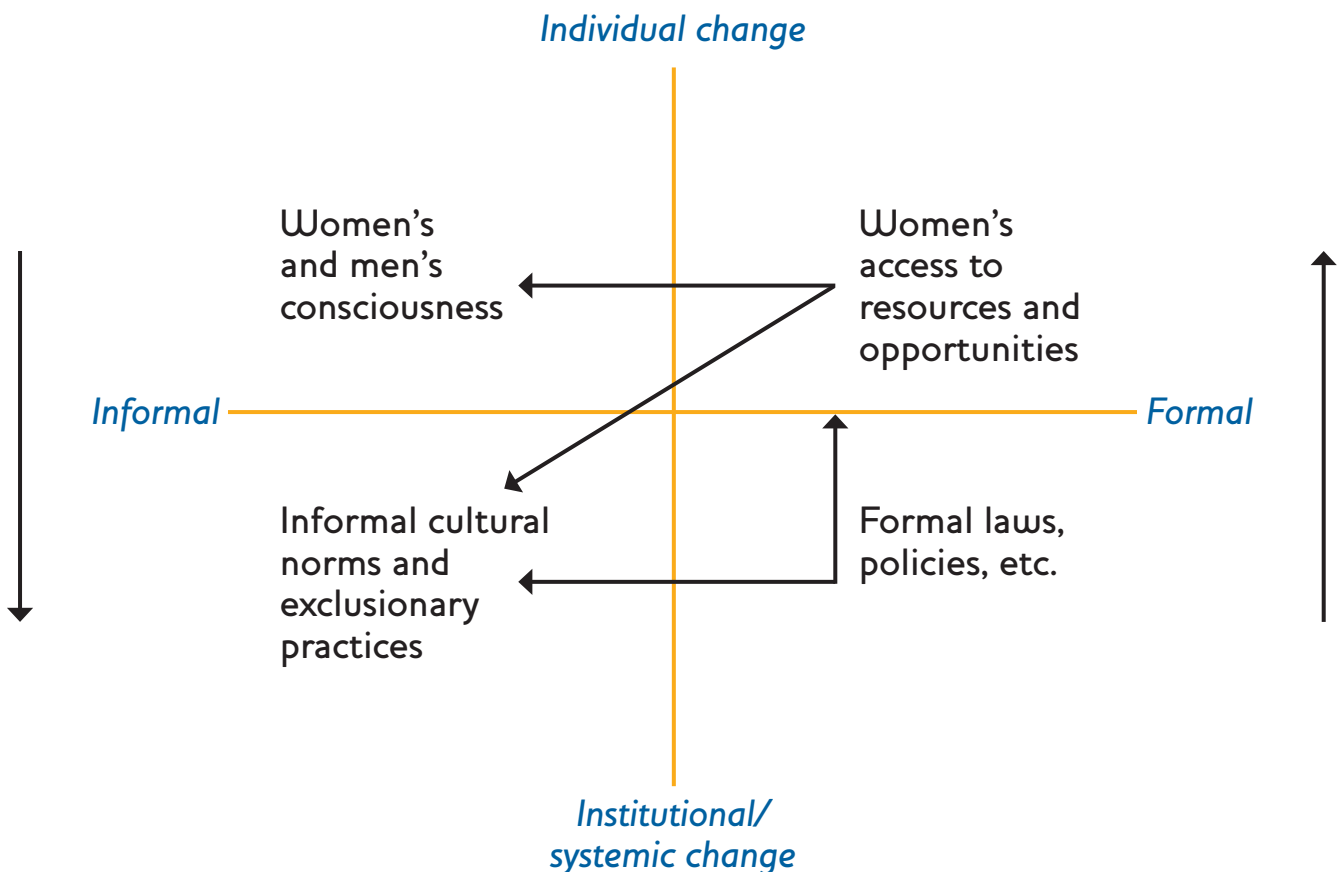
I think it is a lot about the process and keeping the momentum, facilitating the dialogue over time and giving the flexibility to adapt the outputs in different global contexts, so that they are able to adapt to the huge diversity of the programme.

