

The Absence of a Gender Justice Framework in Social Justice Organizing

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Background

This working paper examines whether and how a “gender lens” is incorporated into the work of social justice organizations, and the consequences for those organizations and the social justice movement when it is not. It is based on interviews with eleven social justice leaders conducted in February and March 2008.

Two things motivated this project. First of all, I wanted to follow up on the work of the New Women’s Movement Initiative.¹ That initiative brought together dozens of feminist leaders over the course of 2 ½ years for an extended conversation about how to heal the fissures within the feminist movement, how to find common ground, and how to revitalize the women’s movement. For the most part, participants in the New Women’s Movement Initiative agreed that the women’s movement was not mobilizing new constituencies or maximizing it’s potential as an agent of social change. Though much of the energy of the initiative devolved down to the business of who would be at the receiving end of whatever funding streams might be on tap, the New Women’s Movement Initiative did surface some significant insights and areas of consensus along the way. Those most relevant to this work are:

- The need to promote the principles and values of social justice feminism [See Appendix].
- The impact of the generational transition underway in the women’s movement, and the power and continuity issues that transition raises.
- The need to engage broader constituencies with issues of women’s human rights and gender justice.

The second motivation for this project was my own experience in the social justice movement. I have observed, over many decades of activism, that it is possible today to consider oneself a committed social justice organizer or human rights advocate yet have no functional understanding of how sexism operates. All too many organizers and activists affirm a commitment to women’s human rights or gender justice while having no clear idea of sexism as a systemic phenomenon with tangled historical, social, economic and cultural roots and multiple manifestations. Many of the activists whose work in low-income communities is informed by fairly sophisticated understandings of the dynamics of racism and class privilege – and whose work and commitment I respect – have no framework for understanding how gender dynamics play out in their communities, among their members and constituent, or within their organizations.

At the same time, again, I have witnessed the frustrations of women who are working in the context of mixed-gender organizations, networks or coalitions. Too often their efforts to introduce gender issues

¹ A report on the New Women’s Movement Initiative can be found at the web site of the Ms. Foundation for Women: <http://www.ms.foundation.org/wmspage.cfm?parm1=480>.

are resisted or undermined, or, despite their interest in incorporating a gender lens, they can't figure out where to begin.

As one of those interviewed observed: *There hasn't been a women's movement that shaped this generation of young people. Leaders may want to do better on gender, but they are stuck.*

Hypothesis

Based on these experiences, I came to this project with a working hypothesis. Within the world of social justice organizations:²

- Gender is rarely mobilized as a framework or analytic lens to understand the critical social issues with which they are engaged.
- Program goals and strategies are rarely formulated, articulated, pursued or evaluated in ways that take gender into account.
- Staff and leadership development are rarely conceptualized or implemented in gender sensitive ways.
- The absence of a gender justice lens has negative consequences in the work of social justice organizations, as well as in the broader movement.

Those social justice organizations that are led by women, mobilize women members and constituents and are specifically focused on gender justice issues are exceptions to this pattern. On the other hand, the presence of women in leadership is no guarantee that a gender justice framework will be in play.

Methodology

I explored this hypothesis by conducting interviews with eleven activists and organizers, ten women and one man. Most of those interviewed were, at the time of the interviews, working as executive directors or senior staff in social justice non-profits.

Of the eleven interviewees, five were working in organizations led by women and focused on gender issues related to worker's rights, reproductive rights, immigrant rights and economic justice. The other six were working in mixed-gender organizations on issues such as education reform, globalization, community empowerment and immigrant rights. Of those working in women's organizations, all had

² For the purpose of this project, my working definition of a social justice organization is one whose social change work is based on the presumptions that:

- (1) Problems of inequality, injustice and discrimination are not primarily individual and attitudinal but are based, more fundamentally, on structural, systemic and institutional inequities.
- (2) Visions and strategies for change have to target the structures, systems and institutions that sustain and reproduce these inequities.
- (3) This means directly challenging the power(s) that is vested in the status quo.
- (4) A core strategy for doing so is to empower, mobilize and organize grassroots constituencies, implementing a bottom-up theory of change.

had experience in mixed-gender organizing, either through coalition work or through prior organizational affiliations. Of those working in mixed-gender organizations, all were in organizations in which women constituted a substantial or predominate portion of staff, members and constituents.

