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Why gender matters in activism: feminism and social justice movements

Manjima Bhattacharjya, Jenny Birchall, Pamela Caro, David Kelleher and Vinita Sahasranaman

Social justice movements are able to generate deep and lasting changes that policy change and development interventions alone cannot achieve. However, in many cases, women's rights and gender justice remain low on the priorities of movements, even when women are active members. This article offers a preview of three case studies developed as part of the BRIDGE Cutting Edge programme on gender and social movements, which aims to inspire and support the inclusion of gender equality principles and practices in social justice mobilisation. The case studies feature the global human rights movement (with a focus on Amnesty International), the CLOC-Via Campesina movement in Latin America, and the Occupy movement in the United States. We summarise some of the strategies each social movement has used to encourage the integration of women's rights and gender justice in both internal and external-facing work; discuss some of the challenges that the movements have faced in implementing these strategies; distil common lessons from the three experiences; and end by suggesting some prerequisites for positive gender transformation in social justice movements.

Les mouvements en faveur de la justice sociale sont en mesure de donner lieu à des changements profonds et durables que les changements de politiques et les interventions de développement à eux seuls ne peuvent pas obtenir. Cependant, dans de nombreux cas, les droits des femmes et la justice de genre ne figurent pas parmi les priorités des mouvements, même ceux au sein desquels les femmes sont des membres actifs. Cet article propose un aperçu de trois études de cas mises au point dans le cadre du programme BRIDGE Cutting Edge sur le genre et les mouvements sociaux, qui cherche à inspirer et à soutenir l'inclusion des principes et des pratiques d'égalité entre les sexes dans la mobilisation en vue de la justice sociale. Les études de cas portent sur le mouvement mondial de défense des droits de l'homme (en se concentrant sur Amnesty International), le mouvement CLOC-Via Campesina en Amérique latine, et le mouvement Occupy aux États-Unis. Nous résumons certaines des stratégies que chacun de ces mouvements sociaux ont utilisées afin d'encourager l'intégration des droits des femmes et de la justice de genre dans les travaux internes et tournés vers l'extérieur; traitons de certains des défis que ces mouvements ont dû relever au

moment de mettre en œuvre ces stratégies ; condons les enseignements communs à partir des trois expériences ; et suggérons, pour finir, quelques préconditions pour une transformation positive sur le plan du genre au sein des mouvements en faveur de la justice sociale.

Los movimientos de justicia social pueden generar cambios profundos y duraderos que los cambios de política o las intervenciones de desarrollo no pueden lograr por sí solos. Sin embargo, en el caso de muchos movimientos, los derechos de las mujeres y la justicia de género continúan teniendo baja prioridad, aun cuando las mujeres participan activamente en los mismos. El presente artículo constituye un acercamiento a tres estudios de caso en torno a género y a movimientos sociales, realizados en el contexto del programa Cutting Edge de BRIDGE. Dicho programa pretende impulsar y apoyar la incorporación de los principios y las prácticas de igualdad de género en las movilizaciones por la justicia social. Los estudios de caso analizan el movimiento mundial por los derechos humanos (centrándose en Amnistía Internacional), el movimiento CLOC-Vía Campesina en América Latina y el movimiento Occupy en Estados Unidos. Los autores ofrecen un resumen de aquellas estrategias utilizadas por cada uno de estos movimientos para fomentar la integración de los derechos de las mujeres y de la justicia de género en el trabajo tanto interno como externo; asimismo, examinan algunos de los retos que deben enfrentar los movimientos al implementar estas estrategias; sintetizan los aprendizajes en común obtenidos de ambas experiencias y concluyen planteando algunos pre-requisitos que deben tenerse en cuenta para lograr una transformación de género positiva en los movimientos de justicia social.

Key words: gender; social movements; equality; activism; feminism; human rights; Occupy; Via Campesina; Amnesty International

Introduction

Social justice movements are able to generate deep and lasting changes, particularly in the political sphere, at levels that policy change and development interventions alone cannot achieve. The impact of the movements for democracy and political transformation in some countries of the Middle East and North Africa since 2010, which resulted in the overthrow of long-standing repressive political regimes, is testament to this fact. However, these examples have also demonstrated that even when women are active participants in social mobilisation, this does not necessarily guarantee that women's rights and gender justice are priority areas for movements. Neither do they show that improvements in gender equality will automatically be part of the changes these women help to create. In fact, gender justice remains low on the priorities of many social movements.

