



Evaluation of the ReGender Project in the UK

Full Report

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

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Commissioned by: Oxfam GB

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1

Introduction

Evaluating the ReGender project

- 1.1. Shared Intelligence (Si) and Dipali Chandra were commissioned by Oxfam GB to carry out an evaluation of its ReGender project. The ReGender project is a key part of Oxfam's UK Poverty Programme and has been working with local communities, voluntary organisations and local, regional and national government to build a greater understanding of gender inequality and differences in the UK, particularly in the field of regeneration (for more information see www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/ukpoverty/regender.html).
- 1.2. An evaluation of the project was commissioned to look at the impact of the project over the last three years (between 2005 and 2008), focusing primarily on the second phase of work. The evaluation therefore sought to explore how effective the project has been; what progress has been made; and what more needs to be done in future to promote awareness of gender inequality and gender differences in the regeneration sector.

Methodology

- 1.3. The evaluation was undertaken over three months (August to October 2008) at the final stages of the project. Our methodology included:
 - A review of all relevant documents and analysis of monitoring and evaluative data collected during the lifetime of the project;
 - In-depth qualitative interviews with core members of staff – including the previous and current project managers, the Country Programme Manager for England, and the Equalities Policy Adviser;
 - An e-survey of training participants, to which 29 responses were received (out of a possible 73);
 - Follow-up interview with five of the survey respondents, to explore the key findings in more depth and pick up on areas of good practice;
 - Consultation with 11 organisations who were involved in the advocacy strand of the project – eight of which were in-depth qualitative interviews and three were written responses.

This report

- 1.4. This report includes details on the background and context to the ReGender project; what the project has delivered; feedback on the ReGender training; benefits and challenges of the advocacy work; and our conclusions and recommendations following the research. A summary of the key findings is also included in the next section.

2

Summary of key findings

2.1. The key findings from the evaluation of the Oxfam ReGender project are as follows:

- The Oxfam ReGender project has **made a big difference** to individuals and organisations who have been involved in the project.
- Individuals who participated in the ReGender training programme said that it had helped to build their **awareness and understanding** of gender and regeneration; provided them with a **peer support network**; and **inspired them** to drive this agenda forward in their own organisations and local areas.
- Many of the participants were able to give examples of where they had passed on what they learnt to other colleagues and **made changes to areas of work** that they were responsible for, which included providing more activities for young women in Mossdale; introducing community walkabouts in urban design in Sheffield; and greater efforts to recruit female drivers at a community transport organisation in Rotherham.
- Organisations involved in the advocacy work found **Oxfam's reputation, experience and contacts very beneficial** and valued the role the Oxfam ReGender team played as a **critical friend**. The project also provided **a useful platform** for partner organisations and allies to disseminate research findings and new ways of working.
- Organisations targeted through the advocacy work were also able to provide examples of **positive differences to working practices**, and it is clear that Oxfam's experience in this area has been recognised by those involved.
- The materials and resources produced as part of the project have played a key role in the success of the project and were valued as **useful practical resources** for practitioners and officers.
- The ReGender project has therefore achieved a lot within the resources available and has made a considerable impact on individuals involved. But many **challenges in achieving wider organisational change still exist**, and it is important that we understand and learn from these challenges so that future work can build on the progress made by the ReGender project.
- A significant challenge is that **equalities is still viewed as an 'add-on'** to people's work and not as a legal duty or intrinsic to what they do.

