

**Learning from
Experience:**

**Lessons from
Integrating Gender
Into Democracy
And Governance
Training**

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1717 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 302, Washington, DC 20036 USA
Tel.: 202-332-2853 FAX: 202-332-8257 Internet: WIDinfo@widtech.org

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Learning from Experience: Lessons from Integrating Gender into Democracy and Governance Training

by

Marcia E. Greenberg

Women, Law and Development International

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PREFACE

In 1997, Sally Shelton-Colby asked the centers to work with G/WID to “ensure that [their] training includes adequate consideration of gender issues.” After nearly two years of working to integrate gender issues into training, WIDTECH’s democracy specialist suggested it was time to evaluate those efforts.

By its nature, integrating gender into U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) mainstream programs and activities is a collaborative process. It is predicated on the assumption that people in the agency value diversity and equity, and recognize the extent to which paying attention to status and power can strengthen programs for socioeconomic development. Not surprisingly, then, the quality of collaboration affects the quality of gender-integration efforts. Efforts to enhance awareness of gender issues in the agency’s technical training are most effective when, from one side, the staff in the centers and bureaus are open, interested, and committed; and when, from the other side, women-in-development specialists endeavor to provide technical expertise that is consistent with existing training goals.

It is such a spirit of collaboration that WIDTECH’s specialists have appreciated during their work with USAID’s democracy specialists. It is from such a sound partnership that the opportunity presented itself to work together to consider what approaches should be continued or strengthened in future efforts to integrate gender into technical training for the agency’s centers. But to do so, it was suggested to some key customers and collaborators—the agency’s democracy specialists—that we engage together in a process of stocktaking. Further, it was noted that such a process might also serve as a mutual learning vehicle, going beyond a sum of individual perspectives to a group thinking mode about what works and under what conditions.¹

On February 16, 1999, various USAID democracy specialists thought carefully and honestly about what they believe works in integrating gender into technical training. This report reflects their process and their recommendations.

¹ It was also hoped that the process would illustrate ways to increase debate, adult learning, and interaction for future democracy training. In fact, one participant in the stocktaking so much appreciated the process that she recommended that WIDTECH specialists be asked to design a joint G/WID-Democracy Center workshop on lessons learned from some of G/WID’s PROWID programs.

CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND

On January 23, 1997, Sally Shelton-Colby, assistant administrator for USAID's Global Bureau, issued a memorandum to Global Bureau Center directors about training for USAID's technical staff. It stated the following:

*In moving forward with the training, please keep the following in mind:
I have asked G/WID to work with each Center to ensure that the training includes adequate consideration of gender issues. G/WID has volunteered its own resources to help the Centers in this area.*

Pursuant to that directive, the Democracy Center and G/WID began collaborating to ensure that gender would be integrated into the center's training. Through its WIDTECH and WIDSTRAT projects, G/WID provided technical assistance for six training courses for USAID democracy officers: four regional courses (ANE, ENI, AFR, and LAC); a one-day training session in Washington, D.C., in July 1998; and the Partners' Conference/Training in December 1998.

It was at this juncture that WIDTECH's democracy specialist, who had been involved in planning and/or implementation of nearly all the aforementioned training courses, suggested that the Democracy Center and G/WID engage in a stocktaking process to assess what had been done and what might be done henceforth. A range of approaches to integrating gender had been introduced, each requiring different inputs and timing—and each addressing different issues.

To review and assess these approaches, WIDTECH's democracy specialist organized a workshop on February 16, 1999, to which were invited representatives of the Democracy Center, each bureau, USAID's Research and Reference Services, and the contracting firm Management Services Inc. (MSI). The attendees had participated in the democracy and governance trainings and had seen the gender-integration efforts planned and implemented.²

The stocktaking process had three parts:

- Participants were asked to brainstorm in two small groups to answer the question, "What is the objective of gender integration in democracy training?"³ They shared their ideas in a report-out session.

² Exceptions were made on two counts: (1) Susan Jay, who is with the Democracy Center and responsible for G/DG's Women in Politics Program, attended in Jerry Hyman's stead; and (2) the DG/WID officers of the ENI, ANE, and LAC bureaus were invited.

