

AGENTS OF CHANGE: AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT
IN AFRICA AT THE CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines how the social construction of African women in development discourse transformed from the 1970s to the 2000s, focusing in particular on the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). From the 1970s to the 1990s representations of African women were based on women's economic potential. The mainstreaming of gender in the 1990s resulted in women being represented as agents of change. This approach gave women an opportunity to play roles in decision-making but led to policies that failed to challenge the established institutions. The emphasis on women as agents of change opened doors to some African women but with implications for the women's movement. Only some middle-class women appear to benefit but their gains have been marginal in comparison to the gender inequalities that persist. The thesis uses secondary sources and interviews with development practitioners in Ottawa to understand the representation of African women as agents of change.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my nieces, Hazel and Sophie Recinos-Acquah.

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I would like to show appreciation to the professors and staff at the University of Ottawa who have assisted me over the years. I also want to thank family members and friends who have motivated me to keep working on this thesis until the end.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: A Historical Overview: The construction of African women in development from the 1970s to1990s.....	24
CHAPTER THREE: How and why change occurred to the construction of African women in the 1990s.....	57
CHAPTER FOUR: Conclusion: What are the implications of these changes?	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY	121
APPENDIX A	130
List of organizations consulted and individuals that participated in the study	
APPENDIX B	132
Sample of the recruitment text	
APPENDIX C	135
Sample of the Consent form	
APPENDIX D	140
Sample of questions asked to CIDA Gender Specialists	
APPENDIX E	142
Sample of questions asked to professionals working for non-governmental organizations	

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

From the 1960s to the 1980s, development projects aimed at women in Africa were built around family planning, literacy, mother and infant relations, micro credit and the girl child. These projects were often criticized for being top down and for imposing western values upon Third World people. Women in the Third World were generalized and treated as a category by northern educated development planners and practitioners who perceived them as dependent, backwards and powerless (Mohanty 1988). Today's development projects are recognized for valuing indigenous knowledge and for encouraging participation from the grassroots, the poor and women. These development projects also aim to empower people on the margins, to build their capacity and leadership skills for a more sustainable and effective development process. However, some authors have criticized development projects because of the lack of involvement of local actors in development planning and for the use of words like "empowerment", "participation" and "poverty reduction" in project descriptions, which are followed by little political action (Cornwall and Brock 2005, 1043). In the 2000s, international attention given to African women as agents of change has led to a focus on development projects designed to empower women and increase their capacities to participate in decision-making bodies. For instance, in 2000, the United Nations Security Council officially acknowledged women in Resolution 1325, noting women's "special vulnerability during wartime, and calling for their 'equal participation and full involvement' in peacemaking" (Fleshman 2003, 15).

Organizations like the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are looking for new actors who can ensure the

effectiveness of aid. Women in developing countries are increasingly responding to this call. Therefore, the international community's recent focus on leadership, capacity building and governance is in accordance with donors' concern that their assistance leads to tangible outcomes which justifies their continued support. I hope to add to the research on gender and development in Africa by trying to understand the role of CIDA in the process of gender professionalization and the construction of African women as agents of change. My research will bring something new to the field by examining how the mainstreaming of gender and the participation of African women's organizations have shaped the field of gender and development. In addition, my research examines how the construction of women as agents of change shapes the role of African women and African women's groups in the development arena. I hope that this information will help policy makers to make informed choices about what initiatives they should develop. In addition, I hope that my research will produce knowledge that is both timely and critical for examining the multiple layers of gender and development planning in Africa and the role of CIDA in the mainstreaming of gender. The main objective of this introduction is to discuss the research questions and key arguments, present the literature review and describe the research methods that were used. Finally, the introduction will end with an overview of the chapters.

Research questions and key arguments

My objective in this thesis is to examine the extent that the representation of African women in development discourse has changed from the 1970s to the 2000s. I first examine the period from the 1970s to the beginning of the 1990s to analyze how African women were represented. Second, I study the period from the 1990s onwards to answer the question, why and how did a change occur to the representation of African women. Thirdly, I conclude the thesis by looking at the implications of the positioning of African women as agents of change in development

discourse and how this may affect the women's movement in Africa, the work of CIDA and its executing organizations.

To respond to the question, how were African women represented in development discourse from the 1970s to first part of the 1990s, I argue that the portrayal of African women in development has changed over time but it has always been based on the premise of African women's economic worth for the development process. The representation of African women first changed when the international community recognized the role of women in development as being necessary for economic growth in the 1970s. The advent of the Women In Development (WID) approach also changed the representation of women by enabling a more formal approach across governments and aid agencies to integrate women in development initiatives and policy. The economic circumstance and indebtedness of many developing countries under structural adjustment also led the international community to further acknowledge women's roles in development as developing country governments could not afford to provide social services. Consequently, the international community relied on women to make up this deficit by providing free social services. In addition, the inclusion of women in development initiatives by development practitioners continued without paying attention to local realities, which resulted in the creation of blanket policies that treated women as an indistinguishable group.

To answer the question why and how did a change occur to the representation of African women in gender and development planning, I argue that the process of mainstreaming gender and professionalizing gender across development organizations has led to some change in the representation of women. I first look at the idea of development professionals to understand how experts have shaped African women's participation in the development process. Second, I look at the process of gender mainstreaming at CIDA and amongst gender professionals to understand why change has been slow and inconsistent even with the institutionalization of gender analysis. I

argue that the mainstreaming of gender has resulted in increased bureaucratization in organizations and less political engagement towards gender equality. Thirdly, I look at how the representation of African women as agents of change is a result of the increased professionalization of gender. I describe how the construction of African women as agents of change comes at a price for women in Africa as they are expected to behave in ways prescribed by aid agencies, northern NGOs and their own governments in order to continue receiving financial support.

I conclude the thesis by assessing the implications of the positioning of African women as agents of change in development discourse. I also look at the implications of the increased professionalization of gender for CIDA, its executing NGOs and women's groups in Africa. I argue that the positioning of African women as agents of change continues to be based on instrumentalist arguments for women's role in development and does not have sufficient power to change gender relations. Women's groups will have to decide whether to continue their advocacy work or pursue gender professionalization at the expense of their own objectives. I argue that NGOs in Canada that do gender work also need to reconsider what is important because their ability to promote gender is hampered by their dependence on CIDA. I make the case that CIDA's recent focus on maternal and child health, although it seems to revert to the earlier construction of women under WID in roles as mothers, is an opportunity to promote dialogue about women's rights and gender equality between CIDA, women's groups in Africa and NGOs in Canada.

Literature Review

Gender mainstreaming and professionalization

The gender mainstreaming approach is one of the major results of the 1995 United Nations (UN) Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, where women's groups from around the world convened and tried to place women's rights and gender issues at the top of the international community's agenda (Phillips 2005). Gender mainstreaming is the process of integrating gender analysis tools and mechanisms in institutions. The increased recognition of gender in development initiatives resulted in greater acknowledgment of the work of gender advocates, which led to more demand from organizations for professionals who had taken gender training. The professionalization of gender work resulted in formal processes being created by practitioners to incorporate gender analysis in organizations. In practice, gender mainstreaming has involved the technical application of gender through "frameworks, checklists and tools for gender integration in policies and programmes and trained people in gender awareness and planning, monitoring and evaluation" (Mukhopadhyay 2007, 137).

The gender mainstreaming literature uncovers the historical context of the institutionalization of the WID and Gender and Development (GAD) approaches in governmental and nongovernmental organizations. The WID approach focused on increasing women's participation in development through their involvement in revenue making activities. The GAD approach advanced the practice of gender analysis in organizations in order to design development initiatives that would promote gender equality. The literature examines the gender mainstreaming process within development institutions and amongst gender professionals. I use the texts about gender mainstreaming in organizations to understand the challenges and factors influencing the decisions taken by donor agencies. These texts also enable an analysis of how the professionalization of gender has been orchestrated by different organizations. I use the texts

about the role of gender professionals to understand the limits of the application of gender analysis from the perspective of practitioners. My research will analyze how gender mainstreaming and gender professionalization shape the engagement of women's groups with CIDA and African governments.

There is a tendency in gender mainstreaming literature to focus on the process of mainstreaming gender in larger bureaucracies such as the UN and World Bank (Prugl and Lustgarten 2006; Goetz and Sandler 2007; O'Brien 2000; Hales 2007). Gender mainstreaming has resulted in major development agencies rigidly applying a prescribed set of goals that they have determined to be sensitive to gender (Philips 2005, 660). The gender mainstreaming literature often privileges an institutional perspective. The over reliance on institutions to change systemic gender inequality has been sounded by some authors as the downfall of gender mainstreaming (Hendriks 2005, 629; Standing 2007, 105). In addition, gender advocates have criticized the emphasis put on the technical aspects of gender analysis to the detriment of the advancement of gender equality and women's rights policies (Mukhopadhyay 2007; Himmelstrand 1997, 132). One of the weaknesses of the gender mainstreaming literature is that there is an inadequate emphasis on mainstreaming from within smaller organizations and women's groups. This literature neglects to discuss the personal experience of women in developing countries and of African women especially.

The literature that examines the professionalization of gender focuses mainly on the negative consequences of the process. Many of the texts are critical of gender professionalization because they believe that the process of formalizing gender analysis in development planning has led to the cooptation of the women's movement in Africa by state governments (Tripp 2001). Some authors also argue that the professionalization of gender has reduced the political activities of organizations and shifted their focus away from gender equality to administrative activities to

maintain the organization (Staudt 1997, 17). Many texts point to the inadequacy of funding for women and gender initiatives. Some of the texts analyze the perspective of gender practitioners working in the field. However, most of the accounts were from the perspectives of gender practitioners working in developed countries.

Many of the gender mainstreaming texts refer to the tendency of gender practitioners to avoid examining differences amongst women when integrating gender (Wood 2005, 596). At the same time, the gender mainstreaming literature neglects to discuss the personal experience of women in developing countries and of African women in particular. Moreover, the perspectives of men are never cited in gender mainstreaming in spite of the aim to scrutinize gender relations. Some authors believe that the gender mainstreaming approach in institutions falls short because often the need to be politically correct promotes simple solutions to encourage the participation of women and men rather than questioning practices and systems that render women in unequal positions in society (Ahikire 2007, 44).

The thesis will shed light on the effect of gender mainstreaming on gender practitioners and on women's groups organizing in African countries. The thesis will also attempt to uncover some examples from the perspective of African women working in development in order to understand their unique experience with gender mainstreaming. My research adds to the literature by incorporating interviews with Canadian practitioners whose perspectives reveal the implications of gender mainstreaming for women in Africa. My research contributes to the literature by studying how CIDA's policies shape gender and development policy and its application in African countries.

Gender and development in Africa

The literature on gender and development in African countries helps to answer the research questions by providing a historical background to the WID and gender mainstreaming approaches and policies. I contribute to the literature by looking at the historical transformations of women and gender policies at CIDA.

The literature on gender and development in Africa emphasizes the WID and GAD approaches to development (Rathgeber 1994) and the engagement of women's movement with the state (Tripp 2001; Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet 2002; Kamlongera 2008). My main critique of this literature is that the arguments have not changed over the last decade. The usual pattern of the literature on gender and development is to look at the historical events that have shaped gender and development at the international level. There is always a discussion of the impact of the WID and GAD approaches and the UN conferences on women's organizing (Moser 1993, Tinker 1997, Kabeer 1994, Rathgeber 1994, Razavi and Miller 1995, Denis 2001). The literature often makes a connection to the impact on women of structural adjustment policies (SAPs) implemented by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) (Kabeer 1994; Jahan 1995 and 1997). However, there are few texts that relate to the historical context of African countries and which highlight the role of African actors in shaping the discourse. This limited scope of the literature on gender and development in Africa works to reinforce the privileging of the production of knowledge from western sources.

One of the strengths of the literature is that recently more African scholars are writing about gender and development in Africa (Swai 2010; Orock 2007; Ahikire 2007; Steady 2007) and exploring the experience of African development practitioners (Win 2007; Olufemi 2008) whereas in the past, these issues were written from the perspective of academics and practitioners from developed countries (Wood 2005, 597). One of the first texts published from the perspective

of practitioners in developing countries was by Sen and Grown (1985) who were members of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). Their text entitled *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives* criticized WID for not considering the systemic problems resulting in underdevelopment (Tinker 2006, 281). DAWN gave people from developing countries a voice, which they could use to present their own ideas about development and question the ideas that were produced by dominant groups (Snyder and Tadesse 1995, 13).

A weakness of the literature is that there are few accounts from the perspective of African women actually involved in development work (Win 2007). In addition, some of the texts focus on the experience of women's groups in nonurban areas and less about women's groups in urban areas. Many of the texts mention the women's movement as a whole without really identifying specific organizations. In addition, some of the texts put the onus of promoting gender equality on women's organizations, which excuses donors and national governments from any responsibility for the promotion of gender equality. The texts often reinforce unequal power imbalances that make up the development arena by portraying the women's movement in developed countries as being extremely organized in comparison to the African women's movement, which is often depicted in terms of the challenges they face.

My research with development practitioners in Canadian organizations who have worked on women and gender issues will add to the understanding of African women's construction in development practice. Furthermore, my thesis will contribute to the literature by analyzing how the professionalization of gender has shaped women's organizations in Africa. My research examines the notion of the representation of African women as agents of change to assess whether this conceptualization of African women, diverts from previous representations of

women in development practice and to understand if this construction will lead to new implications for women in Africa.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework outlines how the feminist postmodernist approach and the governmentality approach are used in the research. I use the feminist postmodernist approach in the thesis to examine the power relations between African women, African governments and CIDA in the process of mainstreaming and professionalizing gender. In addition, this approach will analyze the relations underlying the production of knowledge on women in Africa to make sense of the different constructions of African women in development practice. I also examine the implications of gender mainstreaming and the professionalization of gender by looking at the experience of gender specialists in Canada and women's groups in African countries.

The thesis uses the governmentality approach to better understand the construction of African women as agents of change and the different dimensions of this representation. I used the governmentality approach to ask questions about the impact of governance in the process of gender mainstreaming and to comprehend the motivations of donors and governments in positioning women as agents of change. Finally, the governmentality approach is used to examine the relationship between African women, donors and the state. The governmentality approach illustrates how African women are represented as being in need of governance by the international community through the centralization of gender as a development strategy. By representing gender equality as a factor for development, gender mainstreaming has become a requirement in proposals for aid. I argue that the development community continues its governance of African women by using its policies and practices to control the activities of

women's groups who are dependent on aid donors' financial support. The linking of gender to development has also led to less activism from the women's movement.

Post-modernist and Feminist Postmodernist Theory

I will use the postmodernist theoretical framework to analyze the production of knowledge about African women in gender mainstreaming discourse. Postmodernists question dominant discourses, which are presented as being the only understanding of reality because of their tendency to exclude other knowledge systems. In addition, postmodernist thought provides a forum where marginalized perspectives can be heard (Parpart and Marchand 1995, 2). Rather than assuming that the production of knowledge is an objective process, postmodernist thinkers consider our understanding of reality to be a subjective process, which is impacted by our location in space and time (Parpart and Marchand 1995, 3).

A feminist post-modernist critique analyses the conceptions engrained in development discourse about women from the Third World in order to challenge the perception that the production of knowledge from the North is an unquestionable truth (Parpart 1995). Feminist post-modernists also critique the way that development is treated as a technical issue by the development industry (Parpart 1995). Some postmodernist feminists believe that development discourses standardize the identity and experience of women living in developing countries such that a single universal approach is applied towards all women indifferent to their diverse realities (Mohanty 1988; Parpart 1995). Mohanty (1988) presents a groundbreaking critique of the representation of women from the Third World in academic and feminist research as "a singular monolithic subject" (61). Mohanty (1988) questions the assumption made by western feminists that women have the same objectives and the same needs around the world (62). Mohanty (1988) claims that in texts written by western feminists, "Third World" women's experiences are often

presented without cultural and historical specificity resulting in the production of a unitary vision of what Third World women represent (62). Mohanty (1988) critiques western feminist thought for labeling women from the Third World as a homogenous group and for ignoring the possibility that these women can “resist” or struggle against dominant forces (63-64). Consequently, western feminist analysis leads to the conception of an “average third-world woman”, who is represented as marginalized and conventional in comparison to the image of the western woman, who is viewed as being empowered and progressive (Mohanty 1988, 65).

In my research, the postmodernist theory enables an analysis of certain vocabulary such as ‘women as agents of change’ and ‘empowerment’ in gender mainstreaming. Postmodernist thinkers aim to understand the production and employment of knowledge through a critical analysis of “language/discourse” (Parpart and Marchand 1995, 3). They analyze the production of knowledge by examining how “difference(s)” are produced and sustained (Culler 1982 cited in Parpart and Marchand 1995, 3). Postmodernist theory in this research is used to analyze the power relations between the different actors in gender mainstreaming such as CIDA, gender specialists in Canada, African women and women’s groups and African governments.

Some feminists perceive postmodernism’s emphasis on “difference” to be problematic because it can hinder the common ground upon which feminists unite to push for social change (Parpart and Marchand 1995, 6; Nzomo 1995). An emphasis on differences can also put feminism in danger of forming divisions based on essentialist and ethnocentric constructs such as gender, ethnicity and class (Parpart and Marchand 1995, 6). However, some feminist thinkers believe that postmodernism makes a positive contribution to feminist theory by providing a forum where the perspectives and experiences of women on the margins can be included in feminist discourse (Parpart and Marchand 1995, 7). Udayagiri (1995) suggests that universal and essential characteristics can be useful for arriving at a common understanding when creating

public policy (169). Mohanty (1988) has been criticized for making it difficult for women from both North and South to form unions across their differences since postmodernist thought puts so much emphasis on deconstructing generalizations (Udayagiri 1995). Postmodernist thought has been accused of not being transformative enough and the approach is criticized for giving insufficient attention to global economic and political issues (Nzomo 1995, 138; David Harvey 1989, 117 in Udayagiri 1995).

Governmentality

I will use the governmentality approach to ask questions about the impact on African women's groups of being governed by donors and states in the process of gender mainstreaming and to comprehend the motivations of donors and governments in positioning women as agents of change. The governmentality approach will assist my research to understand the implications of the professionalization of gender for women's groups. Finally, the governmentality approach is used to examine the relationship between African women, donors and the state.

According to Steans (2002), IFIs began to include women in their global governance agenda because it made economic sense. For example, the World Bank focused on gender equality policy because "governance is at best seen as a tool that can facilitate adequate returns and ensure the efficacy of the programmes and projects funded by the bank" (Alvarez 1999 in Steans 2002, 100). Some authors have examined the rationale behind the process of governance. For example, Rojas' (2004) looks at how aid is used as a tool to govern developing countries. Rojas (2004) argues that changes in aid patterns result in "differentiated governing subjects, acting as a complement of markets and the state" (98). Rojas (2004) analyses the power relationships between donors and recipients of aid from the 1960s to the mid-1990s when the international community portrayed Third World countries as being in need of management. For

instance, development policies were tied to structural adjustment programs as a condition for receiving aid from the IFIs. Consequently, “conditionality” became a governance mechanism exerted over developing countries dependent on World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans (Rojas 2004, 104). The goal, according to Rojas (2004), was “not development but [to assess the] international competitiveness” of developing countries, linking the rationale behind governance to market forces (Larner and Walters 2002: 414 in Rojas 2004, 104). This process of tying aid to IFIs policies weakened developing country governments by ensuring that market forces directed their actions. It also led to the portrayal of “poverty” as an impediment to development (Rojas 2004, 104). Also, poverty became perceived as an individual responsibility, linking the cause to the “family” and consequently, to women (Rojas 2004, 105). According to Rojas (2004), this displaced the cause of disparity away from “structural” factors and it deemphasized the need for “social” change (105). Finally, the justification behind aid as a governing tool continued to be linked to market forces, the need for development and greater efficiency (Rojas 2004). Similarly, the justification for the inclusion of women in development initiatives under WID and gender mainstreaming has been based on economic arguments.

The governmentality approach will be used to examine the relationship between African women, donors and the state. This perspective looks at the relationship between actors and the state to understand the different ways actors are represented and how they engage with the state (Burchell 1991, 119 in Sending and Neumann 2006, 657). According to Woehl (2008), the governmentality approach can be used as a tool to address issues of governance. Conceptually, the approach examines the power relations in the production of meaning (Woehl 2008, 68). In practice, governmentality represents systems that manage and control the behavior of people to maintain order within the state (Woehl 2008, 69). The governance exerted by the state follows the neoliberal rationale; therefore, “the economy” dictates how the state should function (Woehl

2008, 69). The governmentality perspective helps us to study particular representations of the truth and the justifications behind them (Woehl 2008, 69). In addition, governmentality promotes the self-governance of individuals so that the state can be free from the responsibility of providing services or goods to its citizens (Woehl 2008, 69). This explanation of governance supports the research hypothesis that some African women are being encouraged to participate in decision making bodies to make them accountable for their own well being and for the welfare of poorer women because it is more cost efficient. The neoliberal logic adopted by IFIs and donors also supports the hypothesis because donors increasingly seek concrete outcomes from the women and gender initiatives they support.

Woehl (2008) concludes that the logic of governance works to use the expertise and tools of “progressive emancipatory movements” in order to advance neoliberal agendas which work to reduce the state’s responsibility for providing social services (Schild 2003 in Woehl 2008, 69). The rationale behind governing agents of change is to utilize “their resources and knowledge as techniques and strategies for producing gendered, rational, entrepreneurial actors who are functional for the state” (Schild 2003 in Woehl 2008, 69). This supports the research hypothesis that female African leaders are being governed to utilize their expertise and skills gained from their involvement in the women’s movement and in grassroots organizations to better manage and run the public administration and development programs.

Governance is a dialectical process, producing both gains and losses for individual women and women’s groups. For example, integrating gender equality with the agendas of the global governance institutions may “result in the struggle for equality becoming submerged in global concerns” (Steans 2002, 101). However, if women’s groups choose to take advantage of the current policy climate, it may mean that their efforts to advocate for gender equality may result “. . . in a ‘women’s ghetto’ endowed with less power and fewer resources, attracting less

interest and commanding a lower priority than other national policy goals” (Steans 2002, 101).

Tripp (2003) captures the contradictory nature of women’s groups’ involvement with governance, by explaining that the inaccessibility of funds made them increasingly dependent on donor aid. This in turn led to the “NGO-ization’ of feminism” or the professionalization of gender work which turned increasingly to “urban educated women” to represent the experience of women, when in many cases they could not adequately represent the experiences of women outside the NGO circle or of those from remote areas or with lower levels of education (Tripp 2003, 248-249).

The thesis will examine the notion that African women are being positioned as agents of change in development practice. The term woman as agents of change in the thesis refers to the construction of women from African countries as leaders and game changers in development policy and practice. The construction of African women as agents of change leads the international community to invest in women because of their potential to produce positive development outcomes. Consequently, donors and some national governments represent women as honest brokers, and perceive African female leaders as being reliable, cooperative, and more egalitarian in the distribution of resources. Women are constructed as agents of change to help coordinate aid and to ensure its effectiveness. Also, this construction expects women to assist with holding their governments accountable. The labeling of women as agents of change anticipates that women’s groups can provide donors with concrete results on how they have managed funding. The connotations embedded in the notion of women as agents of change present a window of opportunity for women leaders to enter leadership positions in decision-making bodies. However, by becoming more integrated in governance structures, women’s groups risk giving up their political goals and limiting their ability to criticize unfair state practices (Tripp 2003).

The link between gender mainstreaming and the construction of women as agents of change is that women's groups have the opportunity to attract funding to integrate and implement gender in their projects. Donors expect women's groups to be able to show the results of what they do with this funding. Women's groups are expected to be the spearheads of gender mainstreaming policies in their governments and institutions. International organizations leverage women's leadership and problem solving capacity to target development goals based on African women's success stories in development initiatives.