- In addition to this, **women in senior positions find it difficult to 'speak up'** even when they are committed to equality and diversity, because they don't want to be the one who always brings up gender issues.
- Many people often perceive a distinct **hierarchy of equality and diversity priorities**, with race and disability receiving more attention and resources than gender, which is coupled with a perception that 'the gender problem' has been solved and is not an issue anymore.
- Public sector organisations are **resistant to change**, which means that it can take a long time to see positive results through projects like this.
- There is also a **need to target different levels** of public sector organisations using different methods to achieve real longer term change – from senior leaders, through middle managers and front line staff.
- The ReGender project aimed to address this by joining up direct training of practitioners with advocacy work with senior decision-makers, but **more work to marry these up in practice** would be useful in future.
- Given these challenges, it is important to be **realistic about what is achievable within the resources** and to **manage expectations** of those involved so they understand the type and scale of support they can expect to received.
- An important learning point for this has been to **link this work up with current priorities**; for example the gender equality duty has been an important hook for this work, so using other levers will be beneficial in future.
- **Sustaining support and momentum** that has been built up by the Oxfam ReGender project is a key issue – this is needed to ensure long term change. More work needs to be done at an early stage of project development to ensure that there are structures in place for this and there are resources there to support them.
- There is also an issue about **how to attract individuals who are not already 'converted'** – many of those involved were already interested in or committed to gender equality, so future projects would need to consider how best to attract those who don't understand the value of looking at regeneration (or other areas of public service) through a gender lens.
- This links to the challenge around how to attract more men to attend training courses like this; **a more neutral stance that emphasised the fact that gender is about women and men** might have made the course more attractive and inclusive to men.
- **Reflecting on and sharing learning** about what approaches work and don't work is incredibly important, and Oxfam might want to consider how best to include **more evaluative activities** that consider this throughout the project's lifetime.

3

Oxfam's ReGender Project

Overall aims of the project

- 3.1. The Oxfam ReGender project has been working with local communities, voluntary organisations and local, regional and national government to build a greater understanding of gender inequality and differences in the UK, particularly in the field of regeneration.
- 3.2. The project is built on an understanding that more women than men live in poverty in the UK. Some of the reasons behind this are that women in general have lower incomes than men; are more likely to be without paid work and to be carers and lone parents; and are less likely to be involved when it comes to decision-making. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to be victims of crime, and boys are doing worse in school than girls. The ReGender project is therefore based on the fact that women and men experience poverty very differently and in order to tackle poverty in the UK, these differences need to be taken into account.
- 3.3. However, these differences are often not very well understood and regeneration practitioners and decision-makers across the UK fail to take account of these issues when planning and delivering regeneration programmes. As such, the ReGender project has aimed to influence key decision-makers and regeneration practitioners throughout the country to embed gender analysis in their work and engage women in regeneration programmes and projects more effectively, with the ultimate objective of improving services and outcomes for women and men living in poverty.
- 3.4. The project has aimed to achieve this through:
 - **direct training of 80 primary service providers** (four groups with 20 participants each) in the public and voluntary and community sectors to provide more examples of what works and what does not work at the coalface of implementing regeneration policy;
 - **influencing mainstream training** provision through mainstream training bodies responsible for the provision of training to regeneration practitioners, drawing on lessons from the direct training;
 - **advocacy**, based on lessons learned, with 8-10 regional and national level government decision-makers identified through previous work, to make gender analysis a statutory requirement, and ensure practitioners are provided with an adequate policy framework within which to work.

- 3.5. As a result of these activities, **a number of resources, good practice guides, case studies and briefing papers have also been produced** that have been used to raise awareness more widely.
- 3.6. The idea behind having each of these strands was to ensure that the middle layer of service providers in regeneration begin to implement regeneration programmes that more effectively tackle poverty because they recognise and respond to the different needs of women and men. It was envisaged that further work with decision makers as well as practitioners would help to cement the change.

The UK Poverty Programme

- 3.7. Oxfam GB works in nine regions and over 70 countries worldwide with an ultimate aim of working with others to overcome poverty and suffering. The UK Poverty Programme makes a distinctive contribution to this by working towards a society in which all people will:
- be treated with dignity and respect, and public and political attitudes towards the poor will no longer be punitive;
 - live free from discrimination that contributes to poverty and exclusion;
 - enjoy equitable and sufficient access to basic social services and sustainable livelihoods through the fair distribution of the benefits of economic growth;
 - contribute fully to civil, political and economic life, and have a real say in the decisions that affect their own lives;
 - benefit from greater gender equity in the household, community and the workplace.
- 3.8. Oxfam therefore recognises that a number of factors impact on poverty, such as a lack of income, poor services, discrimination, inequality and exclusion. As such, the ReGender project is a key part of the UK Poverty Programme, and fits particularly into the final two of its aims through its focus on promoting both gender equality (through the implementation of regeneration programmes that recognise the different needs of women and men) and the full contribution of women (and men) to the processes of regeneration decision making.