³ Participants were reminded that the question was not about the objective of gender integration in democracy programming and activities themselves, but in training.

- Participants were asked to consider a list of approaches that have been used to integrate gender issues into training (see box on page 4), and to provide feedback about which approaches they have found to be most effective.⁴
- Focusing on the approaches they had found to be the most favorable, the group formulated recommendations, which are presented later in this report.

⁴ To encourage a fresh and critical thinking process, WIDTECH developed a participatory process by which the stocktaking participants could evaluate the various approaches that may be used to integrate gender considerations into training. Using small dots, participants were asked to identify those approaches that have been most effective (green), least effective (red), or “in between” (yellow). This was done by placing the dots on a copy of the list written on flip chart sheets. Then, it was possible for all to see which approaches were most or least favorable. The results of that process are presented in Annex C.

CHAPTER TWO STOCKTAKING FINDINGS

OBJECTIVES FOR INTEGRATING GENDER INTO TRAINING

The stocktaking participants were asked to identify their objectives for integrating gender into training. The complete responses of the two small groups that engaged in brainstorming and discussion can be found in Annex B.

Participants gave highest priority to and agreed on the following points as those that constitute the aim of integrating gender into training:

1. To raise awareness and increase perceptions of gender implications for democracy and governance programming.
2. To increase the momentum or support for USAID assistance that takes account of gender issues.
3. To provide tools for democracy officers by which they can (a) identify where or when gender is a strategic issue, and (b) improve planning and design by lowering gender-based barriers and capitalizing on gender-related opportunities. Some participants called for a gender-analysis tool to help people assess a situation and make practical changes either to enhance the quantity or quality of women's participation or to redress gender-based imbalances.
4. To offer a forum for sharing experiences on how to improve the quality of women's participation and take gender relations into account in structuring activity or program implementation.
5. To improve reporting about women's participation and how USAID programs benefit women, as well as how taking gender into account can improve performance and results. Although the agency's guidance has changed and missions and partners are no longer required to report on gender, it is absolutely critical to show the benefits of including women and addressing gender-related barriers to their full and effective participation.
6. To utilize gender as a cross-cutting issue to bring together economic and political issues.

WHAT WORKS WELL— AND WHAT DOES NOT

To launch and focus discussion, workshop organizers gave participants the following list of approaches that can be used to integrate gender into training.

Various Gender-Integration Approaches Utilized in Democracy Training

- Prepare materials (articles, reference materials, and the like) for notebooks;
- Arrange for women to be special guests for dinners and banquets;
- Prepare a small, separate break-out session on gender issues, to run concurrently with other sessions;
- Identify and invite to training activities female participants and presenters;
- Provide a gender presentation for plenary sessions;
- Review proposed case studies or exercises for opportunities to integrate gender;
- Hold a small, voluntary round table one evening during training sessions;
- Offer comments in the course of plenary question-and-answer periods;
- Prepare the small-group facilitators for potential gender issues surrounding their topics;
- Provide gender-issue specialists for each break-out discussion session;
- Prepare the speakers, discussing with them their topics and presentations to find gender implications and opportunities;
- Ask speakers to include women or gender in their presentations (this can be done, for example, via an e-mail request);
- Prepare a gender-issue exercise or case study for another person's sessions;
- Review printed materials for gender concerns; and
- Prepare a list of questions and issues about gender for trainees and trainers to consider throughout the democracy and governance training.

In their discussions, participants supported some of these approaches but voiced concern about others.