Nine of those interviewed were people of color: Asian American, Latina/o, African American. Two were white.

Those interviewed worked in organizations engaged in local organizing efforts, statewide and national campaigns. They included small and mid-size community-based organizations, a network of social justice organizations, a national membership organization, and a large faith-based network.

I chose to interview people whose work and opinions I respected and who had sufficient experience and perspective to have informed opinions about the issue at hand. Most of those I interviewed were in the 30-40 year-old age range. Two were 55+. This was intentional. I was especially interested in the views of people who had considerable tenure in social justice organizing, whose politics had not been shaped at the height of the feminist movement, and who were likely to continue in leadership roles for many years to come.

The interviews took the form of open-ended conversations, most conducted via telephone, loosely organized around a series of questions, including:

1. Demographic profile of organization: Is your staff, membership, constituency predominately male or female? Predominately people of color or white? In which economic strata do you organize?
2. Is/how is a gender perspective incorporated into your work at? In organizing, in your educational work, in your staff development?
3. What's positive about how you approach this work in your organization? What's missing?
4. Are you more or less effective at incorporating issues of race and class than gender in the organization's work? Why do you think that is?
5. What would it take for your organization to be better at incorporating gender?
6. Regarding the social justice movement overall, what are the most serious problems in relation to gender issues? What does the movement do well?
7. Anything to add?

I assured the anonymity of participants so they could speak freely about organizations with which they continue to be engaged.

Findings

A. A gender justice lens is rarely incorporated into the work of mixed-gender social justice organizations.

Several of those interviewed felt either that gender was rarely, if ever, incorporated in their organization's work; or that it was incorporated in unsophisticated, unskillful ways; or that it was only brought up for consideration in relation to potential sources of funding.

Of the six activists working in mixed-gender organizations, none believed that gender issues were adequately addressed in program planning or staff development. Among these organizations, some had

highly developed training processes or frameworks of analysis with regard to race or class inequities, together with a total absence of orientation to gender. Two comments along these lines:

Gender analysis was never incorporated into the work. The organization had a strict class-based analysis and getting a race analysis incorporated was considered a big coup and a big accomplishment. When it came to gender the feeling was, “it’s too complicated; we’re not a women’s organization.”

Gender is generally not incorporated. We have a highly developed race analysis and training for members and staff in race analysis. It’s constantly integrated into our framework and analysis of issues, not just a matter of strategy and tactics. But this level of analysis doesn’t exist in terms of gender.

Respondents also spoke to the experience of working in campaigns in which women were the majority of the targeted constituency, but the organization or coalition lacked a foundation of gender sensitive recruitment, promotion or organizer training – even at the level of how, where and when meetings were conducted. One activist spoke to the experience and frustration of raising problems of gender dynamics with a group only to have the problems get worse through unskillful handling of the situation.

Two respondents mentioned that gender had come up in terms of funding strategy. When organizations approached women’s foundation they would emphasize the inclusion of women in a particular programmatic initiative, while having no functional analysis of gender, no gender-specific programming, and no gender-specific measures of evaluation. In other words, gender was used as a “funding hook” without any organizational commitment to developing consistent gender politics.

For obvious reasons, those respondents working in women’s organizations had much more intentional approaches to developing analyses, campaign tactics and staff training that took gender into account. However, they faced frustrations in dealing with allies and coalitional partners who ignored or minimized gender issues.

Some of these organizations have built workers’ rights campaigns based on complex analyses that integrate, for example, gendered division of labor, labor force segmentation and discrimination, trends in immigration and vulnerabilities related to citizenship status, exposure to gendered violence in the workplace, the impact of corporate globalization on local economies, etc. Some have created training materials and processes focused on gender to promote the education and leadership development of staff, members and constituents, including training on issues of heterosexism and transphobia. To the frustration of those who practice at the intersections, however, this work unfolds in the context of a broader social justice movement that is resistant to a gender justice approach.

The broader social justice movement has never found the gender argument compelling. For example, in the struggle over NAFTA, women’s labor was never a central concern. Women always came at the end of the sentence, if they were referred to at all. When women operate in an arena where there are women and men, women don’t control the discourse; we’re the add-on. At the same time, women-only spaces are marginalized. Gender is still regarded as a special interest; it’s dismissed into the gender ghetto.