Methodology

In this section, I will explain the interview process, how participants were contacted, who was interviewed and what I learned from the exercise. I will briefly discuss the CIDA documents that were examined and the rationale for looking at CIDA's policies on gender and development.

The research closely examines the case of CIDA because the organization has been prominent in the advancement of women and gender policies and practices since the 1970s. However, recently CIDA has been in the media frequently and there has been much emphasis on the organization's diminishing reputation in gender policy. At the same time, some organizations still consider CIDA to have a positive reputation in gender policy. The study of CIDA and its gender equality policies keeps the thesis connected to the current international development issues. In this time of shrinking donor budgets, the more prevalent politicization of development assistance and increasing measures to make aid effective, it is fitting to reexamine the role of CIDA in the promotion and professionalization of gender.

The thesis looked at CIDA documents, especially its policies on women and gender to analyze the changes over time and to comprehend the underlying ideas in the organization's policies. The examination of CIDA's policies on women and gender enabled an understanding of

the challenges faced by the agency in the integration of women and then gender issues in development. I was able to access all of the publicly available CIDA policies on women and gender from the University of Ottawa's library. Several library searches with some assistance from a government information library specialist and a few visits to Archives Canada revealed that there were few data or research directly related to CIDA's women and gender policies outside of what the agency had published. I was able to make use of the limited data available about CIDA's policies on women and gender by contextualizing them against the activities of the international women's movement. I initially had difficulty determining how to utilize CIDA's policies on women and gender in my research. However, I examined the transformations in CIDA's policies directed at women in developing countries in conjunction with the historical and political process that was taking place at the international level.

The interview method was chosen because it is a useful way to gather information directly from development practitioners working within Canadian organizations either implementing gender policy in their applications and/or executing gender programs in African countries. In addition, I had access to a wide variety of personnel with connections to governmental and non-governmental development organizations in Ottawa. The interview method allowed me to understand the complex factors and issues from a diverse range of perspectives and vantage points. The interviewees shared information that provided a perspective on the historical background, personal and professional viewpoints on women and gender policy and practice from different generations of development practitioners.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with professionals working in the field of women and gender issues in Africa. I carried out interviews from December 2009 to February 2010. I interviewed a total of eighteen professionals. Many of the interviewees at the time were working for CIDA (4) or they had previously held positions at CIDA (2) and were consulting and/or doing

some academic work. Some of the interview participants (6) held positions with Canadian NGOs based in Ottawa and one participant had recently left one of those NGOs. One participant worked for the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and another participant was previously employed by IDRC but they were currently doing consulting and academic work. There was one participant from the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC). At the time of the interview, one participant held an academic position at the University of Ottawa. Another participant coordinated a project as part of a research centre at the University of Ottawa and they also held a position with Peacebuild. More information about the participants in the research study can be found in Appendix A of the thesis.

I started the recruitment of participants by e-mailing the publicly available e-mail addresses of the development organizations based in Ottawa to introduce my study. I used CCIC's list of members from their "Who's Who in International Development" directory on their website to create a shortlist of organizations working on women and gender issues in African countries. I sent an electronic message to the shortlisted non-governmental organizations to ask them to forward my study's recruitment text to their employees. I received some responses from potential interviewees using this method. I also sent information about my study to professors at the University of Ottawa who had done research in the area of women and gender issues and/or African studies. In addition, I used the federal government's employee directory to contact a few people at CIDA who work on women and gender issues. One gender specialist at CIDA offered to share information about my study at an upcoming meeting for gender specialists at CIDA and a few gender specialists contacted me as a result. I employed the "snowball-sampling" method by following up on the recommendations from CIDA interviewees about potential individuals to participate in the study.

I did not have a difficult time recruiting participants and consequently I was able to conduct interviews within a short timeframe. I encountered some challenges with the interview process. I had difficulties deciding which questions to direct to interview participants because they came from a variety of backgrounds, and they had different levels of experience. For example, some of the interviewees had a difficult time answering the more theoretical questions about the field of gender and development planning whereas other interviewees said that they would have liked more questions focused on the theme of women as agents of change. I experienced obstacles connecting with the first few interviewees because I did not fully grasp what their role and the role played by their organization were even though I spent time going through their websites and reading about what they do. I decided to tailor my questions to each individual's background and experience after the first few interviewees. I also used the feedback from prior interviewees to add or delete certain questions. I adjusted some of the questions as I learned more about the role of CIDA and Canadian NGOs. I realized that the system of international development has changed from the 1970s to the 1990s and consequently so had the roles played by Canadian NGOs. The Canadian NGOs that participated in the study appeared to have less to do with the direct implementation of programs and more to do with administering programs through their partners in African countries. It became evident that many Canadian NGOs put a significant amount of their energy into public advocacy work in Canada and into activities to engage their constituents and the Canadian public. There was only one organization that stood out as playing a primary role in executing projects and having a direct link to the women participants and that was the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA). My most effective interviews came close to the end of the interview process as I developed more confidence as a researcher. I learnt a great deal during the initial interviewees from what was said and what the participants left out about the role of their organization in the larger system, which

led me to ask more pertinent questions in future interviews. Other factors that may have affected an interviewee's openness to answering questions were their age, as more youthful individuals appeared to be more positive and open about their organizations role in the development system. In addition, when speaking with gender specialists at CIDA, I found that newer employees liked to share about the challenges they experienced in their position; whereas the more experienced employees presented a global perspective of the issues faced by CIDA as an institution. The more senior individuals and individuals in higher positions within CIDA tended to be more cautious in their remarks about the possibility for change. At the same time, some of the interview participants with more than a decade of professional experience in the field were more opinionated about Canada's role in international development than the interviewees that had less experience. Another important factor was the gender of the interview participants. Almost all of the interviewees were women and only two men participated in the research. Of the two men in the research one was currently in a leadership position and the other had previously held a leadership position within an organization. Most of the interview participants were women in non-leadership roles. The range in backgrounds of the participants was insightful for getting a variety of perspectives from the interview participants. I had some difficulty processing the wide variety and volume of data. I overcame this challenge by grouping the data according to specific themes. Unfortunately, I could not include all of the data in the research because of space constrains for the length of the Master's thesis and time limits.

Overview of the chapters

Chapter Two responds to the question: How were women represented in gender and development planning from the 1970s to the beginning of the 1990s? The main objective of the first part of the chapter is to provide a background on how women were first conceptualized in

development discourse under WID approaches and to explain the motivations behind these constructions of women. The goal of the second part of the chapter is to understand the rationales behind the changes at CIDA from a focus on integrating women in development projects to a focus on gender equality policy. The chapter makes the case that the underlying drive of development projects has been to show how women are instrumental for economic growth but at the same time women have been represented according to socially constructed gender roles, which did not challenge the existing structures.

Chapter Three answers the question: Why and how did a change occur to the representation of African women in gender and development planning? The chapter first examines how development has been a process constructed as requiring expert and western knowledge and how African women have traditionally been excluded from participating in this process. The chapter also looks at the professionalization of gender at CIDA and the problems that gender experts have encountered mainstreaming gender. Finally the chapter analyses the implications behind the constructions of African women under gender mainstreaming. The chapter presents the argument that the mainstreaming of gender has positive and negative ramifications for African women's groups. Although, women are constructed as agents of change and gender work is increasingly professionalized, women's groups have to find a balance between working within the existing institutions to bring about gender equality and advocating for transformative change.

Chapter Four will answer the question: What has been the impact of the positioning of African women as agents of change in development discourse and how has this affected the relationship between the women's movement in Africa, CIDA and its executing organizations? The chapter presents the argument that some women have benefitted from the construction of African women as agents of change because they have had the opportunity to participate in

decision-making bodies; however, most women continue to be marginalized by the development process and women's groups are limited in their actions because of their reliance on aid donors and national governments. Finally, the chapter argues that the power imbalance between African women's groups, CIDA and its executing organizations may be more evenly redistributed if current policy climates are used as opportunities to promote dialogue and multiple approaches are employed with African women and African governments playing more real and central roles at the decision-making table.

CHAPTER TWO

A Historical Overview

The construction of African women in development from the 1970s to 1990s

A shift occurred in the 1970s and 1980s in the way women were conceptualized in development because of a renewed commitment to women and development issues. This shift was aided by the United Nations (UN) through its decisions and events such as the International Women's Year in 1975, the Decade for Women from 1975 to 1985 and the UN conferences on women (Jaquette and Staudt 2006, 21). Prior to the 1970s, the international community did not consider women's contribution to development relevant; consequently, there were few records of women's economic activity (Jaquette and Staudt 2006, 21). In addition, gender inequality was not recognized as one of the main obstacles to economic growth, which made the analysis of women's role in development seem unimportant. However, as challenges to the world economy increased during the 1970s, international organizations like the UN began to see women and the poor, traditionally excluded groups, as part of the solution to the problem of underdevelopment (Jaquette and Staudt 2006, 21).

This chapter analyses the context under which the Women In Development (WID) policies were formulated and implemented in the international arena and by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The chapter examines the consolidation of ideas about women in developing countries during the 1970s and 1980s and it analyses how the WID perspective represented women in Africa in development discourse. First, a brief examination of the UN Women's Conferences and the UN Decade for Women is presented to set the stage for understanding the climate in which women in development issues were being conceptualized. Second, I examine key approaches to WID. Initially I discuss modernization theory to show how

early development policies disadvantaged women by promoting the production of cash crops to the detriment of subsistence farming. Next, the chapter takes a closer look at two of the main approaches to WID: basic needs and efficiency. The first part of the chapter ends with a brief examination of the shift to Gender and Development (GAD) policy, which rose to prominence in the 1990s as the weaknesses of WID became evident. This analysis provides background information and sets the stage for the study of CIDA.

After examining the general context under which WID and GAD were established, the second part of the chapter goes deeper into understanding the case of CIDA. I analyze how CIDA utilized WID and GAD approaches in their policies and practices to shape the representation of African women. CIDA first promoted WID in the 1970s and 1980s and later shifted to a GAD policy in the 1990s as gender mainstreaming became entrenched in the international arena. This section highlights the problems with the WID and GAD approaches and prepares the reader to understand the mainstreaming of gender and the professionalization of gender, which will be elaborated in Chapter Three.

The UN Decade for Women and the UN conferences on Women from 1975 to 1995

The UN Decade for Women gave women's groups from around the world a forum where they could voice their views and influence development policies and practices. The level of organizing by women's groups for the UN women's conferences led the international community to take the issue of women in development seriously and it allowed women's groups to hold their governments accountable for the treatment of women in their countries.

The institutionalization of women's role in development at the UN started with the first world conference on women in 1975 in Mexico City and the International Decade for Women from 1975 to 1985. Subsequent conferences took place in Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, and

Beijing 1995 (Tinker 1997, 35). The 1975 conference on women focused on issues identified by the UN General Assembly such as “gender equality and the elimination of gender discrimination”, “the integration and full participation of women in development” and women’s role in the promotion of “world peace” (Rathgeber 2005, 581).

The 1980 women’s conference in Copenhagen emphasized, “equal access to education”, “employment opportunities” and “adequate health care services” (Rathgeber 2005, 581-2). The 1985 UN conference on women in Nairobi identified “poor women” as the most important issue to be addressed (Rathgeber 2005, 582). The official document resulting from the conference, the *Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies to the Year 2000*, addressed institutional barriers to women’s advancement in society (Rathgeber 2005, 582). The 1995 women’s conference in Beijing is known for bringing gender issues to the centre of the debate resulting in “. . . a decisive shift in terminology, from *women to gender*” which changed the focus from simply injecting women in development initiatives to prioritizing the analysis of the relationships between women and men in development planning (Rathgeber 2005, 582).

The UN Women’s Conferences from 1975 to 1995 contributed to the conceptualizing of women in development and helped to keep women’s issues on the agenda of the international community (Kabeer 1994). According to Tinker (1997), these events presented issues affecting women to government leaders and forced them to acknowledge women’s unequal status in society through the creation and ratification of agreements (35). The UN Decade for Women and its conferences led to the adoption of groundbreaking policy such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* in 1979 (Division for the Advancement of Women 2011). The UN conferences on women also raised the awareness of government administrators because they had to provide statistics that were separated by sex, which helped to assess the effect of development strategies on women (Tinker 1997, 35). The

information gathered advanced knowledge on the role that women play in development. One of the achievements of the UN conferences was the assembling of women, women's groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world through "the parallel non-governmental meetings" where ideas and techniques were shared (Tinker 1997, 35). Another achievement of the UN conferences on women was the normalization of WID theory and practice, which encouraged governments and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to take action to address women's issues (Jahan 1997, 316).

Approaches to WID and the conceptualization of women's role in development

The main objective of the WID perspective was to get women to participate in already established development processes; in particular, advocates of WID aimed to increase women's productivity in development activities (Porter 1999, 9). This section examines how women from developing countries were conceptualized in two main approaches to WID, basic needs and efficiency. The basic needs approach focused on women's role as mothers and provided some opportunities for women to earn an income in traditional roles and activities. The efficiency approach emerged at a time of economic strife and targeted women for their economic worth and to provide social welfare that could not be provided by debt-ridden governments (Moser 1993, 57).

The dominant development theory in the 1960s was modernization theory, which relied on market forces and foreign investment to promote economic growth (Snyder and Tadesse 1995, 33-34). However, modernization theory failed to promote development or to redistribute the gains of development to the masses. According to the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA), "...the 1960s emphasis on capital-intensive industry and cash crop agriculture led to the perpetuation of structural imbalance in African countries" (Snyder and Tadesse 1995, 34).

Modernization had adverse effects on the majority of the population, which led to “[i]ncreasing income disparities, underemployment – both urban and rural – chronic food shortages and the impoverishment of a large proportion of the rural population . . .” (Young 1993, 5).

Modernization theory ignored the role of women in development, especially women’s role in the production and reproduction of basic necessities, and presumed that women made no economic contribution to society (Tinker 2006, 291). The time-consuming work undertaken by women in developing countries such as “fetching water, and fuel wood; planting, weeding, harvesting, processing and cooking food; taking care of family members; and maintaining the home” was not factored into the calculations of a country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Tinker 2006, 291).

The emphasis on cash crop production under the modernization strategy led to food shortages in developing countries and had a negative impact on women who participated in subsistence farming, because development aid was directed at cash crop production and male farmers (Young 1993, 5). Cash crop production involved “. . . durable and marketable staples (maize, rice, wheat) rather than the basic staples of the bulk of the rural poor . . .” which were grown mostly by women participating in subsistence farming (Young 1993, 5). Many female farmers were expected to provide their labour freely to assist spouses or male relatives to grow and harvest cash crops in addition to working on their subsistence farms (Young 1993, 5). The valuing of cash crops over subsistence crops led to the production of lower quality food-stuffs and resulted in agricultural land being allocated to cash crop production which was more labour intensive than subsistence farming (Young 1993, 5-6). The production of cash crops had political consequences for developing countries as well. There was increased instability and a rise in conflicts due to unstable economies, labour unrest, food shortages and the widening gap between the rich and the poor (Young 1993, 6).

The limitations of modernization were apparent in the 1970s; hence, the UN General Assembly turned its focus to improving the lives of people and this “. . . emphasis on human betterment enabled women as well as men to be seen as essential to the development process” (Snyder and Tadesse 1995, 34). Women were at the forefront of the development agenda because of the realization that “. . . women formed a large proportion of the poorest: an observation which became the basis for more subsequent research and policy demands” (Young 1993, 7). However, this renewed focus on human development did not take away the negative effects of modernization on women. The next section examines the basic needs and the efficiency approaches of the WID perspective, to understand how women were constructed in development discourse.

The basic needs approach

The introduction of the basic needs approach was a response to the exclusion of vast segments of the population such as the poor and women from formal systems of production. Development discourse did not highlight the productive activities of people on the margins. Women and the poor did not have access to basic provisions, making it more difficult for them to contribute to the development of the society and to stimulate economic growth (Young 1993, 7). The main objective of the International Decade for Women was to improve the status of women by involving women in economic development through the liberal ideals of “equality of opportunity through education and training” (Kabeer 1994, 7). These initial objectives met with opposition in development agencies that had mostly male employees; consequently, the focus was changed to the less political approach of poverty alleviation and basic needs (Kabeer 1994, 7). The International Labour Organization (ILO) promoted the basic needs approach in an attempt to address the lack of development in developing countries due to large numbers of the population

being involved in “informal sector” activities which do not spur economic growth (ILO 1976 in Young 1993, 7). The ILO believed that economic growth could be promoted if the poor had access to basic necessities such as “. . . those that could be met through individual effort – food, shelter, clothing – and those which could be met through public provision – health, sanitation, portable water, transport and education” (Young 1993, 7).

The basic needs approach promoted women’s involvement in development based on the argument that women had the main responsibility for supplying the family’s necessities such as “food, water, fuel, health and education” (Young 1993, 20). Women were represented in the basic needs approach according to social constructions of gender which emphasized their nurturing characteristics and their role as providers of social welfare. Advocates of the basic needs approach argued that women carried a heavy workload, especially women from nonurban areas; however, the issue of women’s unequal status in the society was not addressed (Young 1993, 8 and 20). The changes in development discourse in the 1970s reflected a need to address poverty issues, to give women a more prominent role in development and to recognize that women had been excluded from the development process. The basic needs approach attempted to make basic necessities and services accessible to the poor and women and to encourage their involvement in decision-making groups (Young 1993, 8). The problem with the basic needs approach was that many developing country governments did not have the resources to provide basic services to the population (Young 1993, 8). For this reason, the basic needs approach met with challenges when faced with the harsh economic climate near the end of 1970s and beginning in the 1980s (Young 1993, 7).

The basic needs approach framed women’s role in development in terms of their reproductive roles within the family to make WID more tolerable to development agencies; however, it did not improve women’s unequal status in society (Kabeer 1994, 7). The little

attention that was given to the role of women in the economy tended to be about women's ability to generate revenues (Young 1993, 21). The objective of project initiatives during the 1980s was to help women raise funds (Tinker 2006, 281). One problem with this goal was that the results of projects were judged according to a liberal feminist ideal that was different from the priorities and values of women from developing countries (Tinker 2006, 281). Western liberal feminists considered a project to be effective if the intended results prescribed by them were achieved; however, if the goals of the projects were not achieved, the project was considered a failure (Tinker 2006, 281). For example, "[i]f a woman used her microcredit loan to buy a pedicab for her husband, Northern feminists criticized this, while many Southern writers emphasized the positive effect on family welfare and lauded such action" (Tinker 2006, 281).

The basic needs approach was based on modernization theory's pattern of development which prescribed a single formula for developing countries to modernize with the belief that every country that followed modernization stood to benefit and that these benefits would eventually reach the masses (Connelly, Li, MacDonald, and Parpart 2000, 76-77). Similar to modernization theory, the basic needs approach presented one way for developing countries to improve their situation by providing women with basic necessities to take care of their families. However, this approach did not offer alternative representations of women in development, nor recognize that women play diverse roles in development. Finally, proponents of the basic needs approach assumed that development was beneficial for all women and they did not consider that women experienced development to different extents (Connelly et al. 2000, 83). The implications are that women in the development process are viewed as fixed and conventional (Asad 1973 and Said 1985 in Connelly et al. 2000, 79; Mohanty 1988) instead of more specific depictions of women's actual "local" and varying realities and experiences (Connelly et al. 2000, 78-80).

The efficiency approach

The efficiency approach moved the focus away from women to issues of economic development based on the premise that the more women took part in the economy, the easier it will be for them to have an equal share of the resources (Moser 1993, 70; Singhal 2003, 171). The framing of women in development in terms of their economic potential during the 1970s occurred because the economic and social context of the time necessitated a more official acknowledgement of women's role in development, as women's labour would be harnessed to stop the economy from collapsing. According to Kabeer (1994), women were constructed by the IFIs as "the new micro-entrepreneurs, as the 'nimble fingers' behind the export successes of global market factories and the food farmers who would solve sub-Saharan Africa's food crisis" (8).

During the 1980s, there were major cuts in government spending in developing countries because of structural adjustment policies (SAPs), the conditions for the loans given by the IFIs that resulted in many developing countries being in debt. The reduction in public spending coincided with the emergence of the WID theory, which stressed the integration of women into economic activities (Kabeer 1994, 26). Similar to modernization theory, IFIs and liberal governments promoted SAPs as being to women's advantage; although, SAPs had many detrimental consequences for women (Connelly et al. 2000, 61-62). In developing countries women's opportunities for employment increased as a result of greater economic activity in sectors such as the agricultural export industries; however, women employed in factories owned by large foreign multinational corporations were at a disadvantage because ". . . the work . . . [was] temporary with high turnover and severe discipline. Many women in export units work[ed] under sweatshop conditions with low pay and high job insecurity" (Sen and Grown 1987, 62). The implementation of SAPs was also counterproductive to the goal of income generation, as the difficult economic environment meant that women were unable to raise funds through small

enterprises or employment in domestic industries due to high unemployment and reduced consumer spending on services (Sen and Grown 1987, 62). Research on SAPs conducted by feminists in African countries showed that women working in the “public sector” occupied low and insecure positions (Rathgeber 1992, 14). Furthermore, the rise in food prices cut overall spending and consequently, people purchased lower quality foodstuff, which took more time to cook and imposed on the productivity of women who carried out this work (Rathgeber 1992, 14).

Another negative result of structural adjustment was “the shifting of responsibility for welfare services from the paid to the unpaid economy, often through the intensification of women’s labour” (Elson 1991a in Kabeer 1994, 26). The indebtedness of developing countries as a result of SAPs reduced these governments ability to spend on “education and social programs or bringing newly qualified graduates into their bureaucracies” (CIDA 1989, 35). In addition, developing country governments reduced spending on healthcare, making it difficult for women to access health services and hampering women with the responsibility of caring for ailing relatives (Rathgeber 1992, 14). At the same time as women’s role in development was increasingly acknowledged, women’s reproductive labour that did not generate an income was devalued (Kabeer 1994, 26). While the state redirected resources to other development initiatives or to paying the debt, women’s productive and reproductive labour increased as the state relied on women to provide social services free of charge (Moser 1993, 70). As a result, women had less time to participate in income-generating activities and to organize to improve their position in society (Moser 1988 in Goetz 1988). In addition, as the economic situation became more difficult, women relied on their children, especially girls, to work in informal businesses to generate the shortfall in income and to assist with reproductive tasks (Sen and Grown 1987, 63).

The framing of African women under the “efficiency” approach as a means of sustaining the economy led to development projects that did not challenge the status quo. IFIs like the

World Bank had contradictory strategies. While the World Bank promoted poverty alleviation it was also implementing SAPs, which prompted developing country governments to reduce spending on social programs such as schooling and healthcare (Rathgeber 2005, 588). According to Rathgeber (2005), “[t]he Bank’s macroeconomic policy on educational reform in the 1990s emphasized *efficiency* rather than *equity*, and consequently the needs of women and girls were seldom given separate attention” (Rathgeber 2005, 588). The result of the Bank’s strategy meant that for initiatives that were partly paid for by users, such as the cost of tuition, for example, parents had to decide over sending boys or girls to school (Rathgeber 2005, 588). According to Rathgeber (2005), “[t]hus on the one hand, the World Bank together with other donors urged national governments to ensure that girls went to school and stayed in school, but on the other hand, the policies put in place made it highly predictable that girls *would not* go to school” (588).

The WID proponents of the basic needs and the efficiency approaches had similar and different factors underlying their technique to solving the issues of women from developing countries. The basic needs and the efficiency approaches were similar because the objective of both approaches was to increase women’s participation in development and to leverage women’s skills to promote economic wealth. The basic needs and the efficiency approaches were different in their methods because the former focused on providing women with basic necessities, whereas the latter focused on providing women with opportunities to earn wages. Both of these approaches were undermined because the indebtedness of developing countries due to SAPs meant that governments could not afford to provide social services and instead relied on women’s free labour (Kabeer 1994; Connelly et al. 2000). In addition, the income-making opportunities that were available to women were under poor conditions and the weak economy meant that many of the projects were not lucrative (Sen and Grown 1987, 62).