⁶ Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

⁷ Badiou, A. (2005) *Being and Event*, trans. by O. Feltham, New York: Continuum

BRIDGE’s approach focused on the process of developing positions collectively as opposed to the outcomes of influencing. Their hope was that

Figure 1 What are we trying to change?



The arrows represent potential relationships between arenas of change

facilitating dialogue would create a momentum, which would ripple outwards and affect gender and social justice movements over time. Key to their theory of change was the idea that influencing is iterative and based on sharing and learning. This learning was re-shaped into practical recommendations and tools to inform activism, which are appropriate for different contexts and for the diversity of stakeholders that were involved in the process. Successful alliances were formed to continue inter-movement dialogues.

- **Structures of constraint and critical consciousness**

Pathways of Women’s Empowerment drew on the Gender at Work approach to institutional change and gender equality (see figure 1 below).

Influenced by Gender at Work’s theory of change, the Pathways of Women’s Empowerment work stream sees change as a complex process that needs to take place across the formal and informal and at the individual and institutional levels, and that the change process is relational between these spheres. Lessons from Pathways show that although structural change is very necessary, such as a change in laws and policies, it needs to be accompanied by a change in attitudes and a change in the horizons of the possible. For instance, Pathways highlighted the work of the Chapeu da Palha Mulher programme which trains female sugar cane workers in Brazil in the workings of local government and teaches them about citizenship and their rights, before giving them the opportunity to learn new skills such as welding. The women are empowered by their new identities and by the knowledge of what they are capable of. Pathways was able to bring these positive stories of change into the global policy sphere to present alternative and progressive narratives of empowerment. Working with the creative and artistic sectors and looking at the left hand side of the Gender at Work diagram, Pathways represented more positive images of women and by drawing on the work of Freire⁸ in raising critical consciousness, presented alternative ways of being. Through this, as a work stream, they hoped to challenge the underlying structures of constraint which prevent gender equity.

- **Common Threads**

Through the plurality of approaches adopted by the work streams, a certain commonality can be traced. All streams clearly saw the importance



of employing the use of creative media as a tool to reveal hidden stories of change, showcase experiences, and support minority groups in representing more positive images of their lives. Visual products are an important resource to initiate a dialogue for presenting alternative perspectives.

Building alliances across movements was a fundamental aspect of the programme which was a priority for all. This alliance building was particularly important in ensuring issues were introduced across a diverse range of focus areas, as for example in the case of unpaid care. There was a general recognition that evidence on its own is not enough to support change, there is a need to understand political dynamics and power relationships. Drawing on the support of strategic alliances or ‘door-openers’ is key to finding entry points for influence.

One key aspect that the programme offered was a space for dialogues across various interest groups to share differing perspectives and find linkages – a particular example of this was the ‘Undressing Patriarchy’ symposium which enabled significant learning in terms of interaction between southern activists and practitioners. The Bridge gender and social movements programme also provided a very valuable safe space for participants in which to discuss difficult issues and experiences.

Another common thread which ran through many of the work streams was the importance of learning resources to effect change. In seeing change as a long term process, both Pathways of Women’s Empowerment and the Bridge Gender and Social programmes recognised the need to influence a new generation of policy makers and activists. Pathways repurposed their research findings to create teaching resources for school and university students and other learners. Bridge aimed to create a ‘ripple effect’ through a sharing and learning process that triggered shifts in understanding and behaviours towards more inclusive and collaborative activism.

In moving forward, programme work streams need to build on these commonalities to make the most of linkages between the different issues they focus on. There also needs to be more sharing of learning from diverse approaches.

 Lessons from Pathways show that although structural change is very necessary, such as a change in laws and policies, it needs to be accompanied by a change in attitudes. 