Approaches the Participants Encouraged

- Participants agreed that collaborating with trainers or presenters is most effective and potentially has effects that last beyond the training session itself. They noted, however, that in this instance the best first step is to choose trainers and presenters who will cooperate with a WID specialist. Further, said participants, although it is recognized that a presenter may be selected for being the "subject guru," training organizers should try to choose presenters who are either gender-aware or at least open-minded and willing to improve the gender-related aspects of their presentations. Careful selection leading to collaboration will have four benefits: (1) considering gender concerns will be seen as a normal factor to address in democracy work; (2) raising gender implications in advance with a presenter may replace occasional speculation by a WID specialist about how a topic *might* raise gender concerns with the expert presenter's thoughtful suggestion that the topic *does* raise gender issues; (3) a collaborative thinking process may lead to new insights about unrecognized gender barriers or opportunities within the presenter's area of expertise; and (4) the presenter's greater understanding of gender issues in his or her area of specialization enables the presenter to address those issues outside of and beyond the immediate training activity.
- In the LAC regional training, it worked well to have chosen a focus country (El Salvador) where inclusion (and therefore inclusion of women) is a fundamental democracy issue.

Hence, the participating democracy officers tended to raise gender-related issues themselves.

- The workshop participants agreed it is helpful to review the basic training materials to check for gender issues rather than provide additional gender-issue-focused materials.⁵ Participants generally agreed that case studies are a better means of teaching than are presentations, and that such case studies could be written and reported to ensure that they incorporate gender issues. It was also noted, however, that case studies should not only *mention* women, but should have some meaningful, analytical basis for including women.
- Participants agreed it is important to find ways in which gender has practical application; that is, to find a “substantive hook” that shows how gender relates to a particular topic. Specifically, participants suggested that examples of the following are needed:
 - Occasions on which women’s participation, or attention to gender, has demonstrably accelerated, deepened, or broadened program impact; and
 - Instances in which failure to address gender may have led to erroneous assumptions and flawed planning or implementation.

Approaches the Participants Found Less Effective or Potentially Problematic

- The workshop participants said that including gender-related items in reading or background materials seems to have little impact, as trainees tend to have insufficient time to read training materials. Consequently, participants noted, it is only the rare person who looks at the materials, decides to read some of them, and finds the time to focus on supplementary gender-related materials.
- Standing up in plenary sessions to flag or raise gender issues can be useful, participants said, but is also problematic. This approach must be handled carefully, they agreed, because the person raising such issues could be viewed as a “gender cop”—in which case some in the room would listen but others would “turn off.” On the other hand, without someone to bring them up, gender issues would often go unacknowledged. Similarly, if gender issues were only embedded in a case study, naysayers could argue that the country in which they are working is simply different from that in the case study. Nonetheless, the participants noted, despite its problems, having someone in the plenary who brings up gender-related concerns keeps the concerns visible, raises them for people who might not realize where and how they can come up, and seems to encourage those trainees who are unaware of gender concerns or who have questions about gender to speak up. That said, two caveats are important, the workshop participants noted: (1) plenary comments should be limited to one or two key observations, and (2) gender specialists should be experts in the relevant general subject matter.

⁵ It was suggested that the “Democracy Officers’ Desk Reference” be reviewed.

FACTORS IN CHOOSING APPROACHES

The stocktaking participants were quite clear about what they thought would be the ideal gender-integration approaches. At the same time, however, as USAID democracy staff and people who had been involved in planning some of the training sessions, they acknowledged the constraints to taking certain approaches, including the following:

- Different approaches may differ in their degree of appropriateness, depending on the substantive focus of the training involved. For example, as democracy and governance training changes—from last year’s focus on strategy development to this year’s emphasis on performance measurement and results frameworks to focusing on subsectors—the effectiveness of different approaches may vary.
- The effectiveness or availability of some approaches is limited by resource constraints, such as those approaches that require more time and expense on G/WID’s part, and those that require additional time from training planners and presenters.
- Planners and organizers are often either contractors with limited level of effort (for example, MSI) or direct-hires who are pulled in many directions. Certain approaches would demand extra time from a training agenda that is already subject to too many demands. This is another reason, participants said, that it is better for gender issues to be embedded in the curriculum and presentations than to be included as an add-on that requires additional time in the schedule.
- Some approaches risk triggering negative reactions because they may irritate or turn off some people. Yet “safer” approaches may either fail to reach those who are harder to engage or require more time and resources.
- Some approaches may technically meet the Sally Shelton-Colby mandate cited earlier but still fail to be effective. Choosing an approach will depend on how much a center is committed to achieving real, in-depth understanding of how and where attention to gender issues will improve programming and results.