Another implication of WID development projects was that they focused on the participation of women in conventional projects at the “local level” which did not consider women’s role in initiatives at the national level where matters such as development and resource management are discussed (Goetz 1988, 482). The consequence was that women participated in projects based on their traditional roles and not in projects that involved organizing, strategizing and setting objectives in decision-making bodies to make the development process more effective (Goetz 1988, 482). Projects that involved only women had the effect of silencing women’s viewpoints from other development arenas and did not evolve beyond providing women with “basic needs” (Goetz 1988, 482).

WID approaches had the tendency to frame women as a homogeneous group, which separated gender issues from development priorities (Goetz 1988, 482-3). Consequently, women were only considered in terms of their socially constructed roles in society and this led to their exclusion from sustainable development initiatives and decision-making bodies. The WID approach also failed to acknowledge the diversity of women’s backgrounds and goals for development by treating women as one group (Mohanty 1988; Goetz 1988, 483; Momsen 2004, 13). On the one hand, the WID approach represented women from developing countries as having no agency, being uneducated and dependent individuals (Mohanty 1988). This resulted in misunderstandings about what women want and restricted the participation of women in the development process (Goetz 1988, 482-3). On the other hand, WID helped to change the way women had been traditionally conceptualized in development. For the first time, women’s productive role in development was promoted in addition to representing women in terms of their reproductive roles as mothers and according to social expectations of gender (Razavi and Miller 1995, 8). However, WID has been criticized for using the efficiency approach to argue for women’s participation in development because it moves the focus of development to what

women can do to advance the development process rather than to further women's rights (Goetz 1994 in Razavi and Miller 1995, 7). While the efficiency approach to WID helped to give attention to the cause of impoverished women, it also represented women in developing countries as both the problem and the solution to economic development. According to Razavi and Miller (1995) "[t]he cure for Africa's food crisis, child welfare, environmental degradation, and the failure of structural adjustment policies are all sought in women (more recently, in gender)" (8).

The shift to GAD

GAD emerged in the 1980s as an alternative to the WID perspective. Based on the tenets of socialist feminism, GAD aims to examine how gender relations influence women's unequal position in society (Parpart 1995, 235; Denis 2001, 154; Rathgeber 1994, 83-84). Researchers using a GAD perspective examine the connections and inconsistencies between gender, ethnicity and social class in development (Maguire 1984, cited in Rathgeber 1994, 85). GAD focuses on the work done by women both within and outside the home. Therefore, advocates of GAD want systemic change to address socially constructed gender roles, which contribute to women's unequal position in society. GAD sees women as "agents of change" who are capable of identifying their own needs and challenging the status quo (Rathgeber 1994, 85; Denis 2001, 155; Parpart 1995, 236).

Once it became apparent that WID was unsuccessful, feminists wanting to promote the relevancy of women's role in development adopted the term "gender" as GAD was considered to be more inclusive than WID approaches which focused only on women (Tinker 2006, 285). However, the move from WID to GAD and gender mainstreaming in development organizations has not been to women's advantage as it has taken power away from women's groups to advocate for women's rights (Tinker 2006, 285). In addition, the use of the term "gender" has come to

signify “woman” in development initiatives which has deemphasized the political meaning of the terminology, to secure equality between women and men (Tinker 2006, 285). The international women’s movement’s enthusiasm that existed at the emergence of GAD has faded because many of the challenges faced by WID have also affected GAD policy. For example, GAD has not been able to divert more funds towards gender specific development initiatives and aid agencies have not fully incorporated GAD into their policies and practices (Jaquette and Staudt 2006, 38). GAD programs have also been affected by insufficient funding as their financial support is divided amongst departments in order to mainstream gender, which has made GAD programs less effective (Tinker 2006, 286).

Advocates of GAD resorted to the same arguments as those used by supporters of WID to encourage support for women and development planning. For example, GAD advocates made use of “. . . moral suasion and arguments based on economic efficiency, retreating to welfarist appeals when macroeconomic policies set women back and always underfunded” (Jaquette and Staudt 2006, 40). Jane Parpart criticized GAD proponents for talking about change only in the “local” context instead of also promoting women’s empowerment and demanding systemic change at the “global” level (Staudt et al. 2001, 1253 in Jaquette and Staudt 2006, 38). The implications for women’s groups is that governments and institutions are likely not to be held accountable for their actions because the focus of gender policy has been at the local level and less attention is given to decisions taking place at the international level where it is more difficult to build consensus on gender issues amongst aid agencies and governments (Jaquette and Staudt 2006, 38). The GAD approach has been critiqued for presenting unequal representations of women from the Third World despite the contributions of many “Third World feminists” to the approach (Parpart 1995, 236). In addition, GAD advocates are criticized for presenting themselves as experts (Parpart 1995, 236). One consequence of the professionalization of gender

has been the exclusion of local women from the development process because reporting for donors demands particular skills and knowledge that many grassroots women's groups do not possess (Parpart 1995). If women in Africa continue to be excluded from the international arena, their participation in decision making and policy making bodies will be limited even though the decisions made at the international level have local significance.

According to Jaquette and Staudt (2006), “[b]oth WID and GAD succeeded in turning complex intellectual critiques into effective arguments for changing bureaucratic priorities and practices within donor agencies; both contributed to bringing women into development discourse and to shaping new international norms. This suggests that theory can effect practice” (39-40). However, GAD's objectives are sometimes considered unrealistic since they seek systemic change. Consequently, the ideas put forward by GAD, are rarely taken up in the policies and programming of development agencies (Rathgeber 1994, 85). But, GAD is considered to be much more successful in promoting research on women/gender and development (Rathgeber 1994, 92).

The process of gender mainstreaming is the practical application of the GAD approach. Gender mainstreaming is applied in organizations to achieve gender equality in their initiatives through measures designed to assess gender and the impact on women and men. The second half of this chapter and Chapter Three give more insight into how CIDA incorporated a gender approach in its development policy. The GAD approach has contributed to the representation of women as agents of change in development discourse. The following section and chapters show how the mainstreaming of gender by development agencies like CIDA has had a dual effect. On the one hand, the GAD approach has helped to perpetuate the representation of women from developing countries in decision-making roles and to foster knowledge about women's participation in organizations. On the other hand, the application of gender mainstreaming

reverted to representations of women in traditional gender roles and to the dismissal of political questions about women's access to power and gender relations (Buvinic 1985 in Harrison 1997, 61 and Harrison 1997, 65-66, 68).

The construction of women as agents of change under the GAD approach portrayed women as being capable to organize themselves to tackle development problems. The representation of women as game changers was different compared to the portrayal of women under the WID perspective because women's potential to take up leadership roles in their communities was recognized and leveraged, whereas WID's focus on women was limited to women's potential to generate incomes within socially constructed gender roles. Women's capacity as agents of change was constructed as being the answer to the failures of past development projects. On the one hand, the depiction of women as agents of change was based on essential notions of gender that represent women as being more trustworthy, more likely to look out for the needs of the community and to work as a team and less likely to be in conflict with others or to look out for their own individual interests. On the other hand, the depiction of women as agents of change was in response to the professionalization of gender, which increased opportunities for women from developing countries to access leadership training and to build their capacities. The 1995 UN Beijing conference and the promotion of gender mainstreaming led to greater representation of women in organizations at the local and international level. The following section and chapters delve further into the historical background and the factors shaping the representation of women as agents of change.

PART TWO

The transformation of CIDA's development policies on women and gender

The first part of the chapter outlined the changes in women and development planning during the 1970s and 1980s; the second part of the chapter will analyze the changes in CIDA's women and gender policies and examine how African women have been represented. In the 1970s, CIDA began to integrate women in development projects and programs. By the 1990s, CIDA's attention moved to achieving equity for women in developing countries by addressing obstacles such as access to education and healthcare. From the mid-1990s onwards, CIDA promoted gender equality in their development policies and initiatives (Alexander 1995; Asante 2000; Status of Women Canada 1995, 16). Despite this general timeline, there is considerable overlap between the aims of each of CIDA's women and gender policies. CIDA's policies on women and development have been altered, as the negative effects of development policies have become known, as new knowledge about development has been discovered, and as the involvement of women in policy formation and dialogue has increased.

The second part of the chapter begins by examining how CIDA applied the WID approach in its operations and policies. This section examines the advancements and drawbacks experienced by CIDA as WID was implemented. An analysis of CIDA's application of WID reveals that women in developing countries were constructed as inactive agents because of the unequal power relations between women's groups, aid agencies and national governments. The next section examines CIDA moving beyond the WID approach at the end of the 1980s when a decisive shift occurred as a result of CIDA putting more emphasis on policies rather than projects (Asante 2000, 80). CIDA published several policies touching on women and development issues in the 1990s that led to a change in the representation of women from developing countries from

recipients to active agents in the development process (Asante 2000, 24). This change also marked the move away from WID policy to a focus on GAD policy. The section then focuses on the 1995 Beijing Conference and highlights the challenges experienced by CIDA to mainstream gender. This section also gives insights into the relationship between women's groups and aid agencies mainstreaming gender, demonstrating the tensions between incorporating gender and seeking structural change to end gender inequality. The final section of the chapter briefly analyses the challenges CIDA has faced mainstreaming gender to prepare the reader to understand the different issues that will be discussed in the third chapter.

CIDA's application of WID

In 1976, CIDA was one of the first agencies to adopt a WID document (CIDA 1999). At the time, gender equality was high on the Canadian government's agenda because of Canada's participation in the UN Decade for Women. However, despite CIDA's early success in promoting women in development at the international level, at CIDA's headquarters, the picture was less bright. According to the *Report on CIDA's progress in implementing its women in development action plan*, after CIDA released its first WID policy document in 1977, its staff experienced difficulty putting the policy recommendations into action (CIDA 1989, 8). Also, there were not many instruments available at the time to help CIDA staff promote women's participation in development (CIDA 1989, 2). According to the 1989 report, "CIDA relied primarily on advocacy and voluntary compliance to implement its policy and assigned corporate responsibility to a single specialist in a staff position" (CIDA 1989, 8). CIDA's staff had little motivation to implement the objectives of the policy and no checks were in place to ensure that the policy was followed. In addition, the senior leadership team did not enforce the WID policy (CIDA 1989, 8). At that point, WID initiatives were not uniformly implemented because the staff at CIDA had

varying degrees of experience at integrating women in development and many of them had no experience (CIDA 1989, 8).

The integration of WID was fostered by CIDA's policies, projects, program evaluations and research (CIDA 1989). CIDA also monitored women's involvement in programs and conducted research on the obstacles faced by women when participating in development (CIDA 1989, 15). Furthermore, CIDA provided financial support to developing country governments to collect gender differentiated statistics, which helped CIDA to plan better projects for women (CIDA 1989, 18). One criticism of WID has been the way that donor agencies took advantage of women from developing countries in order to obtain information for their own operations. The need for research from developing countries was donor driven; consequently, women in developing countries were not empowered to research issues that were of concern to them. Local NGOs were restrained from participating in advocacy work because they spent most of their time fulfilling donor obligations and because donors did not want local NGOs to engage in advocacy work for fear of conflicting with the developing country government. Connelly et al. (2000), claim that because the WID approach "... relies heavily on modernization theory, it generally assumes that western institutions hold most of the answers and it often ignores the possible contribution of indigenous knowledge" (58). Consequently, the financing of women's groups by aid agencies and governments limited the participation of women from developing countries in the production of knowledge.

CIDA used WID training as a way to standardize its policy on women and development by requiring staff members and Canadian NGOs to get trained on CIDA's WID policy (CIDA 1989, 19). Although CIDA tried to make its WID policy operational, the annual reports from CIDA's WID Steering Committee between 1988 and 1991 showed that WID strategies were ineffective because planners did not seek the advice of gender specialists in advance of preparing

projects and women's issues were incorporated at the last minute in the program cycle (Jahan 1997, 319). In addition, Canadian NGOs implementing the projects were inexperienced in gender programming and they had no incentive to ensure that gender issues were integrated into projects (Jahan 1997, 319).

Early development projects undertaken by CIDA built support for women by highlighting the plight of women in developing countries in terms of how much time women used for food production and other reproductive tasks (CIDA 1989). In CIDA's early WID documents, women in development were represented as having a direct impact on the course of development. Women were portrayed according to the obstacles they face such as malnutrition, "maternal mortality" and "women's poor health" reflecting the basic needs and welfare approaches to WID (CIDA 1989, 7).

CIDA used "country programming" to advance its policy on WID in the 1980s and early 1990s (Jahan 1995, 69). For example, country case studies were used to outline the different ways that women's participation in development could be improved. In addition, CIDA employed "country profiles which examined women's status, roles, opportunities and constraints in CIDA's recipient countries" (CIDA 1989, 17). In the mid 1980s, "CIDA prepared country WID/GAD strategies for 27 of the 150 countries receiving Canadian aid" (Jahan 1995, 69). According to Jahan (1995 and 1997), the effectiveness of the country programming approach has been questioned because the approach often led to unclear results. On the one hand, "WID/GAD profiles and situation analyses" helped to evaluate projects for gender objectives (Jahan 1995, 69). On the other hand, WID strategies had little effect in raising women/gender priorities because they were often perceived by donors to be an add-on to "bilateral aid programs rather than as guides to shape and change these programmes" (Jahan 1995, 69).

CIDA moved its emphasis from projects to policies near the end of the 1980s (Asante 2000, 80). The shift from a project to a policy orientation was aided by “the IMF’s and the World Bank’s focus on structural adjustment policies (SAPs)” (Jahan 1995, 71; Jahan 1997, 321). As a response to criticism from women’s organizations of the effects of SAPs on women, the IFIs made a series of policy changes to address the negative impact of SAPs on women and impoverished people (Jahan 1995, 71). The move to a policy orientation by donors has also meant “policy dialogues emerged as a key area for setting agendas” (Jahan 1995, 72). Jahan (1995) argues that WID was less visible in policy discussions at the time because women were underrepresented in the higher-ranking positions that participated in decision-making process “between donors and partner governments” (72). Women were invited to participate in high-level aid discussions only when women’s issues were on the agenda (Jahan 1995, 72). Moreover, since the focus of policy discussions was on microeconomic policy, it was difficult to obtain gender differentiated statistics, and as a result, the range of solutions that were discussed did not take into account the different impact on women and men (Jahan 1995, 72-73).

The shift in CIDA’s focus from women to gender

In 1984, CIDA opened a WID bureau and institutionalized its WID policy (CIDA 1999). This was also the same year that CIDA incorporated “women into all facets of its development assistance program” (CIDA 1989, 2). CIDA’s 1984 strategy was built on the idea that “development must involve both men and women to be effective” (CIDA 1989, 8). The goals of CIDA’s 1984 policy were in line with WID doctrine to increase the role of women in the development process, to reduce women’s economic inequality by working with developing country governments to promote ways for women to make an income and to surmount cultural barriers restricting women’s participation (CIDA 1989, 8).

CIDA's approach to women and development planning was highly regarded because its leadership ensured that WID policies were central to the organization's mandate. Morrison's (1998) chapter on CIDA from 1983 to 1989 begins by stating that the former president of CIDA, "Catley-Carlson's commitment proved crucial in mobilizing an agency-wide focus on women in development" (221). Catley-Carlson's success in institutionalizing WID at CIDA can be owed to the support she had from the senior leadership and from the rest of the staff (Morrison 1998, 241-242). CIDA also ensured that the "professional" staff received WID training (Morrison 1998, 242). These efforts cumulated in the publishing of "Women In Development: CIDA's Action Plan" in 1986 (Morrison 1998, 242). The Action Plan meant "WID issues now had to be addressed in each project identification memorandum, in all management plans and in terms of reference for executing agencies" (Morrison 1998, 242). There were numerous challenges to the successful implementation of CIDA's 1986 WID Plan of Action. For instance, there was no checks or balances to ensure that WID was properly integrated. This problem was increased by the decision to move the WID Directorate from the "Policy Branch to the Social and Human Resource Development Division of Professional Services Branch", a decision which undermined the legitimacy of the WID office (Alexander 1995, 82). Another consequence of moving the WID Directorate was that it stopped the office from "... providing a leadership role in terms of policy initiatives and counsel to senior management and placed it more in a role of providing technical assistance to programming branches . . ." (Alexander 1995, 82).

In 1992, CIDA's WID policy was changed and released as an "Interim WID Policy" while waiting for an assessment of the WID policy to be achieved (Alexander 1995, 83). The Interim WID policy changed from "promoting equal access of women to the benefits of development to a more comprehensive approach based on gender equity" (Alexander 1995, 83). Auer (1999) argues that changes were made to CIDA's WID policy in 1992 because of demands

from the NGO community at the beginning of that decade for CIDA to pay greater attention to gender relations in addition to issues of economic inequality between women and men (379). The 1993 assessment of CIDA's Interim WID Policy revealed that between 1990 and 1993, CIDA's WID program had not progressed because of "a lack of strategic, corporate commitment" (Alexander 1995, 83-84). The assessment also found that between 1990 and 1993 CIDA cut spending on projects for women and reduced the number of projects geared at women (Alexander 1995, 84).

In response to the 1993 assessment of CIDA's WID Policy, a "WID and Gender Equality Division" was started as part of the Policy Branch in 1994 (CIDA 1999). In 1995, CIDA brought its WID policy to date by adding an equity component that resulted in a publication called *WID and Gender Equity Policy*, which was evaluated later in the year (CIDA 1999, 28). In 1995, the *Government of Canada Policy for CIDA on Human Rights, Democratization and Good Governance* was published (CIDA 1999, 28). At the same time, "[s]upport for the full participation of women as equal partners in the sustainable development of their societies is identified as one of CIDA's six programming priorities in the Government's foreign policy statement" (CIDA 1999, 28). Finally, *CIDA's Policy on Poverty Reduction* was made available late in 1995 (CIDA 1999, 28). CIDA's policies produced in 1995 called attention to equity concerns, institutionalized the idea of women rights as human rights, and focused on sustainable development and poverty issues. Many of these policies were published just before the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women.

CIDA's 1995 policy on *Women In Development and Gender Equity* marked a major change in the representation of women from developing countries in the organization's policies. According to Asante (2000), CIDA's 1995 policy showed a change in the representation of women in developing countries from "beneficiaries" to agents of change involved in all areas of

“planning, implementation and decision-making” (85). In addition, the 1995 policy signaled a move to focus on “gender equity and women’s empowerment” rather than just women’s roles in development (Asante 2000, 82). CIDA made a conscious effort in the 1995 policy to recognize the different realities and concerns of women and men in an attempt to promote equality (Asante 2000, 84). The 1995 policy symbolized the “recognition of the mounting evidence that focusing on gender and gender sensitive planning is central to sustainable economic development” (Asante 2000, 84). Another important change in the 1995 policy was the allocation of “WID Specialists to all programme offices”, one of the suggestions of the 1993 WID assessment (Asante 2000, 82). This move showed the rise to prominence of the examination of gender in CIDA’s policies. The study of gender was to be used as a mechanism to ensure that women were involved in CIDA’s development projects and programs. It would also ensure that the obstacles preventing women from taking part in development were evaluated and that solutions were devised to address these challenges (Asante 2000, 85). While gender analysis was recognized as an important step to ending inequality, the use of gender by CIDA’s staff was quite often limited to an analysis of the obstacles preventing women from having a greater role in development. This approach to gender did not examine gender relations between women and men; it focused on women in isolation of men.

CIDA continued to formulate its strategy on women and gender issues in development and over the next four years CIDA released policies on “Health” in 1996, “Basic Human Needs” in 1997, a draft approach to “Children” in 1997 and a “Commitment to Sustainable Development” in 1997, before officially publishing its most important policy on women and gender to date (CIDA 1999, 28). In 1999, CIDA published its landmark *Policy on Gender Equality*, which continues to be CIDA’s principal approach to gender and development issues. One of the main changes in CIDA’s 1999 policy was to promote gender equality as opposed to

gender equity, which was the focus of CIDA's 1995 policy on women in development (CIDA 1999, 2). In addition, the 1999 policy had a new aim to promote "equality between women and men", to give greater weight to achieving "the human rights of women and girls", and to incorporate "the results-based approach" (CIDA 1999, 2-3). CIDA's 1999 policy marked the increasing importance of examining gender relations in development work as opposed to the role of women in development (Asante 2000, 83). The change in the direction of CIDA's policy was greater in the 1999 policy than in the 1995 policy, which continued to emphasize the role of women in development despite stating that its focus was "gender equity" (Asante 2000, 83).

CIDA's 1995 policy on *Women In Development and Gender Equity* differs from the 1999 policy on *Gender Equality* in the way the study of gender is used as a mechanism to comprehend "local contexts" (Asante 2000, 88). This was a response by international development organizations to critiques of the WID theory, which tended to ignore the differences in locations in its approach to development (Asante 2000, 89). The result of this was that "[c]ountry programming became strategies to ensure that situations of specific contexts were recognized in programming" (Asante 2000, 89). However, CIDA did not adhere to its policy to promote a better understanding of local contexts. Interviews conducted by Asante (2000) with staff at CIDA revealed that CIDA did not seek advice from outside actors to compile its 1995 policy (102). According to Asante (2000), "[t]he 1995 policy, though advocating participation, was developed not through broad consultation but by an internal network of specialists who also had a deadline to meet; the policy was to be developed in time to present at the Beijing Conference" (102). For the 1999 policy, efforts were made to consult with other aid donors, Canadian NGOs and partners during the preparation of the document; but no substantial efforts were made to include the views of developing country "project recipients" (Asante 2000, 102). Asante (2000) argues that CIDA clearly contradicts its own policy to increase its awareness of local contexts by failing to include

the views of groups from the local level who take part in their programs (103). When CIDA did consult with actors from developing countries, they tended to address “governments, civil society institutions and NGOs” rather than community or grassroots groups (Asante 2000, 104). Asante’s (2000) research found that local actors were more likely to be consulted by CIDA to play the role of “researchers” in the preparation of assessments of country programs (105). In addition, when the assistance of local partners was sought, this was more likely to result in “better quality information” being gathered; especially the incorporation of “sex disaggregated figures and statistics” (Asante 2000, 105-106). In spite of the benefits of accessing the local knowledge base, CIDA was more likely to employ Canadian firms to carry out all its assessments abroad which contradicted the recommendations from prior assessments of CIDA’s WID policy to promote the involvement of local people in the production of knowledge (CIDA 1998 and 1999 in Asante 2000, 104-105; Asante 2000, 106).

The Beijing Conference and CIDA

One of the important changes that resulted from the Beijing conference was the increased cooperation between governments and NGOs, greater awareness of gender equality issues and the need to empower women (Porter and Verghese 1999, 129). The Beijing conference was a mechanism of policymaking and change in Canada (Riddell-Dixon 2001, 48). The 1995 Beijing UN conference for women forced Canada to refocus its efforts on women and gender issues, as “Canada, along with all United Nations member countries, was called upon to formulate a national plan to advance the situation of women, both within its own borders and globally” (Status of Women Canada 1995, i). The Canadian government published *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality*, reflecting Canada’s participation in creating the objectives of the *Platform for Action*, the document adopted at the Beijing Conference (Status of Women Canada 1995, i). Also

in 1995, the Canadian government recognized “gender-based analysis of legislation and policies” which made it mandatory for departments like CIDA to complete gender assessments of their projects and programs (Status of Women Canada 1995, 1).

In spite of the renewed enthusiasm for women’s rights and gender equality that was spurred by the preparations for Beijing, at the same time aid agencies reduced funding for women’s programs and some agencies undertook restructuring and “decentralization” (Porter and Verghese 1999, 130). For example, CIDA “. . . stopped most of their grants to women’s organizations outside Canada” (Porter and Verghese 1999, 130). In addition, aid agencies stopped funding “. . . international (feminist) women’s information networks” and started to fund development organizations promoting gender equality policy, but these tended to be organizations that were unwilling to challenge the status quo (Porter and Verghese 1999, 130). The Beijing conference’s final document, the *Platform for Action*, made it necessary for aid agencies to mainstream gender, which contributed to the professionalization of gender work by increasing the need for gender experts. However, as aid organizations and governments mainstreamed gender, the feminist agenda became less pronounced (Porter and Verghese 1999, 130). In addition, the unwillingness of donor countries to allocate more funding to gender mainstreaming at the 1995 Beijing conference ensured that the transformation in donor’s policies would be slower and less effective in the long run (Jahan 1997, 327).