One activist complained that, especially in seeking out allies on reproductive rights issues, controversial in some communities of color, *there’s no reciprocity – our issues are always expendable, always on the*

chopping block. People don't see themselves as less progressive just because they don't support reproductive health.

Another argued that while there are some signs of progress, there's still a very long way to go:

We've made it to the first stage: There's more women's leadership and a rhetorical commitment to gender equality and against patriarchy. But, we haven't figured out how to navigate the second stage. How do we lead on gender issues in multi-gender, multi-racial formations?

B. The absence of a gender justice lens may be attributed to the subordination of sexism as a legitimate concern among "competing isms"; the absence of a sense of urgency on gender issues; the lack of accessible gender analysis and training tools; and the negative reputation of the feminist movement, among other factors.

There were several reasons given for why a gender justice lens is not integrated into the work of social justice organizations:

1. At the nexus of race, culture and gender, gender is a subordinate concern. The pitting of gender against race is a very old trope, but it still emerges in complicated and contentious ways. Activists did not feel that they were skilled enough to handle the conflicts that emerge when race and gender are made to compete for attention and agenda space. As one activist put it: *There's some feeling that if you recognize gender oppression, it invalidates what's going on for men of color. Issues like gender violence [within communities of color] are virtually never addressed.*

For mixed-gender organizations working in low-income communities of color, the problems facing men of color, especially young men, are flagrant: high rates of unemployment and incarceration, low educational attainment, vigorous drug economy and associated high rates of violence, deep alienation from legitimized political and social institutions and processes. Some activists and organizers apparently believe that to raise gender issues would result in minimizing the significance of these problems – or in the perception that they were being minimized. This is particularly the case in organizations that, while trying to build a mixed gender membership base, find that their constituents tend to be predominately female.

When the whole community is vulnerable, women are not necessarily seen as a particularly vulnerable group. Immigrant status, skin color, race and ethnicity are viewed as the most important community issues and there's no sense of disproportionate impact on women.

One activist reported that when gender dynamics were put on the table for discussion in an organization that included many first-generation immigrants, the women who were advocating for discussion were criticized for being too assimilated into U.S. culture, for having abandoned the values of their country of origin. Funky gender dynamics were essentially excused as a legitimate cultural practice. This turned out to be a very effective way to shut down the discussion.

2. There's no sense of urgency on gender issues. The activists interviewed reported that those working in social justice organizations were not feeling any external pressure, either from the feminist movement or from their constituencies, to engage with gender issues. This was sometimes posed as a generational divide. Two comments are relevant here: *It's seen as old news, not currently relevant, and Nobody's really struggling around it [gender] in the context of partnering with other organizations or organizing. We're not being forced to put it on our agenda because nothing's*

happening on a broader scale. In the older generation, there was a lot more identification with feminism, along with a critique of mainstream feminism. No one really identifies as a feminist anymore. Some people think there's already a level of equity and there's no need to struggle over it anymore.

3. Organizations lack the analysis and tools to integrate gender issues. Several activists noted that their organizations just did not have the capacity to address gender issues, even if they were inclined to do so. This was posed as an absence of both a systemic gender analysis relevant to their work and an absence of training tools, either for staff or constituents. All recognized that it takes a good deal of intentional work to recognize and address gender issues, and, with the multiple pressures of social justice organizing, *it's just one more step, and it just gets left by the wayside.* This was also posed as a generational problem, with one activist expressing the opinion that: *My generation has a set of cultural politics with no structural analysis, either on race or gender. There's nowhere for folks 20-35ish to get that. It's all about culture and identity and the oppression Olympics. Cultural and representational issues become a stand-in for structural analysis. We have to identify interventions that match the scale and nature of the problems.*
4. Feminism is a "tainted" ideology. Several activists noted that there is a widespread perception that white women's organizations dominate the gender agenda, and that *the reputation of white feminism serves as a disincentive, a block to people taking up these issues.* Despite the fact that many women of color have taken the lead around a wide range of women's issues, the perception persists, particularly in communities of color, that activism on gender is principally the domain of middle-class white women. This perception – or caricature – creates a barrier to raising gender issues, particularly for organizers working in low-income communities of color.