What are social movements? The feminist activist and academic Srilatha Batliwala has defined a movement as 'an organised set of constituents pursuing a common political agenda of change through collective action' (2012, 3). Progressive social justice movements seek to build the collective power of their excluded, marginalised or oppressed constituents so that they can access human rights and challenge dominant ideologies and power relations (Batliwala and Brown 2006).¹ They are distinguished by six characteristics: a constituency base or membership that is mobilised and collectivised; collectivised members in either formal or informal organisations; some continuity over time; a clear political agenda; collective actions and activities in pursuit of the movement's political goals; and the use of a variety of actions and strategies (*ibid.*).

Social movements and the organisations that are related to them can sometimes be confused. Relationships between movements and organisations are multifaceted; organisations may support movements and movement-building; movements may create organisations; organisations may be allied with movements; or they may provide services to movements (Batliwala 2012). Organisations 'play critical roles in building movements and as organising structures within them' (*ibid.*, 14).

The work of social movements and related organisations has never been more important. In the light of enormous external challenges across different regions – including fundamentalisms, militarism, accelerating climate change, pervasive gender-based violence, and financial crises – it is more important than ever to build inclusive alliances between progressive social justice movements. In order for any action or intervention around rights, democracy, and equality to be successful, it must include and value gender equality as part of its analysis and methodology for change (Horn forthcoming), and, critically, consider how to ensure social movements can better represent and further the interests of all involved in supporting and participating in them.

This article brings together findings from three case studies documenting the challenges and successes experienced by different social movements on gender. The case studies come from a three-year BRIDGE Cutting Edge programme on gender and social movements, which aims to inspire and support mobilisation around shared equity and justice concerns, and promote the inclusion of gender equality principles and practices.²

In this programme, we championed a collaborative approach, actively involving 'communities of practice' made up of over 100 activists and scholars from a range of global regions and social movements.³ Participants in the programme debated why movements need to engage more deeply on a women's rights/gender justice agenda; why women's movements need to reach out to other movements; and how feminists and gender justice advocates work within movements, influencing and re-shaping them through this engagement. In our work together, we shared our interest in how social movements think about gender inequality; both in the outside world, and within

their own internal structures. Above all, we were keen to explore the potential of feminist movement building to help build more effective social movements, better able to create positive transformation.

The three case studies featured in this article were researched and discussed by community of practice members.⁴ These focus on the global human rights movement (with a focus on Amnesty International), CLOC-Via Campesina in Latin America, and the Occupy movement in the United States. These three social movements differ from each other in many ways: age and history, focus and goals, geographic spread, and constituents. In this article, while recognising these differences and the specificities of each example, we highlight some of the key findings of each, and pull together some emerging common themes and strategies.

Gender, women's interests, and social movements

Recent experiences from the Middle East echo earlier stories from national liberation struggles in different contexts. For gender and development policymakers and practitioners, the obvious example is given by Maxine Molyneux (1985), in her classic analysis of the Nicaraguan liberation struggle. She showed how women there participated alongside men to further their shared interest in overthrowing tyranny, yet found in the aftermath of the struggle that their shared 'gender interests' as women received little attention from the new, supposedly democratic, regime (Molyneux 1985).

Why does this still keep happening, nearly 30 years after feminists first identified the tendency for evaporation of gender equality from social change agendas, once women have helped with the work of regime change? The answer to this lies in the male bias which underlies social movements. While gender justice and women's rights may be 'on the agenda' in civil society platforms and policies, practitioners and activists trying to achieve practical change on the ground still experience strong resistance within the 'deep structure' (Rao and Kelleher 2005, 64) of movements and affiliated organisations. 'Deep structure' is the taken-for-granted assumptions about the place of women in organisations and societies. These assumptions are below awareness level, and are therefore not talked about or challenged, but they determine how people think and act, and therefore ultimately frame the priorities and actions of social movements.⁵

In the sections below, we briefly profile the three social movements mentioned above, summarising some of the strategies that each has used to encourage the integration of women's rights and gender justice in both internal and external-facing work. Next, we discuss some of the challenges that the movements have faced in implementing these strategies. Finally, we bring together some common learning emerging from the three examples, and advance some suggestions on prerequisites for positive transformation on gender within social justice movements.