Although the Beijing conference and the activities that surrounded the conference made many advances in the name of gender equality, this did not change the unequal relations of power that characterized the relationship between women’s groups and aid agencies. At the same time that women were being empowered to promote their own change, there were unequal power relationships between women’s groups and CIDA especially in the way the organization utilized its relationship with developing country women’s organizations to advance its own goals. CIDA

supported the participation of NGOs from developing countries in the Beijing conference by providing resources and financial assistance to NGOs for the international and regional pre-negotiation meetings, for projects linked to the conference, and at the actual conference (Riddell-Dixon 2001, 43). CIDA benefited from the relationships formed with developing country governments and NGOs leading up to Beijing because it helped the CIDA staff to acquire “. . . valuable insights into how the UN preparations were proceeding and what positions were being taken by whom” (Riddell-Dixon 2001, 44). Furthermore, the regional meetings allowed CIDA to influence the positions formed by the developing country NGOs that it was funding.

Although women’s groups received support from donors as a result of the Beijing conference, women’s groups found that they were restricted in what they could do because the donors main concerns were not aligned with the kind of work that would challenge the existing institutions (Porter and Verghese 1999, 137). Aid agencies wanted women’s groups to continue to focus on traditional development projects with a regional scope, even though the focus after the 1995 Beijing Conference was supposed to be promoting gender equality; they did not want women’s groups to push for systemic change to transform gender relations at the local and global level (Porter and Verghese 1999, 136). Mainstreaming meant “[d]onor priorities shifted away from education and awareness raising and advocacy (which is transformational) to economic projects for poverty reduction, social welfare and rehabilitation in post-conflict situations” (Porter and Verghese 1999, 137). The 1995 Beijing conference spurred much hope and rejuvenated the women’s movement and women’s organizations promoting gender equality; however, at the same time that aid agencies and governments positioned women as agents of change, they also ensured that organizations promoting gender equality remained firmly rooted in conventional development work by limiting gender mainstreaming resources and controlling the agenda, which

made certain that changes to gender relations would be limited (Porter and Verghese 1999, 136; Jahan 1997, 327).

Gender mainstreaming was difficult to implement even for CIDA, which was considered a leader in women and gender policies. According to Rathgeber (2005), there was much misunderstanding at CIDA about gender mainstreaming; the organization “. . . had problems with mainstreaming gender and in convincing all professional staff to take it seriously . . . ” (584). One of the underlying issues was the perception that gender mainstreaming involves simply injecting women into development initiatives to ensure that a sufficient number of women participate and that the project helps women (Rathgeber 2005, 585). However, “. . . the mere presence of women either on professional staffs or within projects is not a reliable indicator that gender mainstreaming has occurred or that existing power relations have been addressed” (Rathgeber 2005, 585). According to Rathgeber (2005), gender “. . . has been implemented in such a way as to reinforce the core business of development rather than to bring about fundamental changes in the existing social structures” (589). The onus to improve the situation of women in society reduces as women make small concessions. Once a development program has achieved a small amount of success, the aim is to capture this result to the detriment of continuing to interrogate the unequal distribution of power between women and men and amid women (Rathgeber 2005, 590). For Rathgeber (2005), “[t]o some extent this is due to the very nature of international development work, where the emphasis is on achieving visible results and ensuring accountability to financial donors” (590).

Gender Equality and CIDA in the 21st century

CIDA’s 1999 policy on Gender Equality highlights that “gender equality is a cross-cutting goal”; this message is reaffirmed in subsequent policy statements (CIDA 1999, 8). For example, in

Canada's International Policy Statement in 2005, the government of Canada states, "[g]ender equality will be a crosscutting theme throughout Canada's development cooperation. Gender equality results will be systematically and explicitly integrated across all programming" (CIDA 2005a, 21). CIDA's 1999 Gender Equality policy shows the organization's commitment to gender and gender analysis as a tool to assess projects. However, CIDA's 1999 policy states that using gender analysis is a "guiding principal" rather than a requirement for each project (ii). According to Hendriks (2005), this had extraordinary implications for Gender Specialists at CIDA who tried to have the terminology in the policy put greater emphasis on the need to conduct gender analyses for all projects (627n). The softer language used in the policy decreased the consequences for not implementing gender analysis because the policy did not make it a compulsory measure. Consequently, this disempowered Gender Equality Specialists by taking away any clout they had to ensure that gender analyses are a mandated part of the project process (Hendriks 2005, 627n).

The Evaluation of CIDA's implementation of its policy on gender equality (2008) highlighted a number of obstacles to CIDA accomplishing its gender equality goals. For example, constant change in leadership at the senior level of CIDA, insufficient promotion of gender equality by "middle management", varying degrees of skill amongst the staff integrating gender equality and contracting out of gender equality work resulting in loss of information and inadequate transfer of knowledge back to the organization (CIDA 2008, 8). In addition, the 2008 CIDA evaluation found that unclear messages on gender equality from inside CIDA resulted in a lack of system checks in the implementation of gender equality and no clear action plan to promote gender equality at the organization (8). Lack of adequate recordkeeping mechanisms to capture the progress of gender equality, scarce funding and few personnel allocated to gender equality work were also obstacles to the achievement of CIDA's gender equality goals (CIDA

2008, 8). Finally, the evaluation reported that with the “[g]ender unit embedded in the policy unit”, the gender unit was alienated from aspects of the project cycle and from the work taking place in the field (CIDA 2008, 8). The evaluators also warned of the possibility of isolating gender equality from the other objectives and sector approaches within CIDA (CIDA 2008, 8).

In 2010, *CIDA’s Gender Equality Action Plan 2010-2013* was published. This document outlined the measures that CIDA is taking to deal with the issues that the 2008 evaluation raised as impediments to the organization’s achievement of its gender equality policy. The objective of CIDA’s (2010) *Action Plan* is to ensure that mechanisms are established to assist the organization to account for gender equality outcomes internally and in partnership with its executing organizations. The *Action Plan* incorporates Canada’s 2008 *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act* which will allow CIDA (2010) “. . . to demonstrate that its work contributes to poverty reduction, takes into account the perspectives of the poor, and is consistent with human rights” (2). Even though CIDA’s (2010) strategy outlines how it will improve the implementation of its gender equality policy and make the delivery of aid more proficient, the focus of the plan weighs heavily on increasing women’s involvement in sectors like agriculture rather than enhancing CIDA’s ability to carry out and to report on its gender equality outcomes. Also, the *Action Plan* introduces new areas of focus such as “. . . the promotion of maternal, newborn, and child health” (CIDA 2010, 2) without taking up the organization’s preexisting gender equality objectives such as increasing women’s participation in decision-making bodies (CIDA 1999, 7). CIDA’s (2010) *Action Plan*’s main concerns and its approach to assisting non-governmental partners to be in line with the strategy seems to revert to earlier WID objectives, which treated women in terms of their maternal roles and as subjects with no agency to choose for themselves their own development priorities. CIDA’s (2010) *Action Plan* does not contain specific information about how the participation of partners will be enhanced in order to achieve

gender equality and there is no mention of how African women's groups especially will be able to play a larger role in the planning process. Finally, CIDA's (2010) *Action Plan* only covers the period from 2010 to 2013 and consequently is limiting because the long-term reach of the organization's policy cannot be deciphered.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the historical background of the construction of women in development discourse. The chapter has shown how women organized themselves during the UN Decade for Women and the women's conferences to get members of the international community to engage women's issues. The chapter has demonstrated how women were constructed under basic needs and the efficiency approaches of WID in terms of their socially constructed gender roles and women's participation in income generation activities. The chapter has also shown how the GAD approach aimed to further women's involvement in development through the examination of the gender relations between women and men and through the application of gender mainstreaming in institutions. In addition, the GAD approach helped to galvanize the representation of women as agents of change and to represent women in terms of their leadership potential. The section on CIDA examined the organization's institutionalization of WID during the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, this section looked at the transformation in CIDA's policies from a focus on equity to the gender equality in the 1990s. The section also examined the change in CIDA's construction of women within its policies from inactive to active agents in the process of mainstreaming and professionalizing gender (Asante 2000, 85). Finally, the chapter briefly analyzed CIDA's recent strategic plan to align its gender equality policy with aid effectiveness objectives by establishing mechanisms and resources to enhance the reporting of gender equality outcomes. The events contributing to the institutionalization of WID and GAD policy amongst

international actors and within CIDA show that many structural challenges remain which slow down the process of advancing gender equality policy. Chapter three will look further into the implications of gender mainstreaming and the professionalization of gender work at CIDA, amongst gender specialists and with women's groups in developing countries.

CHAPTER THREE

How and why change occurred to the construction of African women in the 1990s

In this chapter, I examine how the professionalization of gender and the increased role of African women's organizations in development work has changed the way women in Africa are represented in development policy and practice. I will argue that the work of gender specialists has helped to change the representation of African women in development policy and practice. Initially, the professionalization of gender work perpetuated stereotypes about women from developing countries such that these women were portrayed as being ignorant, conventional and powerless (Mohanty 1988). Also, gender specialists saw themselves as experts who knew what was best for women from developing countries, denying these women the opportunity to participate in decision making about their own development (Parpart 1995). The professionalization of gender work formalized the need to examine development projects with a gender lens by making it the task of specialists within governmental and non-governmental organizations. While the work of gender specialists was in the past mostly driven by the North, the dynamics have changed in the 21st century, as some women from developing countries have acquired this specialized knowledge to participate in the formation of policy; yet many challenges are still present.

Prior to the Women In Development (WID) approach and during the WID approach, women from developing countries were infantilized in development discourse. Since the advent of gender mainstreaming, however, women from developing countries have been constructed as legitimate actors in an effort to channel aid through women's groups and to demonstrate to donors the economic value of investing in women. The momentum about women's role in

development rose as a result of the 1995 Beijing conference. Consequently, gender specialists were able to shape the representation of African women in development discourse because of the high demand for professionals in gender and development planning. However, after Beijing the attention to women's issues decreased, as did the level of activism from women's groups at the international level. The professionalization of gender work has also slowed the momentum on promoting gender equality. I will suggest that the professionalization of gender work has negatively shaped the representation of African women because it has taken power away from grassroots women's groups to shape the policies and programs that affect them.

The chapter will first examine the idea of experts in development planning which is linked to notions of progress, western development and growth. The link will be made between gender experts, WID experts and early notions of development to illustrate that the backdrop of development is based on the idea of western neoliberal advancement, which has a tendency to represent developing countries and their people as being less knowledgeable than experts from the North. In a similar way, WID was based on the premise that development is a linear process that can benefit women; however, WID failed to examine women's unequal status in society (Parpart 1995, 228).

Second, the chapter will discuss the impact of gender mainstreaming at CIDA, particularly how professionalization has shaped gender equality work. To begin, the section will look at the challenges faced by CIDA to achieve gender equality objectives. Next, the section will look at how the work of gender specialists at CIDA has been affected. Finally, the section will discuss some of the recent challenges faced by CIDA in the promotion of its gender equality policy. I examine CIDA's new focus on maternal and child health to understand the implications for gender equality policy. I consider whether CIDA's policy has gone full circle from a focus on the integration of women in development policy under the WID approach to gender equality and

back to a focus on women's maternal roles. I argue that recent changes at CIDA have led to a lack of transparency about gender equality policy, consequently many organizations in Canada are fearful of the repercussions on their advocacy work. I also argue that women's groups in Africa can try to benefit from CIDA's new focus on maternal and child health by using this as an opportunity to promote dialogue about women and gender issues with the international community.

Third, the chapter will study how the professionalization of gender has shaped women in developing countries and African women's groups. This section will analyze whether the changes are donor driven or a result of women's group's efforts. The empowerment of women's organizations has changed the way women in Africa are represented in development policy and practice because members of the international community and donor agencies represent some African women as having agency, which has led to opportunities being created for women and women's groups to play a role in decision-making. These opportunities have helped to build the capacity of women's organizations to implement their own development initiatives, which has given them more credibility in the eyes of international and national bodies. However, women's groups are dependent on funding from aid agencies and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which cannot be counted on to provide funds. Furthermore, all women do not benefit equally from the construction of women as agents of change. A few educated and middle-class African women have gained prestige from the representation of women as agents of change. However, these women are limited in what they can do and say when they enter decision-making forums. Many less affluent women continue to be denied access to decision-making forums because of social and economic barriers. African governments have benefited from women's organizing and they have made some concessions by funding programs that affect

women. However, many governments have used their position to control the activities of women's groups (Tripp 2001).

Gender experts

Jane Parpart (1995) states that the theory of development rests on the belief that developing countries cannot develop without the know-how of development practitioners (221).

Development is based on the supposition that the end goal is achieving “. . . Western definitions of modernity . . .”, which is supposed to occur in a streamlined and cumulative fashion (221).

Development experts believed they were in the position to help developing countries progress based on their scientific and technological knowhow (Parpart 1995, 221). A major criticism of development experts by postmodernists is the way that experts depicted people from the developing countries as lacking in technical knowhow and needing the assistance of experts from developing countries to fill this deficiency (Parpart 1995, 222). Postmodernists argue that the juxtaposition of people from developing countries with development experts has served to strengthen the assumption that donor agencies and development specialists from the North are more knowledgeable than people from developing countries (Parpart 1995, 222). They have also argued that the comparison between developed and developing countries has helped to exclude people from developing countries from the planning process and from participating in the creation of their own definitions of development (Parpart 1995, 222).

Even though advocates of WID theory helped to integrate women in development by promoting women's participation in income generating initiatives as discussed in Chapter Two, WID was criticized because its basic premise rested on development by modernization, which failed to critically examine the patriarchal system underlying governments (Parpart 1995, 227-8). Parpart (1995) argues that WID proponents helped to reassert uneven representations of women

from developing countries by representing women as “‘backward, premodern beings,’ with no agenda of their own, tied to traditional ways of thinking and acting” (228). The construction of women from developing countries as being in need of assistance warranted the involvement of donor agencies who portrayed issues involving women’s as “. . . technical problems requiring a technical (usually Northern) answer” (Parpart 1995, 229). For example, women entered the development debate in terms of population studies because development experts believed that unregulated population increase could reverse the effects of economic development and instead of supporting the economy, government funding paid for social services (Kabeer 1994, 3). The population issue shaped development planning by promoting family planning programs targeted at women and designed to reduce the birth rate. Women were represented as both the problem and the solution in the population issue. Fear of overpopulation led the international community to finance research on fertility rates, which revealed that “. . . the improvement of education and employment opportunities for women; and increasing women’s participation in public life and decision-making” reduced fertility (Young 1993, 23). However, policy makers applied a “technical solution” to the problem of overpopulation as the “. . . promotion of contraceptives would bring down high birth rates faster and more cost-effectively than providing schooling or employment or raising women’s status” (Young 1993, 11).

According to Parpart (1995), the solutions for development were always presented as being in the possession of Northern development experts, which implied that development could only be achieved with the help of experts from developed countries (229). In addition, development experts often constructed indigenous knowledge and ways of problem solving as conventional approaches and a threat to achieving modern development (Parpart 1995, 229). Women from developing countries were sometimes represented by development experts as lacking agency to choose for themselves what was best (Parpart 1995, 230). Another implication

was “. . . the tendency to homogenize Third World women’s condition, and to see all Third World women as poor and ignorant, [which] has also undermined belief in the capacity of Southern development expertise, especially among women” (de Boef et al. 1993 and Wiltshire 1988 in Parpart 1995, 230). Advocates of the WID theory are criticized because they alleged to know best about the concerns of women from developing countries and how to solve their problems (Parpart 1995, 230). Also, the “technical language” used by WID advocates and the complex processes had the tendency to exclude some women from developing countries involved in development planning and emphasized the expertise of donor partners (Parpart 1995, 230).

With the continued bureaucratization of gender planning, partnerships between aid agencies, international consultants, developing country governments and women’s groups often corresponded to the unequal balance of power that characterized the relationships under WID. According to Standing (2007), the industry of gender and development planning is determined by the aid agencies who fund gender initiatives, which results in gender mainstreaming being “. . . an externally imposed (and in parts of the bureaucracy resented and not understood) requirement for continuing support” (Standing 2007, 103). In addition, the development industry is controlled by a group of “elites” who influence both the “. . . language and resources . . .” (Standing 2007, 103). Furthermore, less influential countries are governed and humiliated because they do not embrace the idea of gender equality in the same way as defined by the donors (Standing 2007, 103). The decision makers and civil society groups from the developing country do not play a central role in gender mainstreaming process and when they are included, there are few mechanisms in place to ensure that the people who execute the project are held responsible (Standing 2007, 103-104). In many developing countries, the lack of checks and balances in place to assist ordinary citizens means that people on the margins are unable to hold their representatives responsible (Standing 2007, 104).

Standing (2007) argues that one of the consequences of gender mainstreaming has been “depoliticization” which occurs when “. . . the demand for ‘industrial’ or mass production models of gender mainstreaming in the form of toolkits and checklists grows” (Standing 2007, 104). For example, after the 1995 Beijing conference there was a surge in demand for gender specialists who were needed to implement the goals of the conference’s agreement; but many academics and professionals argued that increasing the professionalization of gender led to stagnation in the advancement of gender equality (Porter and Verghese 1999, 131; Rathgeber 2005, 589). According to Standing (2007), “[t]his in turn produces a bigger industry of gender professionals, with careers dependent upon a steady demand, from development agencies in particular, for their services” (104). Moreover, gender is no longer a political process, as it has become an administrative function to suit the needs of government and to manage groups of people and funding (Standing 2007, 104). Standing (2007) believes that advocates of gender are mistaken by depending on government to promote gender equality because bureaucracies cannot be relied on to be the instigators of political change (105). Standing (2007) suggests that the gender mainstreaming process has become a tool of governance which is used to closely monitor the actions of developing country governments rather than to encourage them to pursue goals which are realistic, within their mandates and likely to change the experience of women using these services (105). The following section examines the process of professionalizing gender equality policy at CIDA.

The professionalization of gender at CIDA

The 1995 Beijing conference signaled the professionalization of gender work to a scale never before imagined. Beijing institutionalized gender analysis and promoted the industry around gender work. According to Ahikire (2007), “Beijing ushered in a demand for ‘gender experts’,

‘gender consultants’ and ‘gender specialists’” (41). However, despite all this attention leading up to the 1995 Beijing Conference and resulting from the agreements signed, some authors have argued that gender and feminist activism lulled and reached a plateau after achieving these objectives. The purpose of this section is to discuss how the professionalization of gender has shaped gender equality work at CIDA by examining the challenges to achieving gender equality objectives in gender mainstreaming. This section will also look at how gender mainstreaming has affected the work of gender specialists by drawing on interviews conducted with professionals working at CIDA and with Canadian NGOs. Lastly, the section analyses how the professionalization of gender at CIDA has shaped women in developing countries and African women’s engagement with development.

CIDA developed its policies on women and gender from its initial policy in 1976 until the publication of its most renowned policy on gender equality in 1999. According to *CIDA’s Policy on Gender Equality* (1999), “[g]ender equality must be considered as an integral part of all CIDA policies, programs and projects” (8). In the *Evaluation of CIDA’s Implementation of its Policy on Gender Equality* (2008), CIDA is described as a world leader in gender equality especially in the areas of “policy dialogue and advocacy” (20). For instance, CIDA is recognized for the high quality and capacity of its team of gender equality specialists, its efforts to integrate gender equality knowledge in the project planning process, and the range in experience of CIDA’s gender equality professionals (CIDA 2008, 20). CIDA is also known for its gender equality capacity in terms of its resources for the analysis of gender and gender mainstreaming techniques in the design and execution of initiatives (CIDA 2008, 21). The rest of this section looks at the issues identified in CIDA’s 2008 evaluation as being obstacles to the successful mainstreaming of gender at CIDA.

The evaluation of CIDA's Gender Equality Policy unearthed many of the structural problems involved in implementing a gender equality strategy. For example, many times in initiatives targeted at gender equality, "... actions to promote GE [gender equality] appear to be an "add-on" to the design and planning that is not carried through, or not fully integrated into implementation" (CIDA 2008, 9). Many of the organizations coordinating the projects found it challenging to include aspects of gender equality in the preliminary stage of the projects (CIDA 2008, 9). Consequently it was difficult for them to include gender in the application stage and to comment on gender in the project's outcomes (CIDA 2008, 9). The organizations executing projects were able to demonstrate results for their gender initiatives, but these organizations had a difficult time "... analyzing and presenting broader GE outcomes at the *macro* or *meso* levels" (CIDA 2008, 9). In addition, the organizations executing gender equality projects found that the lack of "... baseline data and gender disaggregated information" made it difficult to demonstrate progress in gender equality goals (CIDA 2008, 9).

The gender equality outcome that occurred most frequently when CIDA's projects were evaluated was the goal of "... increasing women's access to resources and benefits" (CIDA 2008, 14). For instance, women gained directly from "[i]nvestments in basic human needs", even though basic needs are not considered to be representative of gender equality (14). The other gender equality outcomes with high indicators in CIDA's projects were "... improving women's livelihoods and control over productive assets", in "strengthening institutional capacity" and in "increasing access by women to appropriate services for their well-being" (CIDA 2008, 14). The implementation of gender equality policies was the objective with the least "... documented evidence of success . . ." (CIDA 2008, 14). The evaluation suggests that the promotion of gender equality policy was difficult to account for in CIDA funded programs

because these outcomes could not be maintained in the long-term and they were not “. . . anchored in strategic/structural changes in favor of greater gender equality” (CIDA 2008, 14).

Gender professionalization has led to a greater emphasis on gender analysis and the incorporation of gender equality targets in development programs. However, not all projects have this emphasis. The evaluation of CIDA’s (2008) gender equality projects found that “. . . a significant portion (one quarter) of directive and responsive investments do not include gender analysis at the design and planning stages, and that of those which do, only 53 percent meet at least half of the quality criteria suggested by the GE Policy itself” (10). The evaluation showed that gender analysis was more widespread for projects where CIDA was in charge of the planning than for projects that were managed by executing organizations (CIDA 2008, 10). However, even when projects were implemented by CIDA, gender outcomes sometimes resulted in “. . . activities that are carried out as an autonomous component of the project, rather than integrated throughout” (CIDA 2008, 10). In addition, funding applications from multilateral organizations, which get a significant portion of gender equality funds, were less apt to incorporate gender analysis compared to the applications from NGOs in Canada (CIDA 2008, 10). The evaluation revealed that there are insufficient monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure that institutions receiving core funding from CIDA are held accountable for the implementation of gender outcomes (CIDA 2008, 10-11). In addition, the change to “program-based approaches” has made it more difficult to mainstream gender because of the promotion of gender equality measures that do not adequately take up “. . . men’s roles and responsibilities in gender relations” which could sufficiently hamper the advancement of gender equality (CIDA 2008, 19).

Some authors have argued that the promotion of CIDA’s gender equality policy so far has been dependent on the hard work of employees concerned with gender and women’s issues; but if gender equality policy is to lead to lasting change there needs to be systemic and sustainable

application of CIDA's gender equality policy (Hendriks 2005, 629 and Pinto 2010, 40).

According to Pinto (2010) despite CIDA's comprehensive strategy on gender equality policy, several factors hamper the successful execution of the policy such as “. . . insufficiently strong political will, the lack of common vision of gender equality, insufficient human and financial resources and an inadequate system of accountability” (40). The subsequent section examines the challenges faced by gender professionals, working at CIDA and in Canadian NGOs, to promote gender equality within their respective organizations. This section also analyzes the ways that gender professionals negotiate the obstacles they encounter.

