'A Perfect Storm: what happens to women in the context of the perverse incentives of development aid funding'

Programme:

8.30-9.30 – registration
9.30-9.45 – welcome by Tina Wallace

9.45-10.45 – Deniz Kandiyoti and Ana Hozyainova
Chair: Nikki van der Gaag

Deniz Kandiyoti will provide a broad framework for donor action regarding gender and post-conflict reconstruction using the experience of Afghanistan as a case study. She will look at the contradictory premises of donors in the field of gender who on the one hand set up machineries for the advancement of women and apply "blueprints" for empowerment based on global experience, and on the other promote decentralisation and conflict resolution mechanisms, using so-called in formal justice institutions which have been quite relentlessly partiarchal.

Anastasiya Hozyainova will then build on Deniz's presentation with her own experience in Afghanistan **Gender Mainstreaming - Lost in Translation**. She will explore various factors that affect gender mainstreaming policies in Afghanistan, examining the socio-political environment as a cumulative result of a variety of historically and regionally layered influences -- various cultural norms of Afghanistan, Soviet legacy, Mujahideen, the Taliban and various Western influences.

Ana will argue that progress on achieving gender equality is stalled due to competing perceptions of gender mainstreaming and different approaches to protection and promotion of women's issues. One approach stems from the Western interpretation of gender mainstreaming as meaning equality of opportunities. According to this view, the key focus for gender mainstreaming should be developing a system that will create a level playing field for all members of the society. An alternative approach is focused on the protection of those already in the system, a model promoted under the Soviet rule, with the expectation that the protection would lead to attracting more women to join the system. The Soviet approach to the protection of women's rights continues to inform some of the work by those who were educated and worked under the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan.

The differences in the two approaches tend to play out in opposition to each other in the current situation in Afghanistan and create tensions not only between the donors and the

local actors, but also between various donors, resulting in a slow or lack of progress toward meeting gender mainstreaming objectives.

10.45-11.00 – Coffee, to lead into group discussions

11.00-11.45 – Group discussions
There will be 4-6 groups, which can be self-selected (but with a maximum of 15 people in each for ease of discussion). Each group will choose to discuss one or two particular issues that have emerged in the presentations so far, or that they feel are important to raise during the day. The group discussions are an opportunity for all participants in the workshop to bring their own experiences and examples of their work, and to contribute to the discussions taking place during the day. Each group should have a rapporteur who is able to record the main points being discussed, both for a short feedback at the end of the day, and for future reporting and sharing of the day.

11.45-12.45 - David Lewis and Maria Jaschok
Chair: Nikki van der Gaag

David Lewis will raise two main issues in his presentation. The first is the tendency for development policy to ignore its own history and constantly reinvent the wheel, focusing only on the promised improvements of the next set of concepts, tools and approaches. This is the 'perpetual present' of policy, in which no one looks back, and therefore no one learns lessons. One example of this tendency is the flood control projects in Bangladesh in the 1980s, and the new current donor emphasis on climate change today. The second is the way development policy has moved 'upstream' further into high level technocratic activity with the move towards 'sector wide approaches' and 'harmonisation', and far away from the lives of ordinary people. David will illustrate this with the example of the Bangladesh Reality Check initiative, in which teams live with households for a few days each year and document people's changing experiences with the ongoing health and education service reforms in an effort to 'reconnect' policy makers and donors with people's lives.

Maria Jaschok will talk about her participation over more than four years in an international research consortium concerned with 'enhancing the empowerment of women in Muslim contexts', which gives rise to reflections, insights and some tentative lessons. She will give a not quite nihilistic account of how idealism and aspiration encountered the apparatus of development and lost their way in the all too often bland ubiquity of LOGFRAMES. The presentation is part of what a group of former colleagues, participants in the afore-mentioned research consortium, have conceptualized as a multi-vocal exercise in reflexivity – which is on-going. Preparing to meet for a second time later in the year, academics, activists and academic/activists attempt to document and interpret the many and varied voices and positions which provided during the life-span of the project, to varying degrees of effectiveness, evidence and argumentation for and against the relevance of a core research framework to understanding women's lives and notions of development in diverse Asian Muslim contexts. Issues identified in joint reflexivity sessions point to various fault-lines, among these may be noted, for example,

the difficulty to reconcile established development praxis processes with transformative feminist agendas; the built-in hierarchal bias in conventional trajectories from donor agencies' identification of fundable, selected development priorities to their implementation and delivery through variously positioned specialists and practitioners; the difficulty of 'translating' gender and development core concepts across diverse linguistic, ethno-religious and socio-political contexts.

12.45-2.00 – lunch

2.00-2.45 – Group Discussions (cont'd)

2.45-3.30 – Panel: Poonam Joshi, Ashish Shah and Seri Wendoh.
Chair: Helen Baños Smith (to include Q&A)

3.30-3.45 – Tea, to lead into group discussions

3.45-4.45 – Group Discussions
Group discussions will be based on key issues that have arisen from the panel presentations (some examples might be 'gender mainstreaming vs. ring fencing', 'what accountabilities do and should private trusts/donors have', 'taking donors out of the equation, why do we still struggle to listen to the voices of women citizens?' … but these might well change as the session takes shape). There will be up to 6 groups.

4.45-5.15 – Brief feedback from groups
In their feedback, it would be helpful if groups could concentrate on the main points of their discussions, as concisely as possible. It would also be good if groups were able to identify any points of action – possible recommendations for practice, or ideas for publications, etc.

5.15-5.30 - Closing remarks by Fenella Porter