Strategies on women's rights in three change movements

Movements are created and given meaning by their members, and leadership and representation are key defining factors. Movements create activist and organising cultures; the idea of 'common cause' brings people together, although dividing lines can appear around strategies for activism (Horn forthcoming). It can be a struggle for movements to 'build internally the participatory, democratic, transparent, equitable and inclusive structures and decision making processes that they seek to enable in the external world' (Batliwala and Brown 2006, 210, in the context of transnational activism initiatives).

The three examples discussed below show that gender power relations play an important role in determining strategies for and cultures of activism, as they are embedded within the deep structures of social movements. Despite the significant differences in their age, scope, and institutional arrangements, all three social movements focused on in this section have, to some degree, adopted strategies to highlight the importance of women's rights and gender justice to their causes, and to begin the process of integrating these issues into both their external-facing activism and their internal structures, processes, and cultures.

The human rights movement

This section draws on a case study of the development of the human rights movement which was written by Manjima Bhattacharjya. It involved a literature review and interviews with key actors in the human rights and women's movements. A related study focusing on Amnesty International was compiled by David Kelleher and Manjima Bhattacharjya using similar methods.

'Human rights' was first defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), drawn up after World War II. The decades that followed saw movements around the world powerfully using human rights to address arbitrary detention or torture of people imprisoned for challenging the state, and in documenting abuse by dictatorial regimes. Discrimination on the basis of 'sex' was decried in the UDHR,⁶ but the concept of human rights and its ability to recognise gendered subjects continued to be contested (Batliwala 2007; Facio 1995).

A real enquiry into the status of the world's women came with the United Nations (UN) Decade of Women (1975–1985), when the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was created and rising numbers of feminist activists came together over three world conferences (Bunch 1990). Connections made deepened over time and led to a coalition, the Global Campaign on Women's Human Rights.

The slogan, 'women's rights are human rights', resonated within the UN and the international human rights community, as women's testimonies moved the UN General Assembly to pass the Declaration to End Violence Against Women and

appoint a Special Rapporteur to report on it. As the 1990s drew to an end, an unmistakable feminist presence made its way into international human rights law. Rape was recognised as a weapon of war, and war criminals prosecuted for sexual violence; gender-based crimes were included in the 1998 Rome Statute that set up the International Criminal Court (Spees 2003). In October 2000, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 established women's rights as a matter of national and international security. Women's movements were key players in creating these changes, as were 'femocrats' within the UN system (Sandler and Rao 2012).

Major human rights organisations began to commit to long-term work on women's rights as a result of these changes, and lobbying and advocacy by feminist activists both internally and externally. Amnesty International is an interesting example of a movement that conforms with Srilatha Batliwala's definition given earlier, but is also a global bureaucratic organisation with many hundred staff. At the same time, Amnesty represents only a portion of the human rights movement globally.

In Amnesty's case there has been a 25-year evolution toward including women's rights as a valued part of its work. Critical to this progress was the role of external pressure from feminist activists, and the work of members, staff, and colleagues from the broader human rights movement in re-thinking Amnesty's approach to human rights to include women's rights.

In 1994, Amnesty published its first report on women's rights (Amnesty International 1994). While some Amnesty sections at the national level had already been working on women's rights, a small Gender Unit was set up at the International Secretariat to steer the women's rights agenda. A particular focus for the efforts of this unit was Amnesty's global Stop Violence Against Women (SWAV) campaign. This campaign was envisaged as a strategy to tackle gender-based violence, but also to ensure that the expanded Amnesty mandate, adopted in 2001, would be put into practice. This expanded mandate widened Amnesty's focus to include economic and social rights, in addition to the civil and political rights it had focused on thus far. Evaluation of the SWAV campaign highlighted that it had mixed results, but noted that it did contribute to changes in attitudes, awareness, policy, and law in many countries (Wallace and Baños Smith 2010).