CHAPTER THREE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTEGRATING GENDER INTO FUTURE TRAINING

The workshop participants offered the following recommendations for future training efforts:

MAINTAIN CONTINUOUS AND EXPLICIT EFFORTS TO ADDRESS GENDER IN TRAINING

Raising awareness of gender issues and building the capacity to enhance attention to gender should be continuous and consistent elements of training, for two reasons:

- a) There are always new people taking on democracy work for USAID. Given the frequent changes within the Democracy Center and among various missions' democracy officers, gender integration cannot happen on a sporadic or periodic basis.
- b) Even when people are aware of the need to address gender issues, many are uncertain as to how to address them. Often they need assistance identifying specific, practical approaches to remedying gender imbalances.

The “ideal” approaches tend to require extra time and input from Democracy Center planners and trainers. In light of normal time constraints and prioritizing, then, there must be a strong message “from the top” that such time should be spent. If resource constraints compel G/WID and the Democracy Center to choose less-time-demanding approaches that are in turn less effective, those who opt for such approaches must recognize their limitations; namely, that they will yield less meaningful or less successful gender integration.

TAILOR GENDER ISSUES TO THE TRAINING FOCUS

To determine which approaches to use in integrating gender into training, it is important to consider several contextual factors, including the geographic region involved, the stage of democracy-building being addressed or represented, the technical focus of training (for example, whether it addresses the development of a democracy strategy), managing for results or subsector issues, and the experience of the trainees. For example, during training in the ENI region, it has often been necessary to point out gender issues to those who do not recognize them. In contrast, because people in the LAC region are already inclined to address the issue, opportunities come up during training to share best practices on engaging women or strengthening their participation.

WEAVE GENDER ISSUES INTO THE CURRICULUM RATHER THAN TREAT THEM AS ADD-ONS

The most effective approach to integrating gender into training is to make gender an integral part of the basic curriculum. It is important to look at the curriculum and identify those areas in which gender is particularly significant and then focus attention on them.

The most effective method of teaching gender issues is either to use case studies or, as noted above, to carefully integrate gender into the basic curriculum—as appropriate. This requires that *all those* who develop the curriculum or serve as speakers or teachers be both interested in cooperating and determined to commit the requisite time. Because people are grappling with multiple demands on their limited time, however, they will find time to integrate gender into their training only if they see it as an important part of their job. This in turn will depend on three factors: (1) that there be a clear message from the top about the importance of integrating gender; (2) that USAID acknowledge and reward those whose work incorporates gender considerations; and (3) that people believe that paying attention to gender considerations will improve the effectiveness of their work.

ANNEX A

SALLY SHELTON-COLBY DIRECTIVE



January 23, 1997

U.S. AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM TO THE GLOBAL BUREAU CENTER DIRECTORS

FROM: AA/G, Sally Shelton-Colby *JS*

SUBJECT: FY97 Technical Training

As was mentioned in last week's Center Directors meeting, we have approval and funding to proceed with training for the Agency's technical staff. Based on your submissions and M/HR's comments, a budget has been allocated to each Center (see attached).

In moving forward with the training, please keep the following in mind:

1. I have asked G/WID to work with each Center to ensure that the training includes adequate consideration of gender issues. G/WID has volunteered its own resources to help the Centers in this area.

ANNEX B:

**SMALL GROUPS' IDEAS ABOUT WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO INTEGRATE
GENDER INTO DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE TRAINING**

SMALL GROUPS' IDEAS ABOUT WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO INTEGRATE GENDER INTO DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE TRAINING

1. Strengthens democracy programming in countries and regions;
2. Raises awareness of gender-related implications or opportunities in work;
3. Shows how paying attention to gender issues can improve results, and builds understanding of how considering gender contributes to more effective democracy and governance training;
4. Increases the perception that gender is important;
5. Helps democracy officers do the following:
 - See gender issues within the process of problem definition,
 - Consider gender issues in strategic planning, such as
 - What is the role of women in democracy?
 - Where or when are gender issues important?
 - Take gender issues into account within program design, and
 - Produce better reports on the involvement of women so that such information may inform future programming;
6. Provides tools for analyzing gender implications in democracy work;
7. Continually promotes training of new people, to build “institutional memory” as individuals change roles and locations in the USAID system;
8. Promotes the sharing of lessons learned from the field, including examples of what has worked; and
9. Expands the quantity and quality of women’s participation in USAID’s democracy and governance programs.