The pilot phase of ReGender

- 3.9. Prior to the main phase of the project (between 2005 and 2008), Oxfam (with support from the Barrow Cadbury Trust) built on the experience of a West Midlands action-lobbying group on gender and regeneration to create the pilot ReGender project. Its purpose was to develop and pilot practical ways of getting to grips with gender issues in regeneration at a community

level and was therefore very much grounded in work with grassroots community organisations.

- 3.10. The pilot project supported and encouraged the equal participation of women and men in regeneration schemes by working with grassroots women to hold local regeneration bodies to account and ensure their gender needs were met. A toolkit – called 'Into the Lion's Den' – demonstrating how to do this was produced and formed a key resource for the main phase.
- 3.11. The pilot project also aimed to supplement that support and encouragement through influencing regional and national government on the basis of what was learned at a community level. Oxfam made some progress towards that aim, but at that time, integrating gender into regeneration programmes was not a legal requirement and gender-disaggregated statistics and gendered practice was relatively rare, which is why more work in achieving an impact at higher levels of decision-making became a key strand in the main phase.
- 3.12. A key aim for the main phase of the work then was to build on the successes of the pilot ReGender project by applying the toolkit and learning and building the capacity of regeneration practitioners working across the public and voluntary and community sectors.

The ReGender team

- 3.13. The ReGender project has had a core team of staff from across Oxfam, which has included:
 - ReGender Project Coordinator (full time)
 - Country Programme Manager – England (part time – approx four hours a week dedicated to the project)
 - Country Programme Manager – Scotland (part time)
 - Equalities Policy Adviser (part time – approx four hours a week dedicated to the project)
 - Communications Assistant (part time)
 - Administrative Assistant (part time)
 - Intern (part time – three days a week – for six months of the project)
- 3.14. In addition to this, the ReGender Project Coordinator and Equalities Policy Adviser had the support of individuals from of the Project Advocacy Group (PAG) and the 'Pink Hearts' group – a group of senior women decision makers in regeneration (and maybe wider) with known commitment and need for mutual support. This group was in effect a network involving women from – and identified by – the National Advisory Group that supported the first phase of ReGender. It was envisaged that this group would advise the team on the ReGender project and would possibly mentor individuals who participated in the training or advocacy work. However, owing to the time commitments of members of the group and the ReGender team, this group only met once during the second phase and became more of a virtual group that provided support on an individual basis.

4

What has the project delivered?

Training

- 4.1. The aim of the training programme was to ensure that regeneration practitioners closest to the ground can establish what taking a gendered approach can deliver in terms of improved practice and then spread this practice within the community. As such, the content build on Oxfam's experience gained through the first phase of ReGender, which included:
- what community level women know about regeneration and what they don't;
 - how to work with them in identifying the barriers they face to greater participation;
 - how women can jointly identify issues that regeneration programmes are not currently meeting;
 - how to support them in learning how to apply pressure in local regeneration structures for what they need; and
 - how to use similar approaches with men and encourage them to think about their greater involvement.
- 4.2. It was envisaged that two people from each organisation would attend **two residential training courses** (a three-day course followed by a two-day course), to ensure they support each other in implementing this work.
- 4.3. In the knowledge that any form of challenge to existing practice needs sustained follow-up to bring about real change, the training also provided a series of four one-day group sessions for **ongoing peer mentoring** and learning, at one monthly intervals for all regions apart from the UK-wide group, who had two two-day mentoring sessions. Mentoring was also offered to participants in between sessions on a one-to-one basis.
- 4.4. The ReGender project carried out training with **a total of 73 participants**. The training was held in four different regions – the North West (23 participants); North East (22 participants); Yorkshire and Humber (15 participants); and UK-wide (13 participants). An outline for the content of the sessions is included in Appendix 1.