The experience of gender professionals trying to influence the development agenda

The professionalization of gender has put added pressure on gender specialists at CIDA to oversee more and varying projects and to work under tighter work constraints. According to the evaluation of CIDA's gender equality policy, despite CIDA's objective to be a leader in the promotion of gender equality, “[i]n the view of CIDA professional staff and managers, however, support for GE has been inconsistent at the highest levels of CIDA and the Government of Canada's International Development portfolio. This lack of consistent support is seen to have weakened corporate resolve in the pursuit of GE” (CIDA 2008, 5). Another problem highlighted by the evaluation was the low profile that was accorded to Gender Equality policy in the CIDA's daily activities, which resulted in the employees “. . . having limited confidence in their ability to apply its directives and requirements” (CIDA 2008, 5).

The evaluation uncovered a number of challenges to CIDA achieving its gender equality policy which directly impact the work of gender specialists such as: the concern that gender specialists perform numerous jobs at the same time resulting in specialists having to juggle demands and workloads, inadequate checks in the system to ensure the implementation of gender

equality and not enough employees and funding assigned to gender equality initiatives (CIDA 2008, 8). Finally, the evaluation identified the lack of uniform statements on gender equality and not having a comprehensive plan for promoting gender equality as impediments to the advancement of gender equality goals at CIDA (CIDA 2008, 8). To attest to the challenging work environment, one Gender Equality Specialist at CIDA described how proposals sometimes come in late in the planning process, at which point, Gender Equality Specialists can not make changes to the project because the project is already in its final stages (Interview, January 7, 2010).

Gender specialists can sometimes influence gender equality measures by making sure that gender issues are addressed in proposals. One Gender Equality Specialist at CIDA believed that gender specialists have the opportunity to shape the development plans of countries and to help set the agenda (Interview, January 7, 2010). However, according to another Gender Equality Specialist at CIDA, gender specialists are not held accountable for gender equality goals in a project. Gender Equality Specialists can document the advice they give to Project Managers, to ensure that if the manager changes, the advice can still be followed up on (Interview, January 6, 2010). However, Gender Specialists often do not have sufficient power to ensure that gender is considered in a project or program. This problem may be heightened by communication issues, which may come up when people of different skill levels and backgrounds work together. One Gender Specialist at CIDA commented that keeping the lines of communication open between Project Officers and Gender Equality Specialists was difficult (Interview, January 5, 2010). This Gender Equality Specialist also mentioned that it was difficult to ensure that Project Officers considered gender equality in the main objectives of the project (Interview, January 5, 2010). In addition, if Gender Specialists are expected to only provide expert advice on gender, then their comments on other aspects of the proposal may not be welcome.

It can be difficult for gender specialists to integrate gender in an initiative when financial resources have not been allocated to gender equality goals. One Gender Specialist at CIDA believed that to ensure that gender objectives are considered in a project, the budget should be sensitive to gender equality goals and sufficient funds should be available in the budget for gender equality activities (Interview, January 6, 2010). However, the repercussions for not promoting gender equality objectives are quite low (Interview with Gender Equality Specialist, January 6, 2010). According to this Gender Equality Specialist, at CIDA Gender Equality Specialists must sign off on a Gender Equality assessment form, which accompanies the project and is necessary for the project to be approved (Interview, January 6, 2010). This is one occasion where Gender Equality Specialists can negotiate to get gender issues in the statement of results and they may also try to get resources allocated to gender equality in the proposal's budget (Interview, January 6, 2010). Although, sometimes Gender Equality Specialists may not have seen the project or even been consulted at the beginning of the planning stage; making it difficult for them to integrate gender objectives (Interview, January 6, 2010).

Hendriks (2005) interviewed gender professionals working for governmental and non-governmental organizations in Canada in 2001 and discovered that Gender and Development, "GAD" is still a small component of development initiatives and that gender is often a contentious issue within certain organizations (620-621). Gender mainstreaming is also undermined when organizations make "... non-influential and non-threatening staff" responsible for gender (Hendriks 2005, 621). For instance, Hendriks' (2005) interview with a Research Officer at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) discovered that sometimes the job of integrating gender in projects was delegated to a student doing a placement at the organization (622). Gender specialists in Canadian institutions face similar challenges to integrate gender, as do women in some African countries who are trying to access decision-

making initiatives. For example, Hendriks (2005) found that although some gender professionals have the ability to influence development initiatives, “. . . an “old boys’ network” is alive and well in mainstream development organizations (which maintains hegemonic control of most decision-making arenas)” (622). Gender professionals are barred from joining these exclusive unofficial associations because they are restricted to male professionals and most of the gender professionals are women (Hendriks 2005, 622).

According to Hendriks (2005), gender mainstreaming has not helped to advance gender equality goals because there are still “. . . gendered power structures that exist within development processes” (622). It is not enough that projects have gender components because the planning process is based on a patriarchal system, which shapes the kind of issues that are addressed in the process of mainstreaming gender (Hendriks 2005, 622). One Project Officer from the non-profit sector made the case that in their organization, gender mainstreaming is about obtaining equal representation for women and men, but this is problematic because it does not examine the systemic barriers that make it difficult for women to be equal players in the planning process (Hendriks 2005, 622). Hendriks (2005) points out that “[t]hese institutional politics and power structures often contribute to an organizational culture in which gender issues are intentionally ignored, dismissed, or rejected” (622).

Still, gender specialists continue to work within the power structures of their institution to promote gender goals. There are several entry points that can be used by Gender Equality Specialists at CIDA to make gender an important element of the project. For example, Gender Equality Specialists can set targets for the number of positions that women should hold (Interview with CIDA Gender Equality Specialist, January 6, 2010). In addition, they can try to involve women’s ministries and other organizations when there are provisions in the project to consult with the public (Interview with CIDA Gender Equality Specialist, January 6, 2010).

There are also “[i]nformal strategies” that gender professionals can employ to get around restrictive institutional practices (Hendriks 2005, 624). One way gender specialists achieved their objectives was to avoid using “feminist” terms by using less offending gender mainstreaming vocabulary (Hendriks 2005, 624). However, Hendriks (2005) warns that this practice “. . . potentially disengages gender equality theory and practice from practitioners feminist principles and convictions” (625). Hendriks (2005) believes that this practice may result in gender professionals contributing to “. . . the inconsistency and ambiguity of gender terminology” (626). In addition, this approach to depoliticize gender work, “. . . may actually diminish, or possibly even destroy, the linkages between GAD and feminism” (Hendriks 2005, 626).

Another approach used by the gender professionals in Hendriks’ (2005) research was to “. . . manipulate gender equality into informal conversations with key individuals who hold decision-making power in mainstream development organizations” (626). Gender professionals will also try to forge relationships with influential members of their organization to advocate for gender equality goals (Hendriks 2005, 626). Hendriks (2005) argues that there is a chance that the covert approaches used by gender professionals to ensure that gender issues are addressed could aid in the cooptation of the feminist agenda and of gender professionals who identify as feminists (627).

Gender practitioners also employ “instrumentalist arguments” to promote gender using “. . . economic growth and market efficiency” rationales (Hendriks 2005, 627). One of the CIDA Project Officers in Hendriks’ (2005) research said that they promoted gender equality objectives using language that spoke to the actors who do not buy into gender equality work (627). One of the gender professionals working for an NGO who was interviewed for my research also spoke about the strategic use of cost-effective arguments to promote a project targeted at women to CIDA in order to secure funding (Interview, December 17, 2009).

Hendriks (2005) argues that gender professionals make a trade off when they choose to promote gender equality based on economic arguments as it could lead to the neglect of gender equality objectives in development practice (Hendriks 2005, 628). Although Hendriks' (2005) interviews with gender professionals revealed several ways that gender professionals use their influence to promote gender equality, at the same time there is a problem with relying on "individual" efforts rather than on systemic approaches which are necessary to achieve gender equality goals in the long run (629). Hendriks (2005) warns that "[i]ndividual disengagement is highly likely given that gender mainstreaming processes operate within development structures that are neither responsible nor accountable to gender equality goals" (629).

The gender professionals in my study were concerned that their work was undervalued and they found it difficult for their organization to integrate gender equality into projects. One gender professional working for an NGO said that much of the responsibility for implementing gender equality measures is on the gender specialist because many organizations simply do not have the capacity or trained staff to do this work (Interview, December 17, 2009). This gender professional believed that it was a challenge to get everyone at the organization to understand that they also need to develop an understanding of gender issues for the policy to be effective (Interview, December 17, 2009). A Gender Equality Specialist from CIDA found that her colleagues did not understand what her role as a gender expert involved (Interview, January 7, 2010). This Gender Equality Specialist explained that it was difficult to translate what it meant to do gender analysis to her co-workers (Interview, January 7, 2010). Some of the Gender Specialists mentioned that they did not feel that they had enough training to do their work. According to one Gender Equality Specialist at CIDA, new graduates especially, lack the skills to do gender work (Interview, January 5, 2010).

Even though women's groups in developing countries are required to adopt gender mainstreaming in their activities as a condition for financial support, in Canada not all of the NGOs that are funded by CIDA have developed comprehensive gender strategies. "According to recent surveys of a small sample of organizations, 88% of CCIC [Canadian Council for International Co-operation] members and 50% of AQOCI [Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale] members have adopted gender policies" (Pinto 2008 in Pinto 2010, 43). As well, the number of Canadian NGO initiatives that have a direct impact on women has been slowly decreasing due to "... the adoption of the cross-cutting approach and, more recently, the sectoral concentration requirement" (Pinto 2010, 43). Gender mainstreaming has resulted in a decline in the number of projects that focus solely on women as direct recipients. According to Pinto (2010), "[i]t is interesting to note that of all the organizations receiving partnership funding from CIDA, only three work exclusively on women's rights and gender equality" (43). Although some Canadian organizations that are funded by CIDA have a gender strategy, some of these organizations lag behind in putting these strategies into practice. Pinto (2010) notes that "[a] large proportion of the organizations have only superficially integrated gender into their work" and many organizations do not have the expertise and resources to update their gender equality policies (43). Pinto (2010) argues that an organization's ability to integrate gender is dependent on the work of gender professionals but that relying on personnel can lead to an ineffective gender strategy because of insufficient support from within the organization, lack of systems to integrate gender and inadequate checks to ensure that gender is being mainstreamed (43).

Even by professionalizing the work of gender specialists, they are not always equipped to do their jobs and they work in difficult environments where the organization or the other staff members may have a negative attitude towards integrating gender. Hendriks' (2005) interviews

with gender professionals revealed a lack of support for feminist perspectives within development organizations as staff who identify with feminist views could feel “ . . . isolated, mocked, and/or threatened” and even fear that they may lose their jobs for promoting feminist issues (622). Hendriks (2005) argues that the more GAD is institutionalized the more it becomes detached from feminist goals and the less advocates of GAD question the status quo (622-623). In addition to gender professionals using direct and indirect approaches to promote gender equality issues, gender professionals also need to liaise with women’s organizations; however, women’s organizations have been mindful of developing ties that are too close to development institutions for fear of having their feminist agenda taken over (Hendriks 2005, 630-631). Hendriks (2005) suggests that for gender professionals to keep gender equality issues relevant in their organizations they must engage with women’s organizations because “[i]t is through these relationships of co-operative conflict that GAD can become less about planning, monitoring, and checklists and more about political struggle and critical analysis” (631).

This account of the challenges faced by gender specialists working within Canadian institutions suggests that little change has occurred in gender and development planning because of the constraints faced by gender professionals in their work. By the same token, this implies that gender mainstreaming has not significantly changed the representation of African women in development even though the study of gender has been professionalized. In the next section, I briefly examine the implications of CIDA’s engagement with gender mainstreaming, as this will be discussed further in the fourth chapter.

CIDA’s engagement with gender mainstreaming

According to CIDA’s (1999) gender equality policy, “[p]romoting the equal participation of women as agents of change in economic, social and political processes is essential to achieving

gender equality” (9). CIDA’s (1999) policy on gender aims to let women make their own choices about their objectives (9); however, gender mainstreaming works to take women’s choices away by streamlining development objectives because these choices have been chosen and shaped by aid donors according to their agendas. Hales (2007) praises CIDA for proposing to work in collaboration with women from developing countries to achieve their objectives (159). However, CIDA’s mandate is inadequate because such collaboration is often complex and typified by unequal relations between the aid agency and the developing country participant (Sadli and Porter 1999 in Hales 2007, 159).

Since 2009, CIDA has focused on three thematic priorities: “increased food security”, “securing the future of children and youth” and “stimulating sustainable economic growth” (CIDA 2009). At the same time, “equality between women and men or gender equality” continues to be a crosscutting theme at CIDA (CIDA 2011a). CIDA has also given much attention to the “Muskoka Initiative, to improve maternal, newborn and child health in developing countries and reduce the number of preventable deaths” as announced by the Canadian government in June 2010 (CIDA 2011c). The change in CIDA’s thematic priorities has meant that women and gender issues have become marginalized compared to CIDA’s focus on children and youth. Canada’s attempt to be one of the first governments to officially recognize the necessity of maternal and child health has not made a good impression on many actors, especially representatives from the NGO community (Joanna Kerr in Agrell 2010, Caplan 2010). The Harper Conservative government has been criticized for its focus on women solely in their role as mothers rather than a holistic approach to ensure that all women have full access to reproductive healthcare (Joanna Kerr in Agrell 2010; Cawthorne 2010). Increasingly, Canada lags behind in gender equality issues and the Conservative government has steadily withdrawn its support from women’s organizations (Joanna Kerr in Agrell 2010). Evidence of the Conservative

government's regression from the promotion of gender equality was demonstrated when they confirmed that reproductive health rights such as abortion would not be part of their strategy on maternal and child health (Clark 2010).

It seems as if gender and development planning has come full circle. Recently CIDA, an agency that was once a reputed leader in gender equality policy announced its focus on the issue of maternal and child health, which took us back in time to the era of WID and basic needs approaches. Some members of the Canadian NGO community have argued that CIDA is no longer playing the critical role it once occupied in gender equality policy work; instead CIDA has settled for conventional development work. According to the past President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) and a member of the McLeod Group, Betty Plewes and Joanna Kerr, CEO of ActionAid International (2010), “[w]hereas CIDA used to fund a wide variety of projects aimed at promoting women’s rights and strengthening women’s organizations, it increasingly focuses on service delivery”. There is evidence that the importance CIDA gives to the promotion of gender equality has changed as some countries that were once financed by CIDA, such as Pakistan and Kenya will no longer receive financial support for women and gender equality initiatives (Plewes and Kerr, 2010). In addition, a Canadian NGO that did important work to promote gender equality had its funding withdrawn by CIDA. In May 2010, CIDA cut funding to Match International because CIDA believed that the organization could not show how it achieved certain results (CBC News 2010). The Executive Director of Match International, Kim Bulger said that CIDA’s decision was based on political grounds and the need to show the Auditor General that it was handling Canada’s aid efficiently (CBC News 2010). Match International was supported by CIDA since 1976 (CIDA 1989); however, the organization fell victim to political indecisiveness and lack of policy coherence at CIDA. This lack of focus and direction has unfortunately caught up with NGOs like

Match International, as CIDA is no longer willing to fund organizations that cannot provide concrete results to fulfill its reporting requirements.

Recent media coverage demonstrates CIDA's inconsistent policy on gender equality. According to Plewes and Kerr (2010), Canadian NGOs that implement and execute CIDA's programs have felt the effect of CIDA's lack of focus. Some organizations have been advised by CIDA staff to not emphasize gender equality in their funding applications if they want to ensure that their initiative is financed (Plewes and Kerr, 2010). CIDA has sent mixed messages to organizations perusing funding for gender equality. For example, "[o]ne organization was told that 'CIDA can no longer support initiatives that focus on women's leadership . . .'" (Plewes and Kerr, 2010). However, projects which address ". . . violence against women can still get approved" (Plewes and Kerr, 2010). On the one hand, CIDA is leading the way in the promotion of maternal and child health in the international community. On the other hand, CIDA's policy on gender equality is under crisis as what happens in practice no longer aligns with CIDA's policy mandate. Plewes and Kerr (2010) explain:

"[t]he policy process has gone underground. We learn of policy changes through press releases, speeches and off-the-record conversations. The space for debate and discussion has shrunk. Organizations that critique policy changes fear their funding will be cut".

A change in CIDA's aid policy may not have positive outcomes for women's groups in Africa. CIDA's partnership branch, which administers most of Canada's aid package and distributes funding through Canadian non-profit organizations, has experienced cuts to its budget (Westhead 2012). While commenting on the 2012 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on Canada's development assistance, Brian Tomlinson, past official of CCIC, said that ". . . the partnership branch has been cut this year by about 15 percent. The geographic branch [which administers Canada's aid amongst governments] will be cut by 12 per cent over three years" (Westhead 2012). The result is that 2012 will be the first year that CIDA

may not request project applications because of budget constraints (Tomlinson in Westhead 2012). According to the 2012 OECD report on Canada's development assistance, Canada became a more efficient donor because it reduced the number of countries, which benefited from its aid from 100 countries in 2007 to just 48 countries in 2010 (Westhead 2012). However, "... Canada's narrowed focus on 20 countries means that long-time aid projects in about 10 African nations have been cancelled" (Tomlinson in Westhead 2012). In addition, since 2010 Canadian non-profit organizations have struggled under CIDA's current aid strategy, which allocates funding on a project basis because many non-profit organizations do not have budgets to employ personnel to contribute to the planning process every few months, when there is a request for proposals (Tomlinson in Westhead 2012). African women's groups may be affected because their Canadian NGO partners do not have the resources to compete in the funding application process. Also, the recent defunding of certain Canadian NGOs for political reasons has affected women's groups in Africa. For example, the Conservative government's decision to not renew funding to Kairos, a Canadian NGO, on the basis that it advocates for Palestinians has also meant that other programs supported by the organization such as "a human-rights NGO in eastern Congo for a program training women . . ." will not be funded (Caplan 2010).

The changes in CIDA's approach to gender equality have resulted in a lack of policy coherence and a lack of transparency in how CIDA operates. Canadian NGOs and developing country partners have less trust in CIDA and they are cautious in how they present gender initiatives in proposals in order not to jeopardize their funding. Some authors have argued that this fear has promoted censorship because some organizations are afraid that they will be defunded on the basis of their advocacy work (Joanna Kerr in Agrell, 2010). Similar to early WID approaches, the Canadian government's new focus on maternal and child health risks sidestepping crucial issues by applying a quick fix approach to complex development problems.

At best this renewed engagement with maternal and child health issues can help to bring the focus back to women and encourage African women's organizations and Canadian NGOs to renew their resolve to hold their governments and the international community accountable for gender equality policy.

Recent events at CIDA such as the withdrawal of funding from Canadian NGOs suggest that gender increasingly occupies a lower priority on CIDA's agenda. The women's movement could be affected because the shift in CIDA's focus could potentially destabilize sources of funding. Other development issues such as maternal and child health seem to be taking CIDA's attention away from its commitment to the promotion of gender equality which could jeopardize CIDA's commitment to gender mainstreaming. According to Smillie (2010), some people consider this latest emphasis by CIDA to be based on "... a narrow domestic agenda ...". There is nothing new about CIDA's decision to focus on maternal and child health as "these two items are pillars of the UN's Millennium Development Goals, and maternal health has been a priority for many countries for many years" (Smillie 2010).

CIDA's promotion of gender equality could suffer if the organization continues to prioritize an economical approach in order to make aid more effective (Hales 2007, 160). Many NGOs and development practitioners are not optimistic about CIDA's role in the promotion of gender equality. In the last few years, CIDA has lowered or halted funding to some Canadian NGOs but, at the same time CIDA has began "... new initiatives and new priorities ..." that seem to contradict the closing of the former programs (Smillie 2010). These recent events highlight some of the ongoing challenges faced by women's organizations despite the professionalization of gender. The international community's initial support of women's groups may disappear and women's groups may have to deal with unstable governments and weak economies while the international community's attention moves to the next issue on their agenda.

Women's groups face an uncertain future in the present climate of aid. They will have to negotiate their position with aid donors and governments in the international community. In the section that follows, I look at how gender mainstreaming has shaped women in developing countries and African women's groups' engagement with the development industry.

Professionalization and women in developing countries

This section discusses the ways that women in developing countries are represented by development professionals in this era of gender mainstreaming and suggests that many of the constructions that existed under WID approaches also underlie the representations of African women in development today. I first analyze the ideas behind the representation of women as agents of change in gender mainstreaming. Second, I look at the weaknesses in the gender mainstreaming process.

In this framework of professionalization where aid donors, northern NGOs and developing country women's groups paths intersect, women from developing countries are constructed as laudable recipients of development aid based on the issues they champion (Bulbeck 2007, 60). The professionalization of gender has had negative implications for the relationships between gender professionals in developed countries and gender professionals working in developing country organizations, as rather than dictating to women in the South what will be good for them as it was conducted under WID, the onus now seems to be on women's groups from the South to prove why the issues they champion ought to receive development aid (Bulbeck 2007, 60). Gender professionals from developing countries armed with their gender expertise, tools and resources now have the skills to write the funding applications using the language that gender professionals in developed countries have promoted. However, with all the advancements resulting from the professionalization of gender, the international community is

still not connecting the dots and linking women's continued unequal position in society to structural issues. The international community is re-victimizing women from developing countries by choosing to ignore the impact of structural issues, which continue to place women on the margins of society. International organizations believe that solutions such as literacy, vaccination and nutrition programs ought to solve women's problems and set them on their way and when the projects do not work they blame lack of education as the reason for their failure (King & Mason 2001 in Bulbeck 2007, 62). Not much has changed under the professionalization of gender, new roles may have been created for women to participate in decision-making bodies but, these roles continue to be based on women's "... role as nurturers, wives and mothers" (Bulbeck 2007, 64).

Bulbeck (2007) argues that feminist issues from developed countries are imposed on women's organizations in developing countries as a condition for receiving aid (64). Feminist groups from developed countries may judge women's groups from developing countries on the presumption that feminist goals can only be achieved when women's groups are organized from the grassroots, promote the equal participation and representation of all women in the society and they are free of state management (Bulbeck 2007, 66). This construction of what a developing country feminist organization ought to look like may lead to the exclusion of some women's groups from certain funding, as the focus may be to work exclusively with organizations that espouse feminist ideals. However, these organizations may not represent the perspectives of the majority of women in the society and they may not be well connected to the other women's groups in the country (Hrycak 2006 and Wesoky 2002 in Bulbeck 2007, 66-67). The next section looks at how gender mainstreaming deals with the different identities and realities that separate women.

Wood (2005) argues that in the process of mainstreaming gender, the individual identities of women are erased and women are treated as a uniform group (594). The objective of gender mainstreaming is to make the integration of gender in development practice more consistent across development organizations (Wood 2005, 594). Consequently, “. . . approaches to gender mainstreaming are both homogenized and homogenizing of women’s experience at some level simply because they have been so broadly institutionalized” (Wood 2005, 595).

The process of “[g]ender training” contributes to the tendency to see women’s separate and distinct identities as a uniform by restricting the situations in which difference can be examined to such categories as “. . . race, class, ethnicity and other sources of inequality . . .” (Wood 2005, 596). Wood (2005) argues that gender mainstreaming homogenizes women’s identities by not allowing the “local” context to influence the “. . . theoretical framework of gender analysis . . .” (597). For example, “. . . the most common use of case studies is to demonstrate that women are the same; they are presented as facing similar situations in different places and behaving in more or less the same way when confronted by those situations . . .” (Wood 2005, 598). Another consequence of conflating women’s experiences has been the construction of the image of the stereotypical developing country woman (Mohanty 2003, 40 in Wood 2005, 599). This conceptualization of women from developing countries as conventional and undermined fails to recognize the differences amongst women from developing countries (Mendoza 2002, 301 in Wood 2005, 599).