ANNEX C

**WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS' REACTIONS TO APPROACHES TO
INTEGRATING GENDER INTO TRAINING**

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS' REACTIONS TO APPROACHES TO INTEGRATING GENDER INTO TRAINING

To encourage a fresh and critical thinking process, WIDTECH developed a participatory process by which the stocktaking participants could evaluate the various approaches that may be used to integrate gender considerations into training. Using small dots, participants were asked to identify those approaches that they have found to be most effective (green), least effective (red), or "in between" (yellow). They placed the dots on a copy of the list of approaches that was written on flip chart sheets. People were allowed only two of each color, so not all items received votes. "Favorites" are in boldface type.

The list was alternately black and red, indicated below with regular and *italicized* type. Participants were told only at the conclusion of the exercise that the red points (in italics) are those approaches that require greater collaboration, time, and effort from training designers and presenters.

1. Include gender-related materials in class notebooks (including articles, reference materials, and such).
least effective: 1
(It was agreed that people rarely read any training materials and are even less likely to see or read the gender-related pieces.)
2. Arrange for women to be special guests for dinners or banquets.
in-between: 1; least effective: 1
(Participants suggested this approach might work if it were voluntary and the speaker chosen was of special interest.)
3. Prepare a small break-out session on gender issues.
least effective: 5
(The participants anticipated that not very many people would participate in such sessions. In fact, there were approximately 12 participants during the break-out session at the AFR democracy and governance training in May 1998.)
4. *Identify and invite female training participants and presenters.*
most effective: 1; in-between: 1; least effective: 1
(Someone pointed out that it is important that the presenters be gender-aware, not that they necessarily be women.)
5. Provide gender presentations for plenary sessions.
most effective: 1; in-between: 2
(The "green" changed to "red" if the presentation were to focus only on gender awareness.)
6. *Review proposed case studies or exercises for opportunities to integrate gender.*
most effective: 5; in-between: 2

7. Hold a small, voluntary round table some evening.
in-between: 1; least effective: 2
(There was concern about how many people would actually attend a round-table discussion.)
8. Offer comments in the course of plenary question-and-answer periods.
in-between: 1; least effective: 2
(One “red” person was concerned about designating a “gender cop” for fear it could cause people to stop listening. This person had not attended the democracy and governance trainings that used this approach to integrating gender, however. Suggestions for improving or replacing this model included priming others in the group to make relevant statements, offering such statements in small groups, and offering a “WID summary” at the end of the plenary discussion.)
9. Prepare the small-group facilitators for potential gender issues.
most effective: 1; in-between: 2
10. Provide gender-issue specialists for each break-out or discussion group.
most effective: 2
(This is a good idea because it enables the WID specialist to provide input that matches the topic or subsector being addressed.)
11. **Prepare the speakers, discussing the topics and presentations to find gender implications and opportunities.**
most effective: 4
(This was a favorite among participants because of its effectiveness and because it helps the WID advisor to get to the core of the topic. There was concern about time constraints, however; namely, that the presentations might not be prepared in time to engage WID input.)
12. Prepare the speakers, asking them (for example, via e-mail) to include women or gender in their presentations.
in-between: 1; least effective: 1
13. Prepare a gender-issue exercise or case study for another person’s sessions.
in-between: 2; least effective: 1
14. Review printed materials for gender concerns.
least effective: 3; in-between: 1
(Participants said the effectiveness of this approach depends on the relevancy and usability of the materials.)
15. **Prepare a list of questions and/or issues about gender to consider throughout the democracy and governance training.**
most effective: 3
16. Pick a country where gender is an issue (added by participants).
most effective: 1