C. There are multiple negative consequences to the absence of a gender justice lens in social justice organizing, including the neglect of key issues and constituencies; the mishandling of sexist gender dynamics, including sexual harassment; the disaffection and silencing of women leaders; and the development of sexually biased campaigns.

Each activist interviewed identified negative consequences related to either the absence of a gender justice lens or the unskillful handling of complex gender dynamics. Several provided examples of projects, campaigns or inter-personal relationships among staff that had suffered due to lack of attention to gender.

In perhaps the most dramatic example, an informal network of activists fell apart largely due to the mishandling of gender issues. In this instance, male dominance was expressed by men *calling the shots, bypassing the process and speaking on behalf of everybody.* When women raised objections to this behavior they were in turn criticized for being out of touch with their own ethnic culture. Though these complicated dynamics were raised in evaluation sessions, there were no tools to deal with the problems effectively, bitter feelings persisted, and the group disbanded.

Two respondents spoke specifically to the problem of community-based organizations that lack the tools to recognize and confront sexual harassment on staff or the impact of relationship violence on staff members. Two examples were given of organizations in which these issues emerged – organizations that have excellent reputations for their work on workers' rights, race and immigrants' rights but terrible internal gender relations. In the words of one activist, these organizations lurched *from bad gender dynamics to denial to crisis to bad handling of crisis to bad resolution.* The result was

that good organizers left, the organizations' reputations suffered and relationships among social justice organizers were damaged.

When people don't handle it [bad gender dynamics and practices], it backfires into the organization and we have no analytical handle or tools to figure out how to deal with it.

As with race, if you don't handle it, it will handle you.

Another respondent addressed the problem of developing campaign strategy in the absence of a gender justice lens. In one particular case – a campaign for employment training resources in a low-income community – the organization was fully prepared to speak to the needs of young men of color, the discrimination they faced, and their lack of access to living-wage jobs. The organization had neither the data nor the framework to effectively advocate for the young women in the community. This was a specific instance of a problem others spoke to: the constituencies that are overlooked in the absence of a gender-sensitive framework.

One respondent insisted that: *There are still abundant issues of who gets listened to, who gets trained, who is advanced to leadership. Low-income women of color are consistently under-represented, especially in unions and organizations of low-wage worker. Now 44% of union membership is female, but is this represented in the leadership?*

Respondents reported that, in the context of the broader social justice movement, the absence of a gender justice lens means that the leadership of women and women of color is not identified as an explicit goal; those organizations that are using a gender lens are marginalized; and the case for gender-sensitive organizing has to be made over and over again, with little momentum gained.

Two of those interviewed spoke to age as a complicating factor in addressing gender dynamics. Specifically, as young women they had encountered situations in which older men used their extended experience and status as quasi elders as a cover for undermining the work of younger women or shielding themselves from criticisms of sexism. One activist tagged this as “patriarchy 2.0,” i.e., not a blatant violation of gender practice, but a way to maintain their status and take up space while undermining the women who were doing the work. In this dynamic, *younger men were paralyzed. They saw it, raised it to the women, but said nothing to the group or to the older men. They were complicit in sexism because they valued their strategic relationships with the older men and didn't want to be on their shit list. It was confusing and silencing.*

D. To develop a social justice movement that consistently incorporates a gender justice lens into its vision and ongoing work requires that activists build the will and a sense of urgency; demonstrate that gender sensitive organizing is more effective; share the experiences of model organizations and campaigns; provide gender education and training; and promote women's leadership.

1. **Build the will.** In light of the current absence of urgency about integrating a gender justice frame within social justice organizing, several of the activists interviewed spoke to the need to develop the will to address gender issues among social justice leaders. This would entail overcoming resistance to adding one more complex item to already full agendas. One respondent envisioned women in mixed-gender organizations taking the lead in overcoming inertia. *Before the tools, we need the political leadership of women. It needs to be raised more than it is, but we would have to exert tremendous leadership to get it on the agenda.* Another was of the opinion that what is needed is a

broad, multi-sectoral approach to establishing general consensus that gender justice is integral to grassroots social justice.