⁸ Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, London: Penguin

Lessons to Take Forward

Contribution not attribution

I am still worried about this question of attribution, not only in terms of policy influencing, it is also about whose story are we telling?

– Workshop Participant

All streams of work are agreed that it is not possible to attribute any changes in attitudes, policy or practice to their intervention alone. All streams were based on the idea of partnership (and in many cases the co-construction of knowledge). Therefore, tracking influence is a challenge, and perhaps it is more useful for partners to track their own (and collective) engagements and roles, and to think of the multiple ways in which they are present in these engagement spaces.

From knowledge producers to something else – mutual learners?

How do we capture the difference we have made as a collective, what have we done to influence each other?

– Workshop Participant

IDS is primarily a research-based organisation, which also has an interest in the applicability of academic work in supporting real world challenges, through knowledge mobilisation for example. But within this programme, IDS played quite a different role – variously characterised as convening, creating spaces, initiating, shaping and supporting dialogue – but which was always very reliant on networks and coalitions of influence. The end result of this programme process was not only academic outputs, such as the traditional books and journal articles as well as more progressively, films. In addition, Sida financing enabled staff and partners in the programme to form links with activists from a range of types of organisations. This helped sustain interest and energy and was a tremendous learning opportunity about the workings and the power of partnerships.

Seizing strategic opportunities (and planting some)

Contextual factors open up windows of opportunity, but this is not something that you engineer, it just happens.

– Workshop Participant

Each stream took a different approach to planning for impact. Yet, all agreed that their work was enabled by strategic opportunities in the operating environment, which were often not of their own making. The reverse, however, was also true and some of the activities that we had planned, and considered central to the change process, did not occur due to outside influences beyond our control, but often lead to new opportunities further down the stream. For example, the unpaid care stream in Bangladesh was able to influence the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) because BBS happened to be piloting a project that was looking at time use and they had a strong Director who was interested in women's rights. To help matters, the coordinator of the work stream in Bangladesh already had a connection to the BBS Director. It is unclear, however, what this means in terms of future data being used, received and interpreted, so although the strategic opportunity was taken, there is uncertainty on how this will progress.

Building Bridges

We created spaces for dialogue between different movements that didn't exist before. Some were formal and others were less formal and so people could exchange on a different level and this created new knowledge and perspectives. Although people had been working in this field for a long time, this informal space created a unique set up for learning. Workshop Participant

The partnerships fostered in this programme created a diverse range of iterative, sometimes open-ended processes with different actors and movements to achieve influence. This influence was often internal, focused on the participating organisations themselves. This was particularly

evident in Bridge's work on social movements. For example, launch events for the Cutting Edge Pack were organised in Guatemala with indigenous rights movements which didn't focus on gender. Yet, these events created a new space for dialogue between these organisations and encouraged a discussion of gender. Opening up spaces for different types of social justice movements to come together enabled people to find commonalities and identify the similarities of their struggles against unequal systems.

Saturation

When our speech or behaviour challenges the natural order, we are judged as mad, bad – or simply ignored – unless sufficient numbers of people share a common vision.
– Workshop Participant

The unpaid care stream of work structured their influence around a process of naming, claiming, framing and programming. All of which reinforced each other. Within the naming piece of work, they adopted a strategy of saturation. They believed that the, hitherto marginalised, issue of unpaid care could only start to seep into the consciousness – the working priorities of policy makers – if it began to appear in a multiplicity of policy spaces, so that people can begin to think of it as an 'emerging issue'. They adopted this approach to respond to the hostility that people felt about the issue but also the 'strategic ignoring' that was occurring to maintain the current hegemony. The arguments that they used were tailored so that unpaid care became a feature of conversations across a multitude of issues such as aging populations, social protection, migration, health care as well as equality. This brought the issue into new spaces.