There is a dilemma in recognizing difference in gender mainstreaming because it makes it more difficult to make connections between women from different backgrounds. However, by noting difference development practitioners can ensure that they do not treat women from developing countries as one uniform group irrespective of their local contexts, histories and realities (Wood 2005, 600). According to Wood (2005), the notion of recognizing differences has

been problematic among feminists because of their thinking that “. . . solidarity is an unchanging state achieved without human thought or action . . .” (600). Feminists see the recognition of difference as an obstacle to building partnerships with women from different backgrounds (Wood 2005, 600). Another point made by Wood (2005) is that the examination of difference in gender mainstreaming is avoided because gender professionals do not have access to specific information about the contexts and communities they are working on (600). Also, some gender professionals are against methods such as the “social relations approach” because they believe the approach’s focus on analyzing multiple realities and identities, which can slow down the advancement of gender equality goals (March, C. et al. 1999, 118 in Wood 2005, 600). The view by some gender professionals that there is insufficient data available to capture local realities is partly driven by the need to make knowledge about women from developing countries accessible for consumption by the development industry. Consequently, the marketing of information about women’s experiences in developing countries leads to the conflation of women’s identities and realities because development organizations are not willing to invest in this endeavor.

In addition, the aim of mainstreaming gender is to make it easy to assess for gender and to reduce time and expenses to process gender, “[h]owever, an understanding of gender issues from a feminist perspective introduces questions of power, control of resources, and conflict, which are potentially challenging and certainly difficult to deal with” (Harrison 1997, 62). Harrison (1997) explains how gender mainstreaming is contradictory because the streamlining of gender does not take into account that gender relations are constantly evolving and shaped by various factors, which is not practical for the way organizations carry out gender mainstreaming (62). According to Harrison (1997), “[i]n the course of such simplification, recognition of the potentially contentious and inherently political (as opposed to technical) aspects of gender relations is usually the first to go” (62).

Similarly, gender mainstreaming has permitted more data to be gathered about women and gender issues in developing countries; however, Harrison (1997) describes how much of this information is never utilized effectively (63). This suggests that aid donors do not pay attention to knowledge that questions the status quo and what they want is statistics to keep the development industry going (Goetz 1994 in Harrison 1997, 63). In the same way as development experts under WID assumed that women in developing countries want to achieve development according to western standards and based on neoliberal principles, projects that mainstream gender presume that the stakeholders involved have the same goals and objectives (Harrison 1997, 63; Wood 2005, 601). Consequently, “[g]ender mainstreaming that does not take difference seriously, and thereby produces a ‘one-size fits all’ approach, will similarly equate gender equality with what we strive to achieve in the North; that is, ‘integration into capitalist markets, the welfare state, literacy, and skill-based empowerment as the solution for women’s oppression’” (Bergeron 2004, 13 in Wood 2005, 601). Likewise, the construction of women as agents of change works in tandem with gender mainstreaming to conflate and dictate women’s interests and desires under the cover of representing women as prominent leaders. This works to take the attention away from structural inequalities that affect women and prevents the questioning of unequal power relations that shape women’s lives.

African women’s engagement with development

This section aims to analyze the effect that the professionalization of gender has had on the women’s movement in Africa. To begin, the section discusses the impact of the professionalization of gender on women’s groups. The section looks at the long-term implications of the promotion of gender equality through the process of gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, the role of the state is examined in relation to women’s groups trying to advance

gender equality. The section looks at women's groups' relationships with state governments and the challenges that accompany this collaboration. For example, women's groups must negotiate their independence in order to remain politically active and be able to hold their governments accountable. The professionalization of gender has been a bittersweet success for many women's groups. The women's movement has experienced strain as gender is professionalized and as their leaders move into positions in government and at the international level. Consequently, women's groups must negotiate how they deal with their newfound success. The dilemma for women's groups will be finding a balance between advocating for women's strategic interests and having their agenda co-opted by governments.

The implications of professionalizing gender for the African women's movement

The professionalization of gender has helped to further women's group's ability to advocate for change to women's statuses; however, the professionalization of gender has also led to many drawbacks for women's groups and women in Africa. According to Ahikire (2008), there have been much advancement in the field of gender equality since the 1995 Beijing conference, which enabled the professionalization of gender; however,

“ . . . this development has in a sense retarded the thinking about gender equality. There is a preoccupation with technical assessment and ‘doing’, for instance with gender audits, gender budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, information systems, and much less creative imagination” (30).

In Uganda for example, the professionalization of gender has meant that government officials use the language of gender equality without necessarily being held responsible for the implementation of gender equality measures (Ahikire 2008, 30). It also means that gender issues are dealt with “ . . . in a technically static manner, devoid of political engagement and hence with very limited outcomes” (Ahikire 2008, 30).

Since the 1995 Beijing conference, the state has been fully implicated in gender and development planning. States have the capacity to transform the status of women because of their position and power in society; however, states can also be instruments that hinder advancements in gender equality because their attempts to promote gender may be superficial and have the added consequence of slowing the advancements taking place (Stetson and Mazur 1995 in Ahikire 2008, 31). According to Ahikire (2007), in most cases states choose policies that will not change the status quo or alter “male privilege” (cited in Ahikire 2008, 31). Dealing with gender equality issues through mechanisms set up by governments and aid agencies can bring added challenges. According to Ahikire (2008), “[t]he apparent embrace of the gender language has tended to blur the line between gains struggled for by women and handouts by government and donors” which works to diminish the power of women’s organizations and restricts their ability to successfully, advocate for their rights (31). Ahikire (2008) claims that “[i]n Uganda, there is now a sense of loss and that women have merely handed over their gains to government” (31).

The main obstacle faced by women’s groups is how to address development issues without becoming consumed by the business of development work and how to advance gender equality through the formation of theory and through activism (Ahikire 2008, 31). According to Ahikire (2008), we should reexamine “gender relations” and question common phrases “. . . such as engendering, gender mainstreaming, empowerment, gender-sensitive . . .” in order to promote new understanding and ensure that we constantly engage with “gender relations” (32). The women’s movement also faces the obstacle of dealing with its progress since much of their time is spent doing administrative work and there is not enough time for “. . . reflection, strategic planning and monitoring” (Kasente 2002, 98 in Ahikire 2008, 32). For long-term success, the women’s movement will have to learn to offset the business of gender and development work

against the task of creating feminist knowledge and questioning the status quo (Ahikire 2008, 32).

Women's organizations engagement with national governments

Change occurred in the way African women are represented in development when African women's organizations began to act independently of state governments and parties. Women's groups acquired increased autonomy from national governments since the independence movement and from the 1990s onwards, which has permitted them to make some decisions independent of their governments and given them some more power to shape gender policy (Tripp 2001); although, women's groups continue to face obstacles to the achievement of gender equality. Examples from the women's movement in Uganda and in South Africa will be explored in this section.

Aili Mari Tripp (2001) describes how women's groups in Uganda have been able to shape how women are represented in development by using their vote to speak to government leaders and to tell them what they want (Tripp 2001). In Uganda, women's organizations have used their links and ties with key female leaders in government, including prominent female leaders to advocate for them (Tripp 2001). The narrative of women as agents of change is supported by the Ugandan government's decision to place women in strategic positions in government. Also, African women in Uganda are represented as honest brokers by the national government and women are chosen to address difficult issues such as corruption, because the state sees women as being more accountable than men (Tripp 2001, 116-117). However, the placement of women in prominent positions does not mean that gender equality goals will necessarily be advanced. Tripp (2001) suggests that some of the female hand-picked leaders in the Museveni government have supported the promotion of women's rights only in a symbolic way because they tend to be more

interested in how women's support can further the goals of the government, than in advancing gender equality objectives that challenge the current regime (118). Tripp (2001) believes that the women's movement needs champions in government that will promote women's issues regardless of their affiliations; but at the same time, female leaders cannot champion women's issues without the existence of an autonomous women's movement to support them (119).

Historically in Uganda, the women's movement has focused on advancing WID-orientated goals based on women's traditional socially constructed gender roles but "[t]oday, there is greater emphasis on activities that contribute to women's political participation: civic education, improving leadership skills, and lobbying on particular legislative proposals" (Tripp 2001, 102). Women's groups in Uganda have flourished because the Museveni government has promoted women's organizing and they have helped women to make inroads in politics through special provisions and quotas to enable female representation (Tripp 2001, 104). However, one of the main challenges faced by Ugandan women's groups is the problem of maintaining their independence from the state and resisting the state's influence in their policies and practices (Tripp 2001, 104).

Relations between the women's movement and the state are dialectical. On the one hand the state promotes women's activism because it needs women's votes; but on the other hand, the women's movement risks losing its ability to make decisions independent of the state (Tripp 2001, 104). According to Tripp (2001), the fact that some women's groups in Uganda have managed to maintain a degree of autonomy from the state has ensured their survival and allowed them to continue their advocacy work (Tripp 2001, 105). However, some women's groups have found it difficult to operate separately from the ruling government's control as the government has managed the appointment of their leaders, physically threatened the safety of members, delegitimized some organizations and closely watched the activities of other organizations (Tripp

2001, 110-111). When the ruling party in Uganda coerced women's organizations and prevented them from acting independently this led to "... keeping women's mobilization apolitical, and of narrowing the agenda to issues that do little to fundamentally change gender imbalances" (Tripp 2001, 112).

While women's groups in Africa are motivated to promote gender equality they encounter obstacles, which make it increasingly difficult for women to advocate for their rights. On the one hand women's groups have pressure from the state to conform in ways that the government deems acceptable (Tripp 2001, 113). On the other hand, there is pressure from the international community to promote gender equality and mainstream gender in a particular way, which limits women's choices. In spite of the recent representation of women as agents of change in development policy and practice, women's groups are often excluded from the decision-making forums where development experts decide on policy objectives. Consequently, the agendas that get advanced are those of the donor agencies and of the state, which may not have women's interest at heart.

The women's movement in Africa has a difficult time holding the state accountable for women's human rights; consequently, it is difficult for women's organizations to advocate for improvements to the status of women in society. In South Africa for example, the government has established a comprehensive system of women's organizations and women's desks; however, these organizations are ineffective because of "overlapping mandates, poor communication, personalized politics, the lack of feminist agenda, and a reluctance to call the state to account for serious infringements of women's rights . . ." (Gouws 2008, 25-26). The inability of South Africa's state led woman's organizations to defend women's rights against the state have led to "... perceptions that the national gender machinery is dysfunctional and to mistrust on the part of women in civil society and women's organizations" (Gouws 2008, 26). The implications are that

state led women's organizations are viewed as being ineffective and powerless since they are not able to advocate on behalf of women.

The increased institutionalization and professionalization of gender has not made it easier for the women's movement to promote women's rights and gender equality. More bureaucratization seems to have limited the actions of women's organizations because they have little political power and many women's organizations are unwilling to jeopardize the status they have acquired so far by challenging the authority of the state. In South Africa's post-apartheid era, the women's movement is the victim of its own success as many of the principal leaders in the women's movement have taken positions in parliament leaving a gap in the movement (Gouws 2008, 26). This has resulted in "... no coherent women's movement to mobilize women in support of issues raised by women in government, to keep women in government accountable, or to help set a feminist agenda" (Gouws 2008, 26).

Conclusion

The professionalization of gender has worked in tandem with the construction of women in developing countries and African women in particular as agents of change. The professionalization of gender was spurred by the 1995 Beijing conference and resulted in more training opportunities and roles in decision-making bodies becoming available for women to take part in. The formal requirement that members of the international community make gender part of their procedures and policies increased the need for personnel that specialize in gender analysis. Gender specialists have found it challenging to ensure accountability for gender objectives in institutions. Aid agencies like CIDA are withdrawing their financial support from organizations doing gender work and shifting to other policy areas such as maternal and child health, which suggests that they are less committed to the promotion of gender equality. Some

authors argued that African women's groups have been co-opted by governments and donor agencies to assist with the mainstreaming of gender (Tripp 2001; Gouws 2008). In addition, women's groups are at a disadvantage because the objectives of donors and states are promoted in gender equality policy and practice and women's interests and the goal of gender equality are not at the forefront. Women's groups are dependent on scarce and constrained funding from donors and governments and as a result, their advocacy work is on the decline. Chapter Four examines the implications of these processes with the narrative of women as agents of change for women's organizations in Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

What are the implications of these changes?

The fourth chapter examines the implications of the representation of women as agents of change for African women and the women's movement in Africa. In the first part of the chapter, I examine the construction of African women as agents of change in the development arena. I explore the challenges faced by women and women's groups trying to participate in these opportunities. I also incorporate parts of the analysis from my interviews with development professionals to situate their understanding of the construction of African women as agents of change. I will argue that the professionalization of gender work has implications for African women who are constructed as agents of change. Similar to the Women in Development (WID) approach, the representation of African women as agents of change aims to leverage women's potential to advance economic growth but at the expense of women achieving their own objectives. Women are constructed as agents of change because they are considered to be effective managers and planners of development. However, the weight of development continues to be on the shoulders of women in Africa as women are expected to juggle these roles and continue fulfilling social expectations of their gender. In addition, the participation of women in decision-making bodies is hampered because the majority of women are on the margins, they do not have access to financial resources, they do not have the technical knowhow and they do not have access to basic services. I argue that the professionalization of gender has led to the increased consideration of gender in development initiatives; however, the struggle to achieve

gender equality has become less political. I will look at the implications for African women who are excluded from these capacity-building opportunities.

The second part of the chapter will examine the postmodernist feminist theoretical approach to assess whether the approach's explanation for the construction of women in development discourse is still relevant today. I examine the nuances from the way women were represented under the WID approach compared to how women are represented today. I look at how the notion of "empowerment", which is similar to the representation of women as agents of change, is used to construct women in development policy and practice and the implications for women's groups.

The construction of women as agents of change

The construction of African women as agents of change in development has many underlying implications. On the surface, the depiction of women as agents of change appears to be a positive shift away from the negative representations of women from Africa. The idea of women as game changers in their communities and in their countries conjures up hope in the development industry that the conditions in developing countries can improve if we invest in women. However, who benefits from this construction of women as agents of change and what does it imply? These questions and issues were posed to the participants in my study.

Some participants described the positive aspects for women in Africa who are represented as agents of change. One participant suggested that the representation of women as agents of change can allow women to bring a more holistic approach to the decision-making table because they are more aware of the needs in their community (Interview with Dr. A. Denis, January 6, 2010). Another interviewee made the case that for change to occur, there needs to be more recognition of what change has been achieved thus far which can be done by promoting and

sharing the stories of successful women (Interview with Dr. E. Rathgeber, January 22, 2010). A CIDA gender professional believed that educated women and women from the middle class would benefit from the representation of women as agents of change. She believed that African policy makers, most of them being male, could also benefit from this construction of African women as agents of change (Interview, January 7, 2010).

The caption to an article in the monthly news magazine *New African* reads:

“In every community in Africa and its Diaspora, there is a woman motivating other Africa[n] women to succeed in their lives. Women are becoming indispensable contributors to the search for practical solutions and nation building. Bekwase Mwale-Adams reports on how for every positive change in Africa, there is a woman of substance behind it” (July 2008).

The article commends women for promoting development in African countries based on their roles as “. . . mothers, caregivers, household managers, or participants in civil society” (Mwale-Adams 2008, 49). Initially, the article recognizes the roles of women in their socially constructed gender roles before other roles such as women’s involvement in decision-making groups and in financial activities is acknowledged (Mwale-Adams 2008, 49). In the article, Saadia Zahidi, “[t]he head of the World Economic Forum’s Gender Parity and Women Leaders Programme . . .” argues for the promotion of gender equality based on women’s economic activity (Mwale-Adams 2008, 50). According to Saadia Zahidi, “[t]he Africa Gender Parity Group believes both women and men need to work together to close the gender gap, and thus better leverage women’s talents to increase productivity and prosperity in all of society” (Mwale-Adams 2008, 50). Mwale-Adams (2008) article suggests that it is the role of women in decision-making bodies and in commerce that has fuelled the construction of women as agents of change.

The representation of women as agents of change has helped to promote the political and legislative process in many African countries that has seen more and more African women

become elected as officials in government. According to Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi (2011) in the Global Gender Gap report,

“[t]he sub-Saharan Africa region has closed 65% of its gender gap. The region performs well on the economic participation and opportunity subindex, ranking ahead of Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific and the Middle East and North Africa. Out of the top 15 performers on the labour force participation gender gap indicator, nine countries are from the region” (26).

African countries have also ranked higher than other regions for “political empowerment” (Hausmann et al., 26). Lesotho ranked ninth out of the 135 countries surveyed in the Gender Gap Report as this country has “. . . no gap in education or health . . .”, and the other high ranking country from the region was South Africa in twentieth position (Hausmann et al., 26). “South Africa maintains the top spot in the region on political empowerment, especially on the percentage of women in parliament (45%)” (Hausmann et al., 26). Finally, “Burundi ranks 1st overall on labour force participation and is the only country among 135 where the female labour force participation rate (92%) is higher than that of men (88%)” (Hausmann et al., 26). The other countries that have shown improvements in the gender gap for political involvement, are “. . . Uganda, which gains four places this year, women parliamentarians increase from 31% to 35%”, “Tanzania [which] gains seven places primarily because of an increase of women parliamentarians from 31% to 36%” and Ethiopia was positioned higher in the general standing of countries as a result of a rise in the number of female parliamentarians “. . . from 21% to 28%”. (Hausmann et al., 26-27). There is still a lot of work that needs to be done in the areas of wellbeing and schooling as African countries were positioned lower for gender gap measurements compared to other countries for school registration and the number of years of life (Hausmann et al., 26).

One arena where women have conveniently been constructed as agents of change has been at the peace table. According to Fleshman (2003) women have not always been constructed

as agents of change at the peace table as they have been excluded from peace talks by national governments in Africa who considered such negotiations to be a task for men (15). In the past, the international community has represented women as “victim[s]” (Fleshman 2003, 15). Women’s role in peace talks and the gender specific impacts of war was formally recognized by the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 (Fleshman 2003, 15). However, women continue to face obstacles to participating in policy forums and in the peacemaking process. Fleshman (2003) shows how women from the Democratic Republic of Congo’s (DRC) organizing in 2002 at the “Inter-Congolese Dialogue” in Nairobi, Kenya made some headway pledging to work in unity with women from all backgrounds in the DRC to promote peace and to ensure that women’s rights were recognized at future peace talks (15). However, women from DRC have had a difficult time participating in peace processes that followed despite the requirements of Resolution 1325. The participation of women in peace talks does not ensure that women’s perspective will be considered and barriers result in an inadequate number of women participating in peace talks (“Ms. Beneta Diop, FAS [Femmes Africa Solidarite] president and secretary general of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development” in Fleshman 2003, 15).

Based on the experiences of women’s peace work in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea through “. . . the regional women’s peace movement, the Mano River Union Women Peace Network” in 2000, Fleshman (2003) describes how women’s groups lacked the support of the international community, they had insufficient financial resources to prepare and attend meetings, and there was opposition to their involvement in the peace discussions from the different parties (Fleshman 2003, 17). Sometimes women were invited to peace talks to play “symbolic” functions and on other occasions they were not allowed to participate in official talks (Fleshman 2003, 17-18). These examples illustrate how the international community constructed women as agents of

change in peace building. The impression is that women have only recently become involved in peace building, “[b]ut the contributions of women peacemakers in Africa, from Somalia to South Africa, have gone largely unnoticed” (Fleshman 2003, 15). Another dilemma is that the roles that are created for women under Resolution 1325 focus on women’s participation in formal processes that may marginalize the important informal work that women have been doing at the local level to promote peace. In addition, there continues to be many obstacles in place preventing women from having equal representation in peace discussions.

A common approach in the development arena is to glamorize development work by celebrating successes and milestones. Likewise, the construction of women as agents of change supports this approach by focusing on prominent African women to lessen the negative image of the development process and to show that aid is being used effectively. I suggest that the construction of women as agents of change by aid agencies is a narrative put together for instrumentalist reasons. A few of the participants in my research study questioned the consequences for individual women and women’s groups who are represented as agents of change. One participant believed that the construction of African women as agents of change puts expectations on women and assumes that women will be more fair in the redistribution of resources towards other ethnic, class and social groups (Interview with Dr. A. Denis, January 6, 2010). A CIDA gender professional thought that women were not seen as agents of change in certain policy arenas, especially on water issues (Interview with CIDA Gender Equality Specialist, January 7, 2010). This shows that the construction of women as agents of change is not even as it applies to certain women in some situations. This Gender Equality Specialist’s explanation shed light on the issue that women are not consulted in decision-making bodies for water and resource management even though women use the resource and are directly affected by it (Interview December 17, 2009). Consequently, we do not often see women constructed as

agents of change in this area. In another example, a gender professional from a non-governmental organization (NGO) noted that women are not usually recognized as influential agents within the cooperative movement (Interview, December 17, 2009). This was surprising to hear, as so much of the focus of development discourse has been on leveraging women's economic potential to drive the development process.

Another implication of the representation of women as agents of change is that women will take on more of the workload in some societies, which may reinforce women's unequal position as women may feel that it is their duty to provide for their family. Many of the interviewees believed that women's workloads were an obstacle because women do not have time to take part in decision-making groups (Interview with Dr. E. Rathgeber, January 22, 2010; Interview with M. Charron, December 17, 2009). Many projects often do not consider in their planning that women have domestic responsibilities and this may place an extra burden on women who have to juggle the activities of the project against their usual work (Interview with gender professional, NGO, December 17, 2009). In a similar way, the focus on women as agents of change often means a focus on the formal roles and activities of individual women and women's groups. In the long run, such an exclusive focus on planned activities overshadows the less formal activities. Moreover, the polished success stories of women as agents of change may dismiss the gender inequalities that persist. There is also a need for current initiatives focused on women as agents of change to examine the gender relations between women and men (Interview with CIDA Gender Equality Specialist, January 7, 2010).

One participant made the argument that it is aid agencies, development experts and practitioners who are benefitting from the construction of women as agents of change (Interview with J. Lebert, January 7, 2010). This interviewee was concerned that aid agencies would use this image of women to claim that their efforts were the cause of women's success (Interview with J.

Lebert, January 7, 2010). She claimed that the idea of women as agents of change was not new but this depiction of women presumes that women have not participated in development to this degree before (Interview with J. Lebert, January 7, 2010). In addition, the rhetoric of women as agents of change assumes that women's actions should occur in prescribed ways for change to occur and it ignores the ways that women can negotiate power in order to achieve their goals (Interview with J. Lebert, January 7, 2010). Lastly, the terminology of women as agents of change does not seem to be any different from the underlying ideas behind the WID theory which assumed that women only began to play formal and active roles in development as a result of the efforts of WID practitioners. The next section looks at the multiple layers of the challenges faced by women's groups in Africa as gender is professionalized.

Challenges faced by women's groups in gender professionalization

The interviewees in my study identified the major challenges faced by African women's groups to be a lack of financial resources, insufficient knowledge creation capacity and the state's control of women's groups' activities. I analyze the obstacles women's groups face from the perspective of Canadian development practitioners to understand the complex power relations in development planning.

Many of the development professionals that I spoke to believed that access to funding was one of the major challenges to the effectiveness of women's organizations on the continent of Africa. In addition, lack of funding sometimes leads to competition amongst women's groups for scarce resources (Interview with R. Morbia, January 21, 2010). Many women's groups have difficulty organizing because of insufficient funding. Women's groups face other challenges such as lack of access to information technologies like the Internet, which makes it difficult for them to carry out their activities (Interview with former Gender Specialist, NGO, February 18, 2010).

A former gender specialist from an NGO found that in the case of Sudan and Ethiopia, formal women's organizations have access to funding; but the smaller organizations at the community level were unable to attract funding because they could not complete the requirements of funding applications (Interview February 18, 2010).