2. Demonstrate value added. Respondents linked the willingness to address gender to the practical issue of organizational effectiveness: *We have to be able to show that there's value added to programming and work with [the organization's] constituency when gender is incorporated. We need to demonstrate concrete benefits and show that the organization will be more robust and effective in its work.* Speaking to the pragmatism of many grassroots organizations, another activist used the example of struggling to include an analysis of racial impact in an organizing campaign: *[You have to] put it in their language – "This is added value to whatever strategy you're pursuing. It opens up new partners and new option. It's a stronger campaign if you document racial disparities"* She predicted that many organizations would have the same attitude toward gender that she experienced in trying to integrate a structural racial analysis: *If it can help us win [a campaign], okay we'll incorporate it. But if it's a long, drawn out process of political education, then no thanks.*
3. Share effective tools, practices and policies. Several respondents identified the need for the intentional and widespread sharing of positive experiences, effective training tools and gender-sensitive organizational policies. Some emphasized the importance of sharing the analytic frame and organizing experiences of those groups that do operate on the basis of an intersectional approach to race, class and gender.³ *We need to highlight or feature how things can be done differently. What does work on the ground look like when gender is incorporated? In your flyers, in your campaigns, in your strategies? To get to the next level we need to identify those groups trying to practice at the intersections as models and learn from how others practice this, including international models.*

In terms of bringing a gender lens to organizational development and personnel policies, one activist spoke to the need to share sexual harassment language as well as language on gender expression, work-family balance and sexual orientation. Others addressed the need to share effective educational materials and training tools.

4. Provide education and training. Every activist interviewed confirmed the lack of resources to train staff and constituents in basic gender categories and their intersection with other markers of social inequality; to integrate gender inequity as a central factor in strategic vision or campaign development; or to incorporate a gender lens into planning for and evaluating organizational and staff development. Here are some of their comments:

There's a huge need for political education.

The academy has done work on this but it's not accessible to us. Who can read that stuff?

A one-day workshop is not enough. We need a systems approach to give us the tools and language so we can see it, name it and analyze it.

³ Some of the groups mentioned in answer to the question "Who does this well?" include Domestic Workers United, SisterSong, Mujeres Unidas y Activas, Mississippi Workers' Center Women Workers' Project, Women of Color Resource Center, SOUL, Incite!, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, Highlander, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Labor Community Strategy Center, Sweatshop Watch and Asian Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Justice.

We need strong support for deeper gender analysis, linking base-building and leadership development.

We have to figure out how not to give up one [race/ethnicity/immigration analysis] for the other [gender lens]; how does it supplement, not substitute.

We need to go beyond asking the questions “How are women affected?” and “How best to serve women and meet their distinct needs?” Our systematic thinking is much less sharp. It’s possible to be pro-woman without a critical analysis.

One activist used the analogy of working on gender issues in personal relationships to argue that it is possible to evolve better practices. *I find that in personal relationships it’s important to create a language and a platform to discuss problems. Then you reach a threshold and eventually it becomes easier. It becomes part of the fabric of the relationship.*

5. Promote women’s leadership: Several of those interviewed believed that more women’s leadership – both individual leaders and strong women’s organizations — was needed to bring about change in the social justice movement. One respondent noted that at her organization, once a woman of color Executive Director was in place, there was a more explicit commitment to developing woman of color leadership. Another noted that there are not enough strong women’s organizations and that organizers were more challenged on LGBT and transgender demands than they were on women’s issues. She noted the example of an international conference in which strong women’s organizations were able to hold participants accountable to gender, by way of contrast to similar U.S. conferences.

On the other hand, other activists pointed out that women are often complicit in perpetuating gender bias and that, in many cases, women are running social justice organizations but not bringing a gender analysis to the work. Though the strong presence of women as staff, leaders, members and constituents of the social justice movement is an opportunity, clearly it is not enough.