During this period, the number of women in senior leadership positions in Amnesty increased, and the capacity of individual staff on gender equality issues began to grow. Work has now begun in earnest on sexual and reproductive rights, and new partnerships have been formed with women's groups. Just before the SVAV campaign ended in 2010, Amnesty's International Council adopted a new strategic plan which prioritised gender mainstreaming in principle,⁷ although challenges remain in practice (Kelleher and Bhattacharjya forthcoming; Wallace and Baños Smith 2010).

In the human rights movement, as the discourse of women's rights as human rights began to take hold, mutual learning occurred between women's and human rights

movements, and joint strategies emerged. Women's movements have achieved good results when they have used human rights tools, and human rights movements have become more grounded and alert to multiple discriminations. Informed by both movements, a concept like 'women's human rights defenders' has found increasing relevance, used creatively by diverse movements which participated in the Tahrir Square uprising, ranging from lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTI) activists targeted for their work against discrimination on the basis of sexuality, to Egyptian feminist groups countering the backlash against women.⁸

The CLOC-Via Campesina movement in Latin America

The CLOC-Via Campesina study was written by Pamela Caro. It was based on interviews with ten women leaders of CLOC member organisations in seven Latin American countries, as well as interviews with male leaders in Chile.⁹

The Coordinating Network for Latin American Rural Organisations (CLOC) is the Latin American branch of the global Via Campesina movement. CLOC was founded in 1994 to bring together the struggle of grassroots organisations across four continents to organise rural peoples from Latin America, strengthening their sense of shared identity and interests, and tabling their demands. CLOC is a movement that has been formed by rural organisations of women and men who live on and from the land, small and medium agricultural producers, indigenous peoples, landless people, youth groups, migrants, Afro-descendants, and male and female agricultural workers. Its aim is to defend access to land, territory, water, and seeds.

CLOC involves 84 organisations from 18 countries. Of these, approximately 10 per cent are women's organisations, with the vast majority being mixed organisations. However, CLOC has a strong focus on women's rights and gender equality, with a growing number of female leaders, strategies to achieve gender parity in decision-making, and prominent campaigns on violence against women and food security, sovereignty, and gender. This focus is reflected in one of the movement's slogans: 'With women home to stay, agrarian reform is delayed'.

In the work of CLOC, and its wider work as part of the Via Campesina movement, many strategies have been implemented to further the interests of rural woman. Women leaders in CLOC and Via Campesina have worked hard to place women's issues on the table. In 1997, CLOC held its first Women's Assembly. This was an initiative of women leaders in the movement, and was intended to place on the table the particular problems and demands of rural women. At this assembly, an agreement on gender parity was signed, stating that 50 per cent of those within the movement's decision-making spaces must be women. Women leaders have increased in number across the CLOC, and according to the movement leaders interviewed, they are seen by their peers as hard-working, bold, creative, and brimming with ideas. In order to acquire visibility and be considered as equals by male leaders within the movement,

communities, and institutional authorities, women leaders have come together to form autonomous women's spaces within the mixed organisations that are members of the CLOC. These spaces have been crucial in building and strengthening women's opinions, and have enabled them to gain voice and opportunities to be heard within the movement.

CLOC has set up training schools for women, where the intrinsic links between gender and class inequalities are highlighted, and students go on to become role models for other women. Female leaders and training school graduates then question and challenge male-dominated organisational models and behaviours within the movement, and they also work with communities to collectively build the content of the brand of rural grassroots feminism that they advocate. Finally, participants in creating the case study felt that the movement has taken advantage of increasing internet access to help ensure women can connect, participate, and gain confidence.

The Occupy movement

The Occupy study was written by Vinita Sahasranaman. It was informed by desk research, a panel discussion of women involved in the Occupy movement at the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) global forum 2012, and a detailed follow-up interview with one of the panellists.¹⁰

The Occupy movement advocates the creation of a model of global economic development that will be fair in its distribution of wealth and economic power. After the Egyptian revolution in Tahrir Square, the Occupy movement is perhaps the most significant mass social movement of this decade so far. It has brought economic justice back on to the international agenda of social justice, to the extent that the word 'occupy' is widely associated with the movement. Its slogan, 'We are the 99%', succinctly captures the concentration of power among the top 1 per cent of corporations and billionaires who dominate global political and economic discourses.