There are lots of ways that you can link unpaid care work to other sectors. It can be an advantage but also if pitching to so many people you can lose the plot! What do you choose? To engage in these discussions, you also need to cultivate deeper technical knowledge on a range of issues.
– Workshop Participant

Stirring up critical consciousness

Sustainable change in women's' lives is not possible with just policy measures but is about changes in consciousness raising and underlying structural change.
– Jenny Edwards

The Pathways of Women's Empowerment

approach was based in part on the premise that you can have an influence by making unusual connections, engaging outside the realm of 'gender and development experts' through the use of alternative communication tools.

Examples of this work include the film 30% about women participating in politics in Sierra Leone. This was an approach also used in work by the sexuality stream such as in film making with Men of Hope and the queer archiving project in India. In the unpaid care stream of work, a photography competition in Bangladesh highlighted images of men in caring roles, countering stereotypes. Given the dominance of negative and harmful messaging in the mainstream media

sector, art and film are a key route for building critical consciousness and helping us to better understand gender norms and stereotypes. In terms of creating alternate norms, work by the streams repurposed research in creative ways that opened up opportunities for engagement and learning to new and unchartered audiences. Change at both the institutional and systemic as well as the individual and informal levels happens by making knowledge visible. This can lead to shifts in consciousness, cultural norms, traditions, and beliefs. The process of engagement in this type of film making can have a powerful effect on the artists involved. Working with film makers and other creative specialists is a particularly powerful way for academics to engage with a mass audience because visual artists can help to translate the complexities of research into something that has a strong narrative thread and a broader appeal to people, making academic knowledge more accessible, as can be seen from the example of Pathways 30% film. This is particularly important in terms of influencing future generations of policy makers and countering prevailing beliefs about women and people marginalised because of their sexuality as victims or for men often seen as a monolithic block of aggressors.

We are not the only ones doing the storytelling... as we know stories can communicate the most negative views of women and gender relations. We are navigating through minefields.
– Workshop Participant

Opening up spaces for different types of social justice movements to come together enabled people to find commonalities and identify the similarities of their struggles against unequal systems.

Braving the maelstrom: Purposeful political meddling

To get [issue x] onto the agenda we ended up writing the text of the document that went on to become [institution] policy. But if a donor says, 'Give us the evidence that you did that' there is a risk. Because it makes the government look bad. And we value our relationship. So we will never say this publicly.

– Workshop Participant

Engaging in the work of influencing sometimes means getting your feet wet by paddling in the muddy puddle that is 'dirty politics'. That is doing politics outside formal political processes of the state or international organisations. 'Identifying and activating champions' often means using your personal relationships in order to get into the action and advocate on the issue. This is a relatively standard approach for activists and lobbyists but left some of the academics in this process conflicted. Is this the role of researchers? How much compromise is justified in the pursuit of our passionately held beliefs? Of course we are not the only ones playing the political game. By raising issues like sexuality and men's involvement you open up the possibility that these issues get co-opted by donors, the development sector and NGOs in ways that are instrumental and which strip the original political agenda from debates.

In the UK we see the reduction of the queer agenda to simply demanding a space within the structures of hetero-normativity (the notion that a monogamous relationship with someone of the same class, race, and religion is the only legitimate form of sexual relationship, and the structuring of the political economy on the basis of this norm) – without questioning these structures themselves.

– akshay khanna

Flowing together

Various partners intersecting over history together to a vision for a better world where we don't have so much male supremacy, we don't have so much discrimination and privilege. It is important to name it.

– Jerker Edstrom

Bringing organisations and networks together across the different streams of work was central to the programme. One of these meetings 'Undressing Patriarchy' was considered a high point where the streams could explore the intersections of their work and also those issues which separated them. For BRIDGE bringing together various social justice networks was the crux of their approach. This was based on the understanding that gender equality goals remain low on the agendas of many social justice movements, viewed as marginal rather than integral to broader social justice struggles. At the same time, gender activists have often failed to confront other forms of oppression – for example, those based on race, age or sexuality – within struggles for gender equality. Hierarchies within justice movements can further perpetuate sexism, racism, ageism and homophobia, exacerbating the marginalisation of those who already lack power and voice. The overall aim of the gender and social movements programme was to work towards more inclusive and effective social justice movements, become better able to generate deep and lasting positive change, and become better equipped to reshape inequitable structures and processes.