E. What does success look like?

Unfortunately, most of those interviewed had few, if any, examples of mixed-gender organizations that handle gender justice issues well. One respondent presented a clear set of criteria for “doing it right”:

When organizations do it right it means they have clear policies to prevent discrimination and harassment; clear affirmative action policies; career ladders and opportunities for training that are accessible to women. They utilize their means of communication to reflect their diversity; they ensure that meetings and actions are planned with broad input; they use collaborative and consensus-based decision-making; they pay attention to logistics, i.e., meals and childcare to encourage women’s participation. They integrate their gender lens with race, sexual orientation, sexual expression, etc.; and they offer ongoing training – anti-oppression training and sexual harassment training. They adopt explicit work-family friendly practices. Maybe they have a women’s caucus or women’s committee – one with some authority — to make recommendations to leadership.

Recommendations

1. Motivate social justice leaders to consistently incorporate a gender justice lens in their work. Addressing the absence of will or sense of urgency on the part of social justice leaders with regard to gender issues is a primary concern.
 - Identify opinion leaders and provide them with opportunities to engage with a gender justice framework of analysis.
 - Broadly share the analysis and approach of successful campaigns that have incorporated a gender justice frame.
 - Link funding – particularly grants from women’s funds – to a credible, demonstrated capacity to develop and evaluate programmatic initiatives from the standpoint of their impact on gender inequities.
2. Develop and provide tools for gender justice education, training, program planning and program evaluation. Some of these tools are available and in limited use; others will need to be developed or adapted to an organization’s particular needs, including:
 - Education in the basic categories of gender analysis and systems of gender inequity.
 - Training in how to identify gender bias and discrimination.
 - Training in the relationship and intersection among gender and other systems of social inequality.
 - Training in how to develop and evaluate programmatic initiatives from a gender justice perspective.
 - Training in how to bring a gender lens to organizational and staff development.
3. Promote and support women’s leadership. Women leaders and women’s organizations want to play a role in addressing this situation. They need to be encouraged and supported in doing so.
 - Provide women leaders with the opportunity to share experiences and problem-solve on the incorporation of gender in social justice organizing.
 - Develop “training for trainers” workshops to provide practical assistance those leaders.
 - Create an online discussion and support network of leaders who are actively working to transform organizational practice on these issues.
4. Provide resources to support the incorporation of a gender justice framework in social justice organizing. None of the above can or will be done without dedicated resources.
 - Engage the progressive funding community on the degree to which this has been neglected and the consequences for the social justice movement.

- Encourage the commitment of resources to gender justice training.
- Develop a gender justice screen – or broadly share those currently in use – to enable foundations and donors to determine the degree to which gender justice is incorporated into the work of their grantees.

Conclusion

Forty years after the emergence of the women's liberation movement, with its transformative impact on U.S. society, the absence of a gender justice lens in the social justice movement is a disgrace. Not only does it perpetuate the subordination and marginalization of "women's issues," it also means that social justice activists operate with a woefully inadequate understanding of how the society they are trying to change actually functions. Further, it deprives them of analytical tools and strategic approaches that could enhance their effectiveness in mobilizing key constituencies. On the other hand, the deepening recognition that there's a problem, as manifested in the thoughtful observations of the activists interviewed here, represents an opportunity and points the way toward solutions. There is an opening to develop the leadership that will extend the commitment to women's human rights and gender justice beyond the confines of the self-identified feminist movement. It is my hope that this working paper will help trigger the kinds of discussions and actions that will, at last, bring the issues and concerns of marginalized women to the center of the social justice agenda.

Addendum

This working paper was circulated by e-mail to the interviewees for comments and corrections. The comments received included recommendations regarding nuance and emphasis as well as new observations. As the written comments received were different in tone than the original interviews, I have summarized them in this addendum rather than incorporating them into the working paper.

General Observations

1. A gender justice framework is needed in relation to:
 - Internal organizational practices and cultures – how to identify and eliminate practices and cultures that reinforce gender inequity and institutionalize those that support gender justice.
 - Leadership development – how to take an intentional approach to develop and support women's leadership.
 - Gender analysis – how to understand and express social conditions using a gender justice lens.
 - Organizing program and campaign development – how to integrate gender justice into the practice of social change organizing and advocacy.
2. Underline the importance of linking the values of social justice feminism to policy formulated with an intersectional perspective, leading to policy options that provide positive impacts on different groups while avoiding the trap of competing social inequities.
3. Many organizations promote women's leadership, but this does not necessarily include helping to develop the complexity of their gender analysis.
4. The structure and focus of non-profit organizations is strongly influenced by their funding sources – grant making foundations – which tend to award a narrow constituency and issue focus. This works against the complexity of a gender justice framework that integrates gender, class, race, etc.