Occupy is the youngest of the three movements focused on in this article, although it should be noted that the movement for economic rights in the United States already had a significant history before Occupy came into being in 2011. Occupy was partly inspired by protests in Tahrir Square, and the Indignados movement in Spain.¹¹ The first widely publicised protest of the movement is known as Occupy Wall Street in New York City's Zucotti Park in September 2011.¹² Subsequently, the movement spread to 600 communities across the United States and beyond to 95 cities in 82 countries (Adam 2011; Walters 2011). Occupiers set up encampments and carried out largely peaceful demonstrations. These encampments not only helped the movement in sustaining pressure on local and national governments, but also sparked debates on the relationship between public space and the community – literally, in English at least, 'the public' – who is seen worthy of claiming it.

Within Occupy, the seeds of strategies to promote more inclusive movement building have begun to grow. Women were everywhere within the Occupy movement's mobilisation and protests; it is significant that in these early days there were no specific demands related to women's economic rights, or attempts to integrate feminist economic analyses into its vision of alternative economic realities.

At Occupy Wall Street, a series of Feminist General Assemblies were organised that addressed not only women's role in an economic justice movement, but also took up issues of patriarchy, heterosexism, and transphobia. Safe spaces committees were formed within encampments, in order to build secure spaces for women to camp and meet. Occupy caucuses have been set up for women, as well as people of colour and queer people, and groups such as Occupy Patriarchy and Women Occupying Wall Street have emerged, in order to highlight women's demands from the Occupy movement. The caucuses have at times blocked proceedings, to demand changes in language.¹³

Challenges

Despite the strategies and successes described in each of the three case studies in the previous section, and the determination of advocates of women's rights and gender justice to transform social justice mobilisation, a range of challenges and barriers have been experienced, many of which still remain. They are by no means unique to the three movements discussed here, and will be familiar in some form to members of many different social movements. One of the most important aspects of our programme on gender and social movements has been to discuss and analyse these common challenges running throughout different experiences.

A key set of challenges involves integrating gender concerns into organisational missions and structures. For example, as stated above, Amnesty International is, in addition to a social movement in its own right, also an organisation at the heart of the human rights movement. It has a complex structure and multiple power centres involving country sections, members, and executive staff at the international headquarters; internal change appears to have been uneven, despite a commitment to gender mainstreaming at strategic level. The case study indicated that in some countries there has been considerable progress, while there has been less in other parts of the movement. There has been a gap between priority setting at governance level and implementation, and the difficult but necessary work of creating a culture of valuing women's rights and gender justice work has begun in many quarters but is far from accomplished. When Amnesty's Gender Unit became the Gender and Sexuality Unit in 2010, scepticism was expressed as to how an intersectional approach would work, given the limited success so far in integrating gender issues. In addition, complications and confusion have arisen around dealing with non-state actors and hurdles posed by culture and religion.

CLOC-Via Campesina's experience highlights the familiar story that gender parity as a goal in decision-making bodies ensures equal numbers of women and men participate, but this does not necessarily mean that women take a central role, or that women are 'empowered'. In spite of the movement's success in achieving gender parity at both leadership and membership levels, male-dominated organisational models and cultures persist, and there are still discriminatory practices, explicit sexist expressions, and sexual harassment. It seems according to the sources drawn on for the CLOC case study that many men in the movement still view women as 'complementary' in terms of offering skills and points of view which are useful as an addition to those of men, but not necessary and fundamental. In addition, many men still tend to see class struggle as taking precedence over gender.

For these reasons, it has been challenging for women in CLOC to gain buy-in from men to gender equality training and discussions. It seems that more work is needed to engage men, involving them in ongoing discussions with women and young people so that they can understand the need for equality as a genuine priority rather than a response to momentary issues, and so that they too can speak about gender equality, sexual and reproductive rights, and defend the right to diverse sexual orientations.

