

Presenters: Ela Bhatt, Marilyn Waring, and Moderator Emily Sikazwe
Rapporteur: Amanda Duncan

Presenter #1: Ela Bhatt

Women farmers expanding local initiatives;
Typical trade unions did not work for farmers and laborers;
Women began to discover the real value of their skills, such as working with hand looms;
The question was how to market these skills.
Women formed district associations and a group called “SEWA”, an organization to represent the women’s needs.

In agriculture a farmers market was organized.
The association of producers gives women an opportunity to learn about the right price for agricultural products, entrepreneurial skills, and how to use fertilizers etc.
These local groups were ready to launch into the global market.
The organization was determined to only allow smaller farmers to contribute to the seed pool.
Money for the seed was given directly to the women.
One woman stated that her family was happy with her work even though she couldn’t always be home.
The key was to break the dependence on the middle man, so the women could sell it themselves.
There is a need for a supportive policy environment for these small farmers in order for them to be successful.

Speaker #2: Marilyn Waring

Being pre-literate should not exclude women from pursuing entrepreneurial projects.
The idea of “best practice” models like SEWA should be encouraged more
Waring spoke about the way new “modalities” may or may not affect women in development (one modality is harmonization)

Harmonization: Having donors talk to each other in development programs not projects. This modality tries to get the donors to agree on a solid program: For example New Zealand and the Solomon Islands; in the Solomons money is given directly to the Solomon Island’s budget and especially the education ministry to use as they see fit
Money should not be taken back by the donor nation when the money is not used by the partner/developing country—new resources must be delivered to the schools ie. Rural schools in the Solomon Islands

It’s brave for a donor nation to enter this new modality—there are many accusations of misappropriation of funds, but the donor nation must trust that the partner country can use the resources appropriately

The donor nation delivers money for “education”, but does not take into account issues like clean water and toilets for girls to use when they go to school—thus we need a more holistic approach that considers the bigger picture

“Gender Mainstreaming”—

Gender development and governance—governance is a word that was introduced so we don't have to talk about human rights, gender development are the words to use because people are too afraid to talk about feminist issues in development

Speaker #3: Emily Sikazwe

Sikazwe works on women's development in Zambia—Organization known as “Women for Change”

- Looks at developing women's leadership skills;
- Looks at the question of human rights—access to clean and safe drinking water, food security, shelter etc.;
- Looks at the issues of access and control of resources—fish farming, cattle rearing;
- Working toward the eradication of all forms of poverty in rural communities—both material and mental poverty (poverty of the mind)—challenging the structural causes of poverty such as government policies that keep women in bondage;
- Mortality while giving birth and HIV are issues of concern for women in Zambia;

In Emily's view the language of gender and development is not so important because in Zambia the issues are life and death and also the structures of patriarchy must be challenged

Five Major Points From the Discussion

1. Poverty has a woman's face and it takes women to break the chain of poverty
2. Holism: Women must be given support for their health, economic and social needs, thus development strategies and models must encompass the whole woman, not just one aspect of her
3. Women must have access to resources and control over the results of their labour
4. Women can chart their own development course by making connections and networks with other women—Women's strength is in their connectedness and relation to one another—Solidarity among women is very important
5. Motherhood should not be a life and death situation for women—There needs to be safe and healthy child birth for every woman—No woman should die while giving birth—Women must have access to hospitals and women who are trained in traditional birthing skills