Re Findings

1. More attention should be paid to the generational divide. Women of color played a positive role in challenging some of the politics of second wave feminism, but also make up part of that generational divide. There's a disconnect both between women of color feminists and mainstream feminism and between the generations.
2. Though there is no identification with the feminist movement in communities of color, there is recognition and valuing of matriarchal practices and leadership, as well as pro-woman sentiment.
3. We need to be clear about the role of conscious men and men of color within social justice organizations: their accountability to feminist practice and to women leaders and organizers, and their strategic role with other men in social justice organizing. Most men don't have the tools to function as reliable allies.

4. Women of color developed a potent, integrated analysis of race, class, gender, sexuality and nation. This is the understanding that is relevant to the base of communities we're working with in social justice organizing, and which grounds us politically. To "build the will" and "demonstrate value," the social justice movement needs to develop awareness and understanding of how the "isms" uphold one another.
5. Underscore the points that (1) not all organizations that have women as their constituents, members and leaders are organizing on the basis of a consistent gender justice framework; and (2) women often exhibit patriarchal and dominating behaviors vis-a-vis other women, entering into silent pacts with men in power.
6. There's a dichotomy with regard to gender in some social justice organizations: they're highly attuned to gender in terms of inter-personal relations but have neither an operative analytical framework at the societal level nor coherent politics in relation to key contemporary gender issues.

Re Recommendations

1. Developing political principles around gender justice in vision statements, mission statements and points of unity can help shape organizational policies and practices.
2. Develop trainings for feminist movement and social justice movement on issues of sexuality, gender expression and trans-gender issues.
3. Develop trainings in languages other than English, on Sexism 101, and on culturally specific gender relations.
4. Develop and share models of accountability to gender justice for men in the social justice movement.
5. Develop mechanisms to hold the feminist movement accountable to social justice values, particularly regarding issues of race and class.
6. Develop opportunities for intentional inter-generational building between 2nd wave, 3rd wave and 21st century feminists.
7. Develop opportunities for exposure to the thinking and practice of global women's organizations.
8. Develop top-level gender justice training for leaders who have broad influence, both within their organizations and in the broader social justice movement.

Appendix

Social Justice Feminism

Over the course of 2 ½ years, the New Women's Movement Initiative returned repeatedly to a deepening discussion of Analysis, Vision and Values. As participants struggled to determine what outlook could provide grounding for a revitalized movement, the theme of social justice surfaced over and over again. By the close of the final retreat, participants had reached consensus that the New Women's Movement should be based upon and promote principles of social justice feminism. The principles below are a work in progress.

First, in terms of issues and constituency, social justice feminism centers those who are especially marginalized and vulnerable.

Second, in terms of analysis and strategy, social justice feminism consistently promotes an approach to women's issues that integrates race, class, sexuality, nationality, citizenship, age, ability and other markers of social inequity.

Third, social justice feminism recognizes and challenges the operation of power and privilege, both in the broader society and within the women's movement itself.

Fourth, while pursuing an agenda that centers on the status and well being of women, social justice feminism actively challenges racism, heterosexist bias, and class privilege.

Fifth, social justice feminism is intentional about ensuring that those most affected by policies and practices are at decision-making tables.

Sixth, the social justice feminist movement conceives of itself as an integral part of a broader social justice movement and consistently seeks out alliances with organizations and networks beyond the women's movement.

Seventh, social justice feminism recognizes that important, often groundbreaking work in developing women's leadership and addressing women's issues is being done by organizations that do not self-identify as feminist, and seeks dialogue and alliance with such organizations.

Eighth, social justice feminism recognizes that the struggle for gender justice and women's human rights is global, and seeks dialogue and alliance with women's organizations worldwide.

In addressing the expressed concerns about the failure of various sectors of the progressive movement to actively support women's issues, NWM participants also reached consensus on the need to infuse feminist principles and values in the broader social justice movement. While this latter theme was not as fully explored, it was captured in shorthand, i.e., the need to advance both a women's movement based on social justice feminism and a feminist social justice movement.