This work is also about challenging the stereotypes that exist within movements that call themselves democratic and equitable. Often you find that women in these movements take on caring roles and important decision making occurs in the evening when women are tied up with work within the home. These types of dynamics are not usually challenged in social movement spaces.

– Julia Hamaus

“‘Identifying and activating champions’ often means using your personal relationships in order to get into the action and advocate on the issue.”

Future Directions

- **Planning for impact**

It took a while to get the right team and partners in place. It is so important to get the right people involved and it didn't quite work to start off with, but we knew it could work, so it was about giving the time for this ...In the end the team worked really well. Workshop Participant

Although the GPS programme did follow a logframe, it was not excessively detailed with very rigid indicators. Most of the work streams started out with specific influencing in mind, however they appreciated the scope within this programme to be able to realign when things didn't pan out as they had imagined. On the whole, the process was iterative and involved a number of partners whose knowledge and priorities collectively led the action. There is, however, an acknowledgement that the programme might have benefitted from more strategic discussions in some areas at the outset to think through targets and outcomes, such as was done for the Undressing Patriarchy initiative. Part of the reason for limited cross-stream strategising at the outset was the way in which the programme came together as an 'umbrella package' of previously developed areas of work, linked to changes in the Sida-IDS relationship and external factors of budget cuts and reorganisation. The understanding in the programme evolved over time, and so programme members were able to make decisions along the way as they learned about the actors and their interests and how they could influence them. A more deliberative collective approach could work more effectively in the future.

Initially people that we thought were our targets, for example organisations actually working on unpaid care, weren't interested at all. There were politics around territory that came into play and so, some organisations were moved out of the workplan and others were brought in. But the importance is in having the flexibility in the workplan to make these changes.

– Workshop Participant

- **Sustainability**

We worked on the Men of Hope project where we facilitated their ability to use film, built their technical ability and took them through a collective process. This got them to a point where there are many in

the group ready to learn a lot more, and take on a fuller film project but we didn't have the resources to do this, it would cost half our annual budget. Being able to bring the process to one point and then no further, and leaving them on their own is a frustrating thing.

– Workshop Participant

This programme was fundamentally about partnership. It is the bedrock on which its successes rest. The programme has created a critical mass, collective process and a momentum. However, this creates a difficult dynamic when the funding comes to an end. If you can't follow through on relationships, there is a reputational risk and a potential for outside observers to see the process as extractive and instrumental. The programme needs to consider how to manage this in the future.

“This programme was fundamentally about partnership. It is the bedrock on which its successes rest.”

- **Adequate financing**

There was an underestimation of the workload, that serious engagement with partners takes time, there was too much work for everyone because it was a very participatory programme. There was a lot of personal commitment which is how things worked out as opposed to the time allocation.

– Workshop Participant

Some of the streams, particularly those that ran a constellation of small projects rather than one large endeavour, felt that they spread their financing too thin and overcommitted on staff time. In the absence of staff time, people drew on their own personal reserves to get the work done. There is a danger of self-exploitation and burn out in this type of over commitment. But if staff members at IDS are to be recompensed, there needs to be an honest conversation about the cost of this, as IDS salaries are expensive relative to other partners.

- **Power and partnerships**

The gender dynamics in the room are sub-optimal. Men who are relatively senior in their own organisations are speaking over the younger people. How can we imagine a world where people

work cooperatively if we haven't interrogated our own privilege and how it relates to class and race dynamics.

– Undressing Patriarchy report

Sometimes, streams within IDS did not work collaboratively, or in a mutually supportive way. In part, this may have been due to insufficient collective planning, but it also reflected different cultural norms, political positions and power related to institutional hierarchies. Although the aim was to work democratically, and build the capacity of junior and younger researchers and activists, this did not always occur at IDS or within partners.