Other challenges arose in the social movements we focused on around tensions between women's rights and other social justice issues. One example comes from Amnesty where, in 2009, there was a public confrontation between Amnesty senior management and a staff member who had led the Gender Unit for almost a decade. The point of controversy was Amnesty's decision to put on a public platform a survivor of torture at Guantanamo Bay who was also alleged to be affiliated with violent, fundamentalist groups. The question posed was: How could Amnesty associate itself with a person or group that was against the fundamental rights of women and sexual minorities? (Kelleher and Bhattacharjya forthcoming; Sawney and Daniel 2010).

In some social movements focusing on minorities in particular, women's rights can also be understood as coming into conflict with particular forms of 'cultural rights'. A challenge faced by women in CLOC as they advocate for gender equality and feminist concerns has been the difficulties talking about feminism and gender in indigenous communities, some of which highlight ancestral values associated with traditional culture, such as respect for the family and Mother Earth. Women leaders report that some people fear feminism will destroy the family and the traditional heterosexual model, and that this will affect family-based agricultural production. The rural popular feminism that CLOC promotes seeks to highlight the inequality that has been naturalised within cultural constructions of families, organisations, and society at large. Women leaders seek to build political processes and construct analyses of the issues that have feminism at their heart, not as an add-on or imposition.

In turn, in the young Occupy movement, 'inclusion' and 'diversity' became severely contested terms, and many participating activists in the United States said

that the movement's focus on wealth concealed other differences based on gender, class, race, and sexual orientation. Represented as largely 'leaderless' by the media, in practice Occupy's leadership was a group of white men. In projecting itself as leaderless, the movement lost the opportunity to question and reflect on its own internal dynamics.

The case study of Occupy suggests that the movement exhibited many of the classic fault lines of social movement organising. The tensions of how a movement frames its arguments to include women, people of colour, disabled people, and LGBTI people came to the surface. Some people felt these tensions were never sufficiently considered, or ignored altogether. For others, Occupy could and did present an opportunity like no other to highlight these factors.

For example, as people began to occupy public spaces across the world, the personal safety of women within the movement became a serious issue. Women faced sexual harassment while participating in protests, and this was raised at General Assembly meetings. But women also raised key questions about the role and relation of women in Occupy. Should they remain limited to issues of sexual harassment and safety? What about their demands for economic justice, knowing they were paid less, that poverty affected them in unique, distressing ways; that women of colour are acutely affected by foreclosures, and that queer/non-conforming people do not find jobs easily? As Emi Kane told us in an interview during the compilation of our case study, 'the transformative potential of a movement is only as present as the strength or voice of the most marginalised'.¹⁴

Lessons learnt and prerequisites for positive transformation

As we have learnt more about these three movements, and spoken to the women and men who are struggling to integrate gender equality issues into the heart of their movements, we have begun to observe some emerging common threads around lessons learnt and the conditions needed for positive transformation of gender within social justice mobilisation.

The crucial role of feminists and gender justice activists and advocates in creating change within movements

It is clear that in many cases, change within both the external agendas and the internal workings of the social movements we focused on has been pushed through by determined and tenacious advocates of gender equality. Feminist groups and individuals have, in a number of ways, been responsible for 'gendering' the strategic direction of entire movements (as in the case of the human rights movement), and in challenging and changing the specific internal dynamics of movements and their related organisations (as the women of CLOC continue to do).

This influence of feminist women is not limited to social justice movements working on issues traditionally viewed as involving women's rights. These advocates and activists are arguing for the relevance of gender issues to economic justice, food sovereignty, and agricultural reform. They are 'gendering' their movements from the inside.

The continuing barriers and hierarchies of rights that feminists and gender justice advocates face within movements

Despite the significant achievements of feminist and gender justice activists, and the often hidden but important role of 'femocrats' within the organisations and agencies linked to social movements and offering them support, hierarchies of rights and demands are still common. Gender justice and women's rights still tend to get pushed downwards in these hierarchies. As stated earlier, women leaders of CLOC-Via Campesina are faced with arguments that demands for class equality must come before gender, and feminist activists involved in the Occupy movement have battled to ensure that gender issues are not seen as an optional extra, disengaged from economic justice. Tensions have emerged within Amnesty, too, where advocates of gender equality felt that women's rights were temporarily placed aside in favour of other more 'pressing' demands. Deferring women's rights and gender justice until 'after the revolution' only results in a failure to recognise how central gender inequality is to all forms of discrimination and oppression (Horn forthcoming).