Many of the development professionals interviewed alluded to the insufficient capacity of women's groups in Africa to create and implement policy (Interview with CIDA Gender Specialist, January 7, 2010), and to do organizational forecasting and raise funds (Interview with former Gender Specialist, NGO, February 18, 2010). A Gender Specialist at CIDA explained that female leaders are at a disadvantage because they do not understand the policy making process (Interview January 7, 2010). She believed it was crucial that female leaders grasp this process to increase their chances of getting funding and their participation in decision-making bodies (Interview with CIDA Gender Specialist, January 7, 2010). A consultant and former CIDA Gender Specialist believed that there was a lack of human resources among African women's groups to do gender analysis work (Interview January 4, 2010). She blamed this lack of capacity on international organizations that hire talented individuals from the African continent, consequently contributing to the brain drain, as these individuals leave to work at the international level (Interview January 4, 2010). African organizations have also played a leadership role in gender analysis work and sometimes they were more familiar with the gender mainstreaming process than organizations in donor countries. For example, a gender professional working for a Canadian NGO said that one of their partners in Ghana conducted a gender audit, which motivated her organization to learn from the Ghanaian partner's experience by conducting their own institutional gender audit (Interview December 17, 2009). This example illustrates that Canadian organizations do also learn from African NGO practices even though the literature often shows the production of knowledge as coming from Northern organizations. Through a

partnership with the NGO based in Ghana, the Canadian NGO became one of the initial development organizations in Ottawa to perform a gender audit of its organization. This Canadian NGO was able to increase its efforts to assess gender in its policies and practices and to raise awareness about gender issues amongst its staff and volunteers (Interview with gender professional, NGO, December 17, 2009).

A former Gender Specialist who worked for an NGO believed that one challenge faced by women's groups in Africa was lack of leadership because the women who once led the women's movement left these positions to become elected representatives and as a result, they become disconnected from women's groups (Interview February 18, 2010). A development professional from an NGO had a different perspective; she believed that women who received training abroad were more likely than men to go back to their communities to assist with development and to share their knowledge and techniques with others in their organization (Interview with L. Tennian, December 17, 2009). In the long term, she believed that women were more likely to stay and work within their communities even if there were better opportunities abroad, as women had stronger ties to the community (Interview with L. Tennian, December 17, 2009).

Women's organizations work under difficult circumstances. According to one former gender specialist who had worked with an NGO, women's groups have to be very careful about how they do their work because they can face public and political criticism (Interview February 18, 2010). Citing the case of women's groups in Ethiopia, this former Gender Specialist spoke about how the national government curtailed the amount of foreign funding that women's organizations could access, which affected the extent and the type of advocacy work that women's organizations could do (Interview February 18, 2010). She explained that the women's organizations in Ethiopia had to be careful to not challenge their government and they had to use ingenious techniques to advocate for women's rights (Interview with former Gender Specialist,

NGO, February 18, 2010). Another interviewee said that women's groups face challenges getting support at the local level because national governments do not have the financial resources to support their work (Interview with H. McGill, January 15, 2010).

Orock (2007) presents another angle of the issue of African women as agents of change when he argues that “. . . a few elite women . . .” are using the international community's focus on gender equality as a way to advance their careers without necessarily being dedicated to the promotion of equality between women and men (93). Orock (2007) makes the case that the gender equality process in Cameroon has resulted in middle class and educated women qualifying for job opportunities that they were once deprived of, but women from non-urban areas and women who work in informal jobs do not have access to the same career opportunities (94). Orock (2007) claims that gender equality policy can only be effective when the process is driven from the bottom up (94). In Cameroon, “. . . gender equality has been institutionalized mainly among professionals and office workers or bureaucrats” and gender policy focuses on employment equity in the work environment (94). In Cameroon, the portrayal of women from more privileged backgrounds as agents of change is exemplified in events such as “. . . the 2005 Women's Day celebrations of 8 March” where “. . . the middle-class urban woman” is glorified for her commitment to her family and to her professional career (Orock 2007, 95) However, women from lower socioeconomic statuses main function in the Women's day celebration is to “. . . sew the National Women's Day dress, and parade or march behind the 'elite' or big women . . .” (Orock 2007, 95). Orock (2007) argues that prominent women in Cameroon have used gender equality policy to secure material gains for themselves but that these women leaders have not done enough to promote gender equality to reach the majority of women in the country (95). One problematic aspect of Orock's (2007) research is the presumption that it is the duty of privileged women to assist less privileged women. Orock's (2007) examination does not consider gender

inequality as a systemic process that infiltrates all structures and that shapes the relations between women and men. Also, much like the WID approach, Orock (2007) examines gender equality within the confines of liberal objectives of equality of opportunity, which is based on achieving gender parity with men according to educational and economic opportunities rather than a complete transformation of gender relations in the society. Orock's (2007) claims can also be a relevant criticism of the women's movement in Africa because it is possible that some women's organizations are not as politically active as they once were because of the semblance of having realized the goal of integrating women in decision-making bodies. One of the negative implications of the construction of women as agents of change is the international community's perception that many women are moving into decision-making positions when many women have not entered these positions.

My research has shown that there are both advantages and disadvantages for women and women's groups in the construction of women as agents of change. Another implication of this construction is that it can be used to divide the women's movement and to raise old divisions amongst women of different backgrounds along class and ethnic lines. The international community has used the construction of women as agents of change for their own purposes to control women's organizations and to ensure that women's groups can never be strong enough to present a significant challenge to the dominant hegemonic forces that uphold the development industry (Swai 2010). The next section looks at the implications of the construction of women as agents from the perspective of postmodernist feminists.

Feminist postmodernist approach

The postmodernist theoretical perspective tries to comprehend the creation and use of knowledge through the critical analysis of certain terminology (Parpart and Marchand 1995, 3). The

following section examines the use of the term empowerment in the context of educational programs that were created by the Tanzanian government in the 1980s and 1990s to promote women's involvement in development (Swai 2010). The section argues that the discourse around women as agents of change has been used to reinforce the status quo by entrenching women's unequal status in society under the guise of improving women's lives. This section will also look at another facet of the rhetoric of women as agents of change. This facet puts the spotlight on educated and middle class African women, who are integrating into decision-making bodies even though the development community does not acknowledge their perspective because of the focus on poverty issues.

Women's knowledge systems began disappearing as the Tanzanian government became less influential during the ". . . 19[9]0s, when neoliberal politics were reintroduced in Tanzania" (Swai 2010, 159). Consequently, the Tanzanian government sought other ways to reinforce its legitimacy through ". . . a cultural role, which primarily involved establishing control over people, stifling their creativities with the propaganda of 'empowerment' . . ." (Swai 2010, 159). In Tanzania, "education" represented a mechanism to archive economic development and national unity (Swai 2010, 158). According to Swai (2010), ". . . the idea of 'education for women[']s empowerment' assumed new strength and power and women's groups under adult education were at the forefront in education policy in Tanzania in [the] 1980s" (158). In spite of this, the activities that the Tanzanian government planned to empower women restricted women's customary methods and women's ability to create and apply their own problem-solving techniques (Swai 2010, 178). This made it difficult for women to use this knowledge to oppose the systems that relegate them to unequal positions in society (Swai 2010, 178). Furthermore, the Tanzanian government controlled the adult education system in order to ensure the involvement of women in the country's development and to maintain its control over the women's movement

(Swai 2010, 159). There were tensions between women's customary ways and the new methods that were promoted by the national government (Swai 2010, 159). These tensions had rural and urban, local and global, and gendered dimensions to them simultaneously. According to Swai (2010), "[t]hese new technologies implied the primacy of readymade knowledge and resources at the expense of women's traditional knowledge production systems, which were rendered obsolete" (159). The Tanzanian government's aim to empower women has been a double-edged sword as it has resulted in women not having a say in their own development and it "... has come to mean women conforming to social and cultural expectations" (Kabeer 1999, 457 in Swai 2010, 160).

The construction of women in the empowerment approach is similar to the construction of women as agents of change because the professionalization and mainstreaming of gender has reduced women's advocacy work. Gender mainstreaming has meant that women's groups focus on goals that are driven by aid agencies, which may not cater to their own interests. In addition, the construction of women as agents of change like the empowerment approach, leads to competition for resources, power and prestige among women in organizations which may exclude less affluent, lower educated and young women from participating (Swai 2010, 162). Another problem is that women's empowerment is complicated to measure and assess because "... it is entirely subjective and open to value based judgments, particularly when we tend to use Western, liberal view of empowerment" (Mohanty 1991 in Swai 2010, 171). On the one hand, women's involvement in women's organizations is one way for women to use their power to challenge gender inequality (Rowlands 1997 in Swai 2010, 171). On the other hand, women's involvement in women's groups can be seen as women obeying the rules rather than challenging gender inequalities (Swai 2010, 171).

Swai (2010) makes the final observation that education programs for women are inconsistent because they construct women within the limits of the society's outlook of women's roles (178). Women are educated to adhere to these social expectations in order not to threaten the status quo and the systems that relegate women in unequal positions (Swai 2010, 178). In a similar way, gender work has been institutionalized through gender mainstreaming to ensure that organizations consider the gender dimensions of their projects and policies but these assessments are constructed within the confines of women's predetermined roles. Gender mainstreaming never does enough to actually change or transform gender relations in the society. Gender mainstreaming is designed to reinforce the status quo. Similarly, WID theory and practice saw women in terms of their economic capacity and used women in the West as development experts to govern the behavior and activities of women in developing countries. WID theory did not challenge the existing structures; rather it institutionalized the structures of inequality by treating women from developing countries as an identical group (Mohanty 1988). WID practitioners dictated what development should look like which excluded women from the process of development planning. Gender mainstreaming and the rhetoric of women as agents of change is another way to govern women's activities and ensure that the social relations and power imbalances rest entrenched. Next I examine the perspective of the middle class African woman, a view that is often marginalized in development policy because of the focus on poverty alleviation. Another facet of the rhetoric of women as agents of change is the exclusion of the personal perspectives of affluent African woman because of the development industry's need to simplify the lives of African women for mainstreaming gender.

Win (2007) begins by comparing the characteristic of the "New African woman" to the persona of the conventional representation of African women in development discourse as "[a]lways poor, powerless and invariably pregnant, burdened with lots of children . . ." (79). The

narrative around women as agents of change may appear to be a new way of looking at women from developing countries because it is more positive than the representation of the traditional and destitute developing country women that we have been accustomed to; however, the narrative of women as agents of change can be dangerous because it is still a narrative that only tells one version of reality. The narrative around women as agents of change, like the WID theory and practice, continues to treat women in Africa as if they come from one group rather than as individuals with particular realities and different stories to tell. In addition, this facet of the narrative quickly moves the focus from women's impoverishment, to the opposite scenario of some women's upward mobility without addressing the issues that different women face. The narrative around women as agents of change is somewhat superficial because the underlying structures that the narrative is built on continue to emphasize and represent most women as being impoverished. There are nuances in women's representation as agents of change that are not exposed but rather hidden in order to preserve the impression of the effectiveness of development aid.

Win (2007) challenges the international community to consider women in Africa beyond the confines of impoverishment in order to examine the different realities that women face. The exclusion of the personal experience of the "middle-class" African woman from development discourse means that wealthier women are told that they cannot speak for women in Africa because their education and access to opportunities alienate them from the lived realities of the typical African woman (Win 2007, 82). There are several repercussions of the development industry's quest for authenticity. One result is that the development community conflates the experiences of African women to satisfy mainstreaming requirements, which treats African women as an indistinguishable group in the policy-making process (Wood 2005). Another consequence is that women's organizations are in a constant occupation to provide evidence to

aid organizations in the North in order to attest to their association with “. . . the grassroots poor” (Win 2007, 82). Furthermore, Win (2007) complains that these demands are never asked of development organizations in developed countries (82-83). According to Win (2007), the “[v]illagization” of non-poor activists has resulted in the often-heard refrain, ‘Africa has no policy analysis capacity’” (83). This has put a price on the production of knowledge about women’s experiences in Africa. These unequal power relations are reflected at international meetings where it is mainly theoretical studies that are presented, and scholarly journals have few reflections from people working directly in the field (Win 2007, 83). The power relations underlying the production of knowledge in development discourse also fits within the larger context of the valuing of scientific and rational knowledge that has been the basis of development theory and practice, which has led to the exclusion of knowledge that comes from people on the margins, the disadvantaged, women, and indigenous peoples.

There are many contradictions at play here that speak to the irregularities of the feminist postmodernist approach. On the one hand the feminist postmodernist approach suggests that we examine women’s differences and incorporate this knowledge in our analyses. Within the rhetoric of women as agents of change and the professionalization of gender there is still the perspective that the character of the traditional development woman is the main focus of development institutions. Moreover, women from developing countries continue to be treated as a uniform group and women’s perspectives are limited because of the narrow focus of policies. At the same time that the development community promotes women’s roles in decision-making bodies, they also restrict the potential of women through the representation of women as agents of change in development policy and practice. It is in the development industry’s interest to control the power of the women’s movement to mobilize because if this potential is uncontrolled, it could undermine the unequal structures upon which the development industry is built. The next

section looks at the governmentality approach to find out how the narrative of women as agents of change works within and amongst institutions of governance and what the impact is on women's groups in Africa and the goal of achieving gender equality.

Governmentality approach

I argue that under the governmentality approach, international development donors aim to reduce the role of African states in development policymaking and implementation by working increasingly with women's groups to facilitate gender equality policy. The narrative of women as agents of change fits within this logic as some individual African women are given opportunities to gain training and to build their capacities to enter leadership positions in governmental and nongovernmental bodies. However, women and women's groups sacrifice their own objectives in the process of being positioned as agents of change to achieve the long-term objectives of the international community.

The gender mainstreaming process, in the interest of advancing the objectives and perspectives of donors, denies African state government's rights to own and promote their own development because they are forced to adhere to gender equality policies that are imposed on them as a condition for receiving aid. In addition, women in Africa are not direct beneficiaries because the policies that African countries agree to are constructed from the donor's perspective and there is little room for African women to claim ownership for these development initiatives. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming has led to more bureaucratization of gender work, which has reduced the advocacy capabilities of organizations, decreased the participation of ordinary women and further strained the limited human and financial resources of women's groups.

Gender mainstreaming has been co-opted by aid donors and the process is no longer focused on advocating for women rights. The international community is employing women and

women's groups to help to keep African state governments accountable for aid. At the same time, the international community has utilized gender mainstreaming to govern African state governments and the activities of women and women's groups. Gender mainstreaming has become a tool of governance. On the one hand, gender mainstreaming is one of the mechanisms that have enabled women in Africa to have greater representation in government and other decision-making bodies. On the other hand, the entrance of women into policy-making forums has had personal consequences for women and costs for the women's movement in Africa.

My research has shown that governance in gender and development planning occurs at various levels between different actors. On an individual level, the rhetoric of women as agents of change has allowed some women in Africa to access opportunities at the international level, in academia and in leadership roles at the municipal and national level. The rhetoric of women as agents of change has given a few women a competitive edge and the benefit of the international community's attention. But, such claims also suggest that women have not earned their positions, which is not necessarily accurate. The process of mainstreaming gender has led to the politics being taken out of the struggle for gender equality because the policy is applied widely by organizations to tackle issues without considering local, historical and cultural contexts (Mukhopadhyay 2007, 135). According to Mukhopadhyay (2007), "[t]he challenge that feminist advocates have faced and continue to face is that their work straddles both worlds – the technical and political – but the development business tolerates only the technical role" (137).

Another perspective claims that gender mainstreaming has been successful because it has managed to pair women's rights issues with development outcomes that speak to the international community's need for concrete results and efficiency (Razavi 1997 and Kabeer 1999 in Mukhopadhyay 2007, 138). It can be argued that the notion of women as agents of change also tries to package gender equality issues attractively to speak to policy makers; but, in some cases,

the experiment has not worked because simply adding women into the policy environment has not been sufficient to create sustainable change. The notion of women as agents of change has helped to sugar coat the issue of gender equality by exploiting women's success stories without really touching on the sensitive issues. However, Mukhopadhyay (2007) argues that this has been necessary for any measure of progress to take place (138). In a similar way, women's organizations can use the international communities renewed interest on maternal and child health to maintain the attention of the international community by making the link to the economic benefits of the policy. However, on the scale of advancement, gender mainstreaming policy has not moved much beyond the WID approach which sought to promote women's role in development based on their economic potential.

Another point in the argument is that gender mainstreaming has led to the removal of the emphasis on women because development planning perceives that "[i]nitiatives specifically directed towards women are seen as a failure of mainstreaming" (Mukhopadhyay (2007, 139). In some cases aid donors may decide to withdraw support from an initiative on the basis that gender has been successfully mainstreamed in the actual project even though there continues to exist systemic gender inequalities in the organization and in the larger community (Mukhopadhyay 2007, 139). Gender mainstreaming in some circles has meant getting more women involved in groups and in leadership roles (Mukhopadhyay 2007, 141). Using Tanzania as an example, Swai (2010) has suggested that the empowerment of African women leads to a dead end for the women's movement because women are denied the opportunity to use their knowledge to change the system once they enter such policy-making circles (178). Win (2007) has also suggested that while educated and middle class African women are allowed to participate in decision-making bodies at the international level, their perspectives are not welcome (83). The rhetoric around women as agents of change simplifies and reduces the scope of women and gender issues.

Gender mainstreaming approaches do little to change the prevailing status of gender relations because the focus has been on professionalizing and instituting gender to solve short-term goals (Mukhopadhyay 2007, 144). Another obstacle in gender mainstreaming is the difficulty to hold governments and organizations accountable for integrating gender analysis into their procedures (Mukhopadhyay 2007, 144).

The narrative of women as agents of change is contradictory. At the same time that it empowers women to play more active roles in knowledge creation and policy making, it has been shown to take women's power away by using gender mainstreaming to make the goal of gender equality a procedure rather than a struggle for women's rights. The narrative of women as agents of change attempts to present new ways for some women to speak out and new arenas for some women to speak in. However, the narrative of women as agents of change attempts to exploit women's lack of power by continuing to speak for African women and by restricting African women's power to create knowledge about African women. African women are not completely powerless under the rhetoric of women as agents of change but the power of African women's organizations is constantly shifting and has not yet been sufficient to change the power relations. It will be interesting to see how African women continue to be represented in the discourse of women as agents of change and what role African women play in forging representations of themselves.

Conclusion

The objective of the thesis has been to understand the construction of African women as agents of change in development discourse. The thesis has also aimed to comprehend the role of CIDA in the mainstreaming and professionalization of gender equality policy and practice. The literature on gender mainstreaming and African women in development exposed the issues shaping the

construction of African women in development policy and practice. These issues included: aid agencies and governments promotion of development initiatives based on women's socially constructed gender roles, WID advocates and gender practitioners use of economic efficiency arguments to advance gender equality and the treatment of African women as an identical group in development policy and practice. Furthermore, the international community's emphasis on poverty issues ignored the impact of development issues on women from other socioeconomic backgrounds (Win 2007), the process of professionalizing gender placed responsibility for the integration of gender on gender specialists but with few mechanisms in place to hold donors and states accountable for gender policy. Finally, the promotion of gender equality policy by states and donors is hampered because long-term financial support and resources are not available to ensure the achievement of gender equality objectives and the cooptation of feminist ideals by governments and states has reduced women's groups ability to advocate for their rights (Tripp 2001; Ahikire 2008).

The feminist postmodernist and governmentality approaches revealed the underlying meanings in the WID and gender mainstreaming processes. These theoretical approaches also showed the nuances in the power relations between the different actors such as women's organizations, CIDA, gender professionals, and African state governments. The feminist postmodernist approach exposed that the representation of women as agents of change in development policy and practice exists within the larger policy arena of gender mainstreaming. The knowledge of some African women's successes in the development arena is used to justify donor practices to make aid more effective however; these practices take power away from African women's groups and African governments to shape the development process according to their own priorities and to construct their own solutions for development issues. The governmentality approach showed that the gender mainstreaming process and the

professionalization of gender have contributed to the stagnation of the feminist struggle to achieve gender equality because women's organizations are embedded in the aid system and their focus is on maintaining the system rather than seeking ways to challenge and question the system's perpetuation of inequality.

I used interview material from development professionals working for CIDA and other organizations in Ottawa to understand the multiple factors that shape the construction of African women as agents of change in development practice. These factors included women's organizations dependency on financial assistance from donors and national governments that is often insufficient, short-term and restrictive on women's organizations work. African women's organizations are challenged competing in the international arena to get their issues and interests on the agenda because they do not have access to the same levels of resources and technology as northern organizations, donors and governments. African women's groups don't have a place at the decision-making table to determine the working terms and rules; consequently they have an unequal position in the formation of gender equality policy. Women's groups in African countries have been pulled into the gender equality process without being given the chance to formulate their own objectives and to contribute on their terms. Some women from higher socioeconomic classes and educated women have been able to benefit from the international community's focus on women as agents of change but this has resulted in African female leaders constantly having to discuss women's issues in terms of poverty and lacking power to enact real sustainable change. My thesis has examined a very small part of gender and development policy and practice; therefore further research should be conducted to continue the interrogation of African women's roles in the process of gender mainstreaming.

Chapter Two looked at the construction of African women in development from the 1970s to the 1990s by examining the historical background underlying the institutionalization of

the WID and the GAD approaches. I argued that a change occurred to the representation of women in development discourse because the WID approach promoted women's participation in development initiatives for economic reasons. The integration of women in development policy and practice was spurred by the international women's movement's advocacy work during the United Nations (UN) conferences for women. Women were represented in care giving roles so that governments could utilize their reproductive labour and time at no cost. Women were constructed in terms of their economic potential to participate in income-generating projects to assist the economy and to counter the effects of structural adjustment policies. Development experts from the North presumed to know women's interests and needs and they conceptualized women in terms of their participation at the community level which did not envision a role for women from developing countries in policy formation at other levels (Goetz 1988, 482). Consequently, women were represented as being conventional, uneducated and unable to make their own decisions (Mohanty 1988). These representations treated women from developing countries as a uniform group (Mohanty 1988) and further entrenched women's unequal position in society.

Advocates of GAD helped to further the goal of gender equality through the analysis of gender in development policies and practices (Parpart 1995, Denis 2001, Rathgeber 1994) but GAD's momentum has been stunted by its own achievement (Ahikire 2008, 32). The professionalization of gender has not been sufficient to change the structures that sustain gender inequality. The mainstreaming of gender in institutions and the creation of training opportunities for women has constructed African women as agents of change but it has not been enough to change the lives of the majority of African women. The GAD approach like the WID approach continue to be driven by economic arguments for women's inclusion in development policy and application.

CIDA was one of the initial donors to integrate a WID approach in its policies and practices in the 1970s. CIDA's early policies and projects represented women in terms of socially constructed gender roles in initiatives that dealt with nutrition, maternal and child health (CIDA 1989, 7). CIDA moved from a project focus to a policy orientation in the 1990s in order to integrate women and gender issues in development (Asante 2000, 80). At the same time, CIDA changed its focus from representing women as recipients of aid to positioning women as having agency to change their situations (Asante 2000, 85). In the mid-1990s, CIDA actively took up the promotion of gender mainstreaming and assigned specialists to the task of gender analysis (Asante 2000, 82). Several evaluations praised CIDA for its leadership role in the promotion of gender equality. However, CIDA faced difficulties applying the WID and the GAD approaches. CIDA was critiqued for not adequately integrating women and gender issues into their projects and policies (Jahan 1995, 69) and for restricting the role of local experts in policy development (Asante 2000, 103). In 2010 CIDA established its *Gender equality action plan* to make Canada's development assistance more effective however, several issues such as cutbacks in funding to Canadian NGOs (Smillie 2010), the reduction in the number of African countries receiving Canadian aid and changes to the funding application process making it necessary for NGOs to apply on a project basis compromised these organizations ability to continue their gender advocacy work (Tomlinson in Westhead 2012).