Sometimes people spoke up when this occurred, such as at the Undressing Patriarchy meeting, where one group of participants chose to illustrate some of the points from their discussion through a performance around the fact that men had been taking up a lot of space over the course of the symposium. The performance revolved around a central character ranting about individual power dynamics and spaces, privileges and the phallus. The other people standing around him kept interrupting him as a way to remind him of some of the points that had been raised during the group discussion. He always replied with a smile and the phrase 'I absolutely understand your moral outrage but...' By the time the last 'interruption' was made, the speaker realised that everyone had progressively left and were now having their own conversations elsewhere.

For some programme staff, being involved in the programme meant shifting from being seen as a 'comrade' to being seen as a 'donor'. In some cases, this led to exclusion from activist conversations.

GPS role in a new spring of change

The GPS programme has been working on issues which speak to a spectrum of gender justice concerns, such as working with minorities, exploring more positive representations of sexuality, incorporating gender justice concerns across social justice movements, and focusing on the obstacles which impede women's equitable participation in public life. Looking to the future, these issues will need sustained pressure and activity, particularly as the world moves to a new era following the succession of the millennium development goals, and is currently passing through a particularly insecure period which will have an increasing impact on gender rights. There

needs to be constant vigilance in ensuring that gender justice issues remain a continued priority and that those closest to the issues at stake are given a meaningful voice in processes of change.

As a programme, GPS sees the space it would occupy as continuing the debates it has started on gender justice issues across diverse groups. It needs to continue to think innovatively on how to make the linkages which will provide leverage in ensuring progress in its areas of focus.

The last three years have provided a useful basis on which to explore commonalities of approach and work practices among the six work streams. It has provided opportunities and space to link up and to enable the streams and their partners to listen to and learn from different perspectives. With the new re-organisation of IDS and the establishment of a focused Gender and Sexuality Cluster which incorporates the work streams from the GPS programme, the hope is that this will continue to build on this collaborative process.

There are specific areas of focus for the work streams. For making unpaid care visible, the priority is to keep the momentum going, expectations have been raised and it would be an enormous setback to lose this impetus. Linking with men and masculinity work needs to influence a change in the prevailing policy and programming discourse on men's roles within the care economy. To really get progress on women's empowerment issues there needs to be a redefinition of the gendered aspects of production and social reproduction. Continuing the saturation approach of highlighting the significance of care to a whole range of issues will be important, and particularly relevant amid concerns around an ageing population.

As well as care, the men and masculinities work stream sees an important role in engaging in debates on equalising public and political participation to give women and others less privileged equal voice in politics and decision making. There is also an important part to play in connecting women's and men's organisations working on equality, as has been started under this current funding.

For Bridge, the team want to continue their support for enabling gender just movements and to document positive and progressive practices in order to promote learning. With this in mind, they also want to develop their learning and training materials and encourage inter-movement dialogues. The Pathways of Women's Empowerment team also want to continue

their focus on developing curriculum materials to develop more positive representations – and real lived experiences – of women.

There are lots of exciting points of connection between the various work streams. From here, the GPS group will aim to define the outlines and directions for a next phase to explore and seek out the necessary resources to provide the appropriate spaces and alliances to continue to develop this work for future collaborative influencing for social justice on gender and sexuality.

“There needs to be constant vigilance in ensuring that gender justice issues remain a continued priority and that those closest to the issues at stake are given a meaningful voice in processes of change.”

The Gender, Power and Sexuality – Connecting Local Voices to Global Arenas for Equality and Rights programme (GPS) is coordinated by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The aim of the programme is to influence norms and institutions at global and local levels to more effectively tackle the challenge of achieving gender equality.

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/idsresearch/gender-power-and-sexuality-connecting-local-voices-to-global-arenas-for-equality-and-rights>