The importance of gaining buy-in and commitment for truly transformative change

Our case studies illustrate the importance of a movement's central body or organisation in ensuring that women's rights and gender justice can really be embraced within the movement's work. Whether this is deciding upon action to create gender parity in membership or decision-making, or pushing forward strategic plans and campaigns to 'engender' a movement's work, senior-level commitment is a key driver of change.

However, in the Occupy movement, which was – as stated above – characterised by a purported lack of hierarchy or a central organising body, there are opportunities for an alternative route to change. Whether these opportunities are realised will depend on the impact that caucuses for equality issues can have on the less visible, but nonetheless present, structures that determine the strategy and internal dynamics of the movement, and the inclusivity and transparency of these structures.

Whatever route is taken, and no matter which drivers for change are at work, a commitment to gender equality cannot be restricted to increasing female numbers or addressing safety issues for women. It must go further and deeper; re-imagining the goals of movements and recognising the centrality of gender equality in all social justice issues. All social movements, including women's movements, need to commit

to a holistic approach to inequality, recognising identities based on gender, ethnicity, caste, age, class, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability, and championing arguments and actions that respond to the human rights demands of everyone.

Recognising and transforming culture, power dynamics, and hierarchies within movements

Even where buy-in and commitment at senior level is achieved, and policies on equality are created, real transformation in favour of gender justice and women's rights cannot occur without changes to the working culture of movements and related organisations. Social movements are not immune from bullying, sexual harassment, and violence, which can have the effect of marginalising women's participation in movements. In two of our case studies, separate spaces for women or other marginalised groups were created in order to provide an arena where they could strategise, support each other, and build their own understanding on issues around equality and rights. This has proved invaluable in building strength for negotiations on gender equality within the movements, but it has also proved necessary for issues of women's rights and gender justice to be debated and explored in broader, mixed spaces, so that gender is not siloed into a small range of 'women's issues'.

It seems a combination of high-level strategies and educational initiatives is needed, in order to recognise and change internal power dynamics and hierarchies. There must be a commitment to continuing conversations on gender and power, even if these conversations are difficult. Gender equality implies to many the loss of male privilege; this is why it is so important to work with both men and women, exploring the perspectives, hopes, and fears of others, and developing better understanding of the benefits gender equality could offer everyone.

Developing and using tailored and appropriate strategies and methods

Movements need knowledge and pedagogical methods that can translate gender equality approaches into different contexts and situations. There is a big difference between knowing about gender and knowing how to integrate it into daily work. Movements and their related organisations cannot simply import gender equality strategies from outside; they need room to digest ideas about women's rights and gender justice and translate them into terms and approaches that fit with their context and ways of working.

For example, in CLOC-Via Campesina, women leaders have found that small groups, workshops, and informal events, as well as chatting around the fireplace or stove on a daily basis, are often better arenas for the promotion of equality than large assemblies, because they bring political depth to the discussion and enable ownership of the issues. This is where the CLOC's popular rural feminism is growing, in an approach that is intrinsically linked and relevant to the movement's broader goals on equality and rights.

In the Occupy movement, learning took place in newly formed caucuses, where members were able to explore and develop their own language of equality. In this way, actors are engaging in feminist movement building: 'creating dynamic, learning movements' with spaces for 'critical reflection and re-grouping for greater impact' (Batliwala 2012, 22).

Committing to the long haul

Finally, our case studies show that the journey towards social justice mobilisation that integrates gender equality in a transformative, meaningful way can be long and difficult, and requires huge amounts of energy and perseverance. Gains are achieved but backlash and regression can also occur along the way.