Chapter Three looked at the question: how and why change occurred to the construction of African women in the 1990s. This chapter examined the notion of development, which is built on the idea that developing countries cannot advance without the assistance of development specialists who usually come from developed countries (Parpart 1995). Equally, in the process of gender professionalization, gender specialists from developed countries have been situated as having the knowhow that women's groups in developing countries need to advance the gender

equality agenda and to receive development assistance. The unequal power relations that characterize the relationships between gender experts and women's groups in developing countries were examined. I suggested that the process of gender mainstreaming, like the WID approach that preceded it, undermined women's groups in their efforts to promote gender equality by dictating what their objectives should be and by limiting the actions that they could take. The process of professionalizing gender has led to less activism for women's groups because they are dependent on funding from international donors and state governments who try to control their activities (Standing 2007). The gender mainstreaming approach also made it difficult to hold gender professionals in governmental and nongovernmental organizations responsible for the application of gender policy (Standing 2007).

The section on gender mainstreaming discussed the challenges faced by CIDA to mainstream gender effectively in spite of the organization's leadership role in gender equality policy. The effectiveness of CIDA's gender equality policy has been challenged by the lack of mechanisms to verify that gender is incorporated adequately in policies and practices and insufficient financial and human resources to promote gender equality goals (CIDA 2008). The role of gender specialists at CIDA and within other Canadian organizations was examined to understand the strategies they use to promote gender. The research revealed that gender specialists have access to very limited formal and informal tools to promote gender but that relying on these mechanisms alone is insufficient to promote structural change (Hendriks 2005). Gender mainstreaming has both positive and negative outcomes for women. On the one hand, the professionalization of gender has led to the production of specialists who try to ensure that organizations effectively integrate gender in their plans and applications (Ahikire 2007). On the other hand, women's objectives are constrained by streamlining gender. Similar to WID, gender

mainstreaming conflates the interests of women from developing countries and treats women as a single group (Wood 2005).

The professionalization of gender helped to carve out roles for women in policy forums and in leadership positions. However the institutionalization of gender has been fraught with problems and contradictions, which seem to reinforce the status quo and keep women on the margins. For example, lack of mechanisms to hold donors and governments accountable for gender equality policy, insufficient funding and weak political commitment. Gender professionalization resulted in small concessions for women's groups by presenting opportunities for women to get leadership training and to build their capacities. In spite of this, women's groups have become immersed in the bureaucratization of gender work, which may compromise the political struggle for gender equality (Rathgeber 2005, 589) because donors and governments shape women's groups agendas.

Chapter Four looked at the implications of the positioning of African women as agents of change. There have been some changes to the representation of women since prior to the UN Decade for Women and as a result of the UN conferences on women from recipients of development assistance to participants contributing to development policy and practice (Asante 2000, 85). The institutionalization of gender, although a less than perfect process, has enabled the analysis of gender in development projects and in government policies at all levels. It has ensured that governments provide gender-disaggregated data to enable planners to develop projects that are more cognizant of the way development initiatives impact gender relations. At one level, the professionalization of gender has added many layers of bureaucracy that make it difficult for ordinary women to access the system and to advocate for change. At another level, without these systems and processes in place, women and women's groups may have never been invited to decision-making forums to have a say in the policies and practices that are decided upon by

governments and institutions. There are many issues at play that shape the extent to which women from developing countries can influence the policies decided upon by governments and the extent to which they can hold their governments accountable. For example, my research has shown that women face barriers accessing decision-making bodies because of a lack of political will from national governments and members of the international community, inadequate funding and lack of recognition for women's rights.

In order for gender and development policy and practice to move forward, multiple processes working from within institutions and from outside institutions to achieve gender equality are required. There needs to be individual and collaborative efforts across organizations and between non-governmental and governmental groups for changes to occur. Sometimes an advance in one area will lead to a drawback in another area and sometimes the success achieved by the women's movement may cause women's organizations to retreat and examine if it is really a success and who is benefiting. Sometimes gender advocates may become so enthralled in the process of gender mainstreaming that they may forget the original goal and sometimes they may need to take a break from the original goal in order to build coalitions and to open doors. A multifaceted approach is needed to achieve gender equality. Relying on the professionalization of gender alone will not work. In addition, getting frustrated with working through bureaucratic processes or looking to the so-called grassroots level for the answers will not work. African women's organizations, development practitioners, aid donors and African governments need to take responsibility for achieving gender equality. These actors in the international community cannot continue to point fingers at each other or expect that certain actors will play a larger role. Members of the international community must push for dialogue across the multiple realities and groups that separate and divide them. The answers so far for how to forge collaboration between different groups have pointed to more capacity building for women in developing countries and

their governments in order to increase their ability to participate in decision-making bodies. The actors in the international development arena should carefully examine the power relations and gender relations at play with all of these solutions and be aware that the power imbalances are constantly changing and evolving in the development industry.

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- Interview with gender professional, non-governmental organization, December 17, 2009.
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APPENDIX A

List of organizations and individuals who participated in the study

List of organizations

The research participants were affiliated with these organizations at the time of the study (December 2009 to February 2010) and/or they had previously worked for a considerable period of time with the organization.

Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA)
 Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)
 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
 International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
 Inter Pares
 Match International Centre
 Oxfam Canada
 Peacebuild

List of participants opting to be identified in the research

The positions held by the participants were their positions at the time of the study, which took place from December 2009 to February 2010. There were eighteen individuals interviewed for the study, of these, eight individuals chose not to be identified by name in the study as per the confidentiality and anonymity agreement in the consent form.

Monique Charron
 Program Officer, Africa Programming
 International Development Program
 Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA)

Dr. Ann Denis
 Acting Chair Of the Department Of Sociology and Anthropology
 University of Ottawa

Dr. Guenet Guebre-Selassie
 Programme Officer for Africa
 MATCH International Centre

John Julien
 Director
 International Communications and Policy
 Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA)

Joanne Lebert
Deputy Director of Peacebuild and
Coordinator of the POWER project (Progress & Opportunities for Women's Equality Rights)
Africa-Canada Human Rights Research & Education Centre, University of Ottawa

Hunter McGill
Senior Fellow
University of Ottawa

Rita Morbia
Executive Director
Inter Pares

Sylvie Perras
Program Officer
Africa Canada Forum
CCIC

Dr. Eva Rathgeber
Consultant

Laurie Tennian
Member Engagement Coordinator and Women's Mentoring Program Coordinator
Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA)

APPENDIX B

Recruitment text to participants

Dear _____,

I am a graduate student at the University of Ottawa at the School of International Development and Global Studies. I am currently working on my Master of Arts thesis paper.

I am contacting you to ask you if you would like to participate in my study. I would like to interview individuals involved in gender and development planning in Africa. I am interested in individuals who have played a role in managing, implementing or executing development projects for women in Africa either directly as a practitioner or indirectly through a funding agency. Your participation in the research will help me to complete my thesis and to further research in gender and development planning in Africa.

My research will focus on gender and development projects, which emphasize African women's leadership skills and capacity building. My research question centers on the representation of African women in development over the last 40 years of gender and development planning. I am particularly interested in examining how African women have been framed as "agents of change" and what impact this has had on their status.

I plan to interview individuals who work for non-governmental and governmental organizations. I would like to talk especially to organizations, which receive funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

I would like to meet you to discuss your experience with gender and development planning in Africa.

The research proposal has gone through an Ethics Review Board process at the University of Ottawa to ensure that the research follows ethical standards of research. Therefore, each participant will be asked to sign a consent form, which outlines your role and rights as a participant and the measures taken to ensure confidentiality during the research. The consent form will allow participants to choose whether they want to be identified or to be anonymous in the final research. In addition, participants can choose if they would like to be recorded or not to be recorded during the interview. Finally, the consent form explains that your participation in the research is voluntary, you can refuse to answer any question and/or withdraw from the research at any time. Furthermore, participants will have the opportunity to review and edit their quotes.

Your participation in the research will be greatly appreciated and it will help to achieve the research objectives.

If you have any questions, I can be reached by telephone at ###-###-#### and by e-mail at <#####>. My thesis supervisor, Dr. Jacqueline Best can be reached by e-mail at <#####> and the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research can be contacted at the University of Ottawa.

Yours sincerely,

Augusta Acquah
 Graduate Student
 University of Ottawa
 School of International Development & Global Studies

Le texte de recrutement

Cher(e) _____,

Je suis une étudiante au 2^e cycle à l'Université d'Ottawa à l'École de développement international et de mondialisation. Je suis entrain de rédiger ma thèse de maîtrise.

Je vous contacte pour vous demander si vous voudriez faire partie de mon étude. J'aimerais interviewer les individus qui travaillent dans le domaine du genre et du développement en Afrique. Je voudrais parler avec les individus qui ont joué un rôle dans la gestion ou la réalisation des projets de développement pour les femmes en Afrique. Je voudrais également parler avec les individus qui ont joué un rôle comme praticien(ne) ou qui travaille avec un bailleur de fonds qui a subventionné un projet du genre et du développement en Afrique. Votre participation à cette étude m'aidera à compléter ma thèse et il sert à avancer la recherche dans le domaine de la planification du genre et du développement en Afrique.

L'étude se focalise sur les projets du genre et de développement qui ont le but de développer les capacités et le leadership des femmes en Afrique. Les questions de recherche se centrent sur la représentation des femmes africaines dans le développement depuis les 40 dernières années. Je suis très intéressée à savoir comment les femmes africaines ont été positionnées comme des agents de changement et quel est l'impact sur leur statut ?

J'interviewerai des représentants des organisations non gouvernementales et gouvernementales. J'aimerais parler surtout avec les organisations qui reçoivent de l'aide financière de l'Agence canadienne de développement international (ACDI).

Je voudrais vous rencontrer pour discuter de vos expériences avec la planification du genre et de développement en Afrique.

Ma proposition de thèse a été passée à une revue du Comité d'éthique de l'Université d'Ottawa afin d'assurer que la recherche suit les normes éthiques de la recherche. Nous demanderons donc à chaque participant de signer un formulaire de consentement qui explique son rôle et ses droits comme participant ainsi que les étapes qui sont suivies afin d'assurer la confidentialité pendant la recherche. Les participants peuvent choisir sur le formulaire de consentement s'ils veulent être identifié ou rester anonyme dans la recherche finale. En plus, les participants peuvent choisir s'ils veulent être enregistrés ou pas enregistrés pendant l'entrevue. Finalement, le formulaire de consentement explique que votre participation dans la recherche est volontaire, vous avez le

choix de ne pas répondre aux questions et/ou vous pouvez vous retirer de l'entrevue en tout temps. De plus, les participants auront l'opportunité d'examiner et d'éditer leurs citations.

Votre participation dans cette étude sera fortement appréciée et il aidera à réaliser les objectifs de la recherche.

Pour tout renseignement additionnel concernant cette étude, vous pouvez communiquer avec moi par téléphone au ###-###-#### et par courriel au <#####> ou avec mon superviseur, Dr. Jacqueline Best au <#####>.

Pour tout renseignement sur les aspects éthiques de cette recherche, vous pouvez vous adresser au Responsable de l'éthique en recherche, Université d'Ottawa.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur ou Madame, les expressions de mes salutations distinguées,

Augusta Acquah
Etudiant au 2^e cycle
Université d'Ottawa
École de développement international & mondialisation

APPENDIX C

Consent form

Title of the study: Agents of change: An Analysis of gender planning for development in Africa.

Name of the researcher: Augusta Acquah
 Graduate student
 School of International Development & Global Studies
 Faculty of Social Sciences
 University of Ottawa

Name of the supervisor: Dr. Jacqueline Best
 Associate Professor
 School of Political Studies
 University of Ottawa

Invitation to participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by *Augusta Acquah* and Supervisor *Jacqueline Best*.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to examine how gender and development projects for women in Africa have changed over time and to examine the impact of these projects on the status of women in Africa. The researcher will interview representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations participating in the planning and execution of capacity building and leadership focused projects for women in Africa.

The research will look at the changes in the way African women are represented and conceptualized in development discourse. Therefore, the research examines what happened to promote these changes, as well as how the positioning of women as agents of change impacts gender and development planning.

Participation: My participation will consist of taking part in one interview session of 1.5 hours long during which I will be asked questions about my organizations role in gender and development planning. The interview will take place at:

-----on-----
 (location) (date and time)

Risks: My participation in this study may cause me to criticize various aspects of gender and development planning. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks by taking measures to ensure confidentiality. I can request to not be identified in the final research and I can have my identity kept anonymous by using a pseudonym

in the published research. In addition, I can choose to not answer any question and I can choose to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Benefits: My participation in this study, through the knowledge that will be produced, will help my organization to improve their policies and practices in gender and development planning in Africa.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only to help the researcher answer the research questions and to write her thesis. I understand that my confidentiality will be protected because only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the interview records and this information will be kept confidential unless I give my permission for it to be published. I understand that my confidentiality may be breached in cases where the researcher is required by the law to report the information. If I agree to be quoted, I understand that I will have the opportunity to review and edit my quotes. The researcher will send the quote to me via e-mail to be verified. I understand the limits of confidentiality using this method as e-mails can be intercepted. **Anonymity** will be protected in the following manner: If I check off on the consent form that I would like my identity to be anonymous, I will be assigned a pseudonym and my real name will not be disclosed in published material. I understand that the name of the organization that I represent will be published because it lends credence to the study to list the organizations that participate in the research.

Please check one of the following:

- I would like to be identified in the final research. OR
 I would like my identity to be anonymous in the final research.

Please check one of the following:

- I accept to be recorded during the interview. OR
 I do not accept to be recorded during the interview.

Conservation of data: The data collected, interview notes, audio recordings of the interview and transcripts, will be kept in a secure place at the researcher's home. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to this information and it will be conserved for 10 years.

Voluntary participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will not be used in the research. The interview notes will be shredded and the audio recording will be recoded over.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate
(name of the participant)

in the above research study conducted by Augusta Acquah of the School of International Development and Global Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, whose research is under the supervision of Dr. Jacqueline Best.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____
(date/ month/ year)

Witness's signature (needed in the case where a participant is illiterate, blind etc):

_____ Date: _____
(date/ month/ year)

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____
(date/ month/ year)

Formulaire de consentement

Titre du projet: Agents de changement : Une analyse de la planification du genre pour le développement en Afrique

Nom du chercheuse: Augusta Acquah
Étudiant au 2^e cycle
École de développement international & mondialisation
La Faculté des sciences sociales
Université d'Ottawa

Nom du superviseuse: Dr. Jacqueline Best
Professeure agrégée
École d'études politiques
Université d'Ottawa

Invitation à participer : Je suis invité(e) à participer à la recherche nommée ci-haut qui est menée par *Augusta Acquah* et son superviseur *Jacqueline Best*.

But de l'étude : Le but de l'étude est d'examiner comment les projets du genre et de développement pour des femmes en Afrique ont changé et d'examiner l'impact de ces projets sur le statut des femmes en Afrique. Le chercheur interviewera des représentants des organisations non gouvernementales et gouvernementales participant à la planification et l'exécution des projets focalisés sur le développement des capacités et le leadership pour des femmes en Afrique.

La recherche observera les changements selon lesquels les femmes africaines sont représentées et conceptualisées dans le discours de développement. La recherche examinera donc quels facteurs ont contribué à ce changement, ainsi que comment le positionnement des femmes comme des agents de changement, influence la planification du genre et de développement.

Participation: Ma participation consistera à participer dans une entrevue d'une heure et demi pendant laquelle le chercheur me posera des questions sur le rôle de mon organisation dans la planification de genre et de développement. L'entrevue se déroule à:

----- le -----
 (le lieu) (la date et l'heure)

Risques : Ma participation à cette recherche peut impliquer que je critique divers aspects de la planification du genre et du développement. J'ai reçu l'assurance du chercheur que tout se fait en vue de minimiser ces risques en prenant des mesures à assurer la confidentialité. Je peux faire une demande de ne pas être identifiée dans la recherche finale en utilisant un pseudonyme dans la recherche publiée. En plus, j'ai le choix de ne pas répondre aux questions et je peux me retirer de l'entrevue en tout temps.

Bienfaits : Ma participation à cette recherche aura pour effet d'avancer la connaissance tout en aidant mon organisation à améliorer leurs politiques et pratiques du genre et du développement en Afrique.

Confidentialité et anonymat : J'ai l'assurance du chercheur que l'information que je partagerai avec elle restera strictement confidentielle. Je m'attends à ce que le contenu ne soit utilisé que pour aider le chercheur à répondre aux questions de recherche et à écrire sa thèse. Je comprends que ma confidentialité sera protégée parce que seulement le chercheur et son superviseur auront accès aux données et cette information sera gardée confidentiel à moins que je donne la permission de le publier. Je comprends que ma confidentialité ne peut pas être protégée dans les cas où le chercheur est requis par la loi à dénoncer l'information. Si j'accepte d'être cité, je comprends que j'aurai l'opportunité d'examiner et d'éditer mes citations. Le chercheur m'enverra la citation par courriel électronique afin de vérifier. Je comprends les limites de la confidentialité en utilisant cette méthode car les courriels électroniques peuvent être interceptés. **L'anonymat** est garanti de la façon suivant : Si je coche sur le formulaire de consentement que je veux avoir mon identité gardé anonyme, je serai attribué un pseudonyme et mon nom ne sera pas publié. Je comprends que le nom de l'organisation que je représente sera publié en raison de donner plus de crédibilité à la recherche en nommant les organisations qui ont participé.

Veillez cocher la case appropriée :

- Je voudrais être identifié dans la recherche finale. OU
 Je voudrais que mon identité soit anonyme dans la recherche finale.

Veillez cocher la case appropriée :

- J'accepte d'être enregistré pendant l'entrevue. OU
 Je n'accepte pas d'être enregistré pendant l'entrevue.

Conservation des données : Les données recueillies, les notes de l'entrevue, les enregistrements sonores et les transcriptions seront conservés de façon sécuritaire à la résidence du chercheur. Le chercheur et son superviseur sont les seuls individus à avoir accès aux données qui seront conservées pour dix ans.

Participation volontaire : Ma participation à la recherche est volontaire et je suis libre de me retirer en tout temps et/ou refuser de répondre à certaines questions, sans subir de conséquences négatives. Si je choisis de me retirer de l'étude, les données recueillies jusqu'à ce moment ne seront pas utilisées dans la recherche finale. Les notes de l'entrevue seront détruites et les enregistrements sonores seront enregistrés par dessus.

Acceptation : Je, _____, accepte de participer à cette
(le nom du participant)

recherche menée par Augusta Acquah de l'École de développement international et mondialisation, la Faculté des sciences sociales, laquelle recherche est supervisée par Dr. Jacqueline Best.

Pour tout renseignement additionnel concernant cette étude, je peux communiquer avec le chercheur ou son superviseur.

Pour tout renseignement sur les aspects éthiques de cette recherche, je peux m'adresser au Responsable de l'éthique en recherche, Université d'Ottawa.

Il y a deux copies du formulaire de consentement, dont une copie que je peux garder.

Signature du participant : _____ Date : _____
(la date/ le mois/ l'an)

Signature du témoin (nécessaire dans le cas où le participant serait illettré, aveugle, etc.) :

_____ Date : _____
(la date/ le mois/ l'an)

Signature du chercheur : _____ Date : _____
(la date/ le mois/ l'an)

APPENDIX D

Sample questions asked to CIDA Gender Specialists

These questions were tailored according to the experience of the individual and their position. I asked the interviewees to tell me about their role in their organization by e-mail before the interview. Some individuals sent me a copy of their resume.

1. What is your role at the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)?
2. How long have you been in this position for?
3. What is your background/experience in gender and development?

Questions on CIDA

1. What issues seem to be the most important for CIDA in its gender equality programming?
2. What challenges are there to having “gender equality” as a “crosscutting theme”?
3. What factors have influenced the change in language used to describe projects that promote gender equality? How has this impacted projects and programming in Africa?
- E.g. CIDA’s shift from “gender equality projects” to “equality between women and men”?
4. What are the implications of the Official Development Accountability Act for gender equality projects?

Questions on women as ‘agents of change’

1. What does the phrase ‘women as agents of change’ suggest and mean to you?
2. What factors have contributed to the positioning of women in Africa as ‘agents of change’? Why? What is the motivation?
3. Who will benefit from the construction of African women as ‘agents of change’?
4. To what extent are women seen as ‘agents of change’ for policy making? What kind policies? Which women? Who sees them as ‘agents of change’?
5. What role can African women’s groups play, in the current international and globalised context, to make development more effective?
6. What obstacles might women’s groups face trying to integrate into decision-making bodies?
7. To what extent has the representation of African women in development changed? What, in your opinion explains the change in African women’s representation?

Project Questions

1. Can you give an example of a policy or project you assisted with or assessed for gender?
2. To what extent did the policy/ project promote gender equality goals? / To what degree were the rights of women and girls promoted?
3. What was the impact of the policy/project on African women?
4. What were the challenges to implementing the policy/ executing the project?
5. What was the extent of women's participation in decision-making bodies?
6. What does capacity building in this policy/project mean? How is leadership facilitated?
7. What factors made this policy/project successful and unsuccessful?
8. What were the results and outcomes of the policy/project?
9. What major issues did you identify in your analysis?
10. What suggestions/ feedback did you give?

Conclusion

1. How would you describe the future of gender and development planning in Africa?
2. What do you consider the most important issues or challenges to overcome for progress to be made in gender and development planning?
3. What lessons have you learned from your involvement in the field of gender and development?
4. What measures should CIDA take to improve its "Policy on Gender Equality"?
5. What role do you see CIDA playing in gender and development in Africa in the future?

APPENDIX E

Sample of questions asked to professionals working for non-governmental organizations

The questions for non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives were tailored according to the experience of the individual and their position. I asked the interviewees to tell me about their role by e-mail before the interview. The questions in this sample were prepared for an NGO representative affiliated with Oxfam Canada however the individual was not speaking on behalf of Oxfam Canada in the interview.

Introduction

1. What is your position? How long have you been in this position?
2. What is your experience or background in gender and development issues?

Questions on Oxfam Canada

1. Why is Oxfam Canada promoting “women’s rights and gender equality” as one of its main objectives?
2. What approaches or theories influence Oxfam Canada’s gender equality policies and practices?
3. How is Oxfam Canada using a ‘rights based approach’ to advance or develop its objectives?
4. What are Oxfam Canada’s current program priorities for gender in Africa?
5. What work is Oxfam Canada doing to promote leadership training for women in Africa?
6. How does Oxfam Canada promote ‘gender equality’ goals to its partners?
7. What obstacles do you face promoting gender equality goals to your partners?
8. How has the way Oxfam Canada works with its partners changed over time? When did this change occur? What factors led to this change?
9. How does Oxfam Canada engage the Canadian public? Why is it important to Oxfam Canada to engage Canadians? Have the reasons for engaging Canadians changed over time? What factors led to this change?

Questions on women as ‘agents of change’

1. What does the phrase ‘women as agents of change’ suggest and mean to you?

2. What factors have contributed to the positioning of women in Africa as ‘agents of change’? Why? What is the motivation?
3. Who will benefit from the construction of African women as ‘agents of change’?
4. What role can African women’s groups play to make development more effective?
5. What obstacles might women’s groups face trying to integrate into decision-making bodies?
6. To what extent has the representation of African women in development changed? What, in your opinion explains the change in African women’s representation?

Questions on Partnerships

1. What is Oxfam Canada doing to “empower women” in African countries?
2. What role does Oxfam Canada play in the partnership?
3. How long has this partnership existed?
4. What are some of the challenges the organization faces to achieving its goals?
5. What are some of the organization’s achievements?

Questions on funding

1. What percentage of Oxfam Canada’s funding comes from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)?
2. What challenges are there to getting funding for the work done by Oxfam Canada?
3. What percentage of the partner organization is funded through the assistance provided by Oxfam Canada?

Conclusion

1. How would you describe the future of gender and development planning in Africa?
2. What do you consider the most important issues or challenges to progress in gender and development planning?
3. What role do you see Oxfam Canada playing in gender and development in Africa in the future?
4. What lessons have you learned from your involvement in gender and development issues?