Great strides have been made within the human rights movement in the recognition of women's rights as human rights; this has taken place over a period of 40 years, but some achievements are currently under threat due to the rise of conservative fundamentalisms and the spread of economic crises. The Occupy movement, growing out of these crises, is at the start of its journey, and has the opportunity to embrace feminist movement building at an early stage; what road it will take remains to be seen. In contrast, progress on gender equality within the CLOC-Via Campesina movement has been driven over two decades due to the systematic, constant work of visionary women filled with conviction. They feel there is no possibility for going backwards on their advances and triumphs to date, because women's awareness of their rights cannot now be taken away. But at the same time, they have no doubt in recognising the challenges that remain.

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Notes

- 1 Of course, not all social movements are progressive; some have formed around conservative religious fundamentalism, ethnic nationalism, and neo-Nazism, at times with significant active participation from women.
- 2 The programme was run by BRIDGE at the Institute of Development Studies, UK, and started in 2011. It is due to end in 2014. The programme is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and also supported by the UK Department for International Development, Irish Aid, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. A major output of the programme will be a *Cutting Edge Pack*, which will be published, along with a range of related multimedia and multilingual resources, in autumn 2013. More information can be found at: www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/go/cutting-edge-programmes/gender-and-social-movements.
- 3 These community of practice members were suggested by the gender and social movements programme expert advisory group: Srilatha Batliwala, David Kelleher, Marivic Raquiza, Hope Chigudu, Patricia Ardon, and Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, as well as by the BRIDGE International Advisory Committee and other BRIDGE partners. Members took part in five online discussions: two global discussions, one Spanish-language discussion, one for young activists, and another for gender equality advocates in mixed social justice movements.
- 4 Additional case studies written for the programme also focused on the sex worker and lesbian/gay/bi/transsexual (LGBTI) movements in East Africa, democracy activism in Egypt, and the global peace-building movement.
- 5 It should be noted, of course, that analysing deep culture is not only important in understanding the male bias which exists in mainstream social movements, which results in failures to address gender justice fully. Deep culture analysis can be used in analysing how the interests of other identity groups fail to be furthered also. It is therefore relevant to exploring the ways in which women's movements themselves have often failed to take on board the interests of women from marginalised identity groups. Feminist movements have not always been inclusive of other forms of injustice within struggles for gender equality, and have been criticised for marginalising the interests of groups such as disabled women or sex workers (Datta 2011; Price 2012; Shah 2011).
- 6 Article 2 of the UDHR states 'Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status'. The entire UDHR can be viewed at: www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml.
- 7 More details on gender mainstreaming in Amnesty's strategic plan can be found at: www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/POL50/002/2010/en/541c7524-7ecd-426e-b091-13ab79e6d18d/pol500022010en.pdf.
- 8 Women human rights defenders is a term used to describe women who are active in the defence of women's rights globally, and are targeted for what they do. It has also been extended to include human rights activists defending women's and sexual rights.

- More information is available from the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition: www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/. For an example of how the concept is being used in Egypt, see Nazra for Feminist studies: <http://nazra.org/en>.
- 9 Video interviews with seven of these leaders are available at the BRIDGE video channels: www.youtube.com/user/BRIDGESocialmovement and <http://vimeo.com/bridgesocialmovements>.
 - 10 Maria Poblet, Emi Kane, and Jodie Evans took part in a panel discussion at the AWID forum in 2012 on 'Occupy: a space for a feminist politic?' Maria's keynote speech at the forum where she talks about Occupy is available at: <http://cjjc.org/en/maria-poblets-blog>.
 - 11 More information on the Indignados movement can be found at: www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2012/0516/Spain-s-Indignados-The-original-Occupy-reemerges-with-force, www.culturespain.com/2011/11/24/outrage-the-indignado-movement-ubuntu-and-a-new-philosophy/ and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011%E2%80%9C93present_Spanish_protests.
 - 12 A timeline of significant events and protests can be found at: <http://theweek.com/article/index/220100/occupy-wall-street-a-protest-timeline>.
 - 13 One example of this is documented in Manissa McLeave Maharwal's blog: www.racialicious.com/2011/10/03/so-real-it-hurts-notes-on-occupy-wall-street/.
 - 14 Emi Kane is a community organiser based in the United States who is on the national steering committee of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence.

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