Influencing mainstream training

- 4.5. The aim of influencing mainstream training providers was to make sure that gender analysis was embedded in ongoing training programmes for regeneration practitioners, to ensure longer term follow up and sustainability.
- 4.6. The plan was to negotiate inputs into this ongoing work, paying particular attention to ensuring the engagement of male regeneration practitioners by pulling out the connections between masculinity and the take up and participation of regeneration services by men as well as women. It was also intended to explore the particular barriers faced by BME women that a full gender analysis reveals.
- 4.7. The rationale behind having the two types of training was that they would reinforce each other, with the direct training helping to establish good practice on how the quality of regeneration work can be improved, and the mainstream training ensuring that the practice is spread widely across the regions.
- 4.8. As such, it was envisaged that targeted bodies would include the Centres of Excellence in the English Regions; Commission for Architecture and the Environment; dedicated regeneration schools such as *Regen* in Sheffield and the Scottish Centre for Regeneration; learning networks (such as the Kings Fund Health and Regeneration programme); academic regeneration courses; and professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Housing.
- 4.9. Progress on this aspect of the project was more difficult than anticipated, although two mainstream training providers were engaged and worked with the ReGender team to provide some resources on gender and regeneration.
- 4.10. The first of these was RENEW North West, with whom an opportunity arose to deliver a number of events around gender and regeneration in the North West and to develop of a small training 'pack' which is currently being used to develop **an online resource for the RENEW website**.
- 4.11. The ReGender team also worked with **Northern College** (an adult education college) who ran a two day course on gender and regeneration, and the Gender Equality Duty. The college also **built elements into their community regeneration diploma** (see box on 'raising awareness in an adult education college' in section 5 for more details).

Advocacy

- 4.12. The aim of the advocacy strand was to achieve an improvement in services and opportunities for women and men experiencing poverty in regeneration areas, through regional and national influencing. Through a range of advocacy activities, the Oxfam Regender team aimed to ensure the implementation of existing guidance and active adoption of new requirements to address gendered poverty and discrimination in regeneration programmes (for example, the Public Sector Gender Duty, April 2007).

- 4.13. Around 17 individuals across 11 organisations were targeted through this strand of work (not including those involved in the Project Advocacy Group or Pink Hearts Group). These included **partner organisations or 'allies'**, who were organisations that have a research and policy development function specifically on gender equality concerns and within the regeneration field. These organisations were working on an equal footing to Oxfam to influence thinking, policy development and practice within other key strategic organisations operating at national, regional and local levels that have statutory responsibility for delivering government policies and initiatives on regeneration.
- 4.14. For example, the Women's Resource Centre and the Urban Forum has been working with the Oxfam ReGender team on an ongoing research project on women's representation on Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), which has been disseminated to others through research reports and a launch event.
- 4.15. The Gap Unit at Manchester Metropolitan University has been part funded by the Oxfam ReGender Project to provide research evidence on gender and participation at local, intermediary and city wide levels in social regeneration. The Gap Unit jointly undertook research on women's participation in neighbourhood renewal with Oxfam, and presented these findings at the ReGender training workshops, and developed a training resource for future trainers to use.
- 4.16. Tea in the Pot – a community organisation based in Scotland with 200 members – worked with Oxfam to develop a case study based on local women participating in local decision making on social regeneration, and the Women's Design Service (WDS) has designed and developed training materials for the ReGender training programmes. WDS has also been part of strategic discussions on the ReGender Project as a member of the Project Advisory Group in the early stages of the project.
- 4.17. In addition to this, the Oxfam ReGender team **targeted local, regional and national organisations who they wanted to influence**. These were usually organisations with statutory responsibility for delivering government policies and initiatives on regeneration.
- 4.18. In some of the organisations that were targeted to influence, **the relationship changed and the ReGender team worked with individuals to provide ongoing support and advice**. These were organisations operating at a national and regional level with a regulatory role or performance monitoring and management role over those organisations having statutory responsibility for delivering government policies and initiatives on regeneration. The relationship began on the basis of influencing thinking, understanding and knowledge of gender equality in the context of their regulatory and performance management and monitoring roles. Then evolving into joint activities to influence local statutory bodies delivering government policies and initiatives on regeneration.

Communications and resources

- 4.19. A number of resources have been produced as part of the project, that are available on Oxfam's website. These include:
- Into the Lion's Den – a practical guide for including women in regeneration;
 - Not seen and not heard? A briefing paper of gender and community engagement;
 - Where are the women on LSPs? A report on research conducted with the Women's Resource Centre and Urban Forum on women's representation on Local Strategic Partnerships;
 - A place for everyone – a briefing paper on gender and urban planning;
 - Gender and spatial planning: Royal Town Planning Institute Good Practice Note;
 - a DVD of 'Into the Lion's Den' (currently being produced).
- 4.20. Other organisations have also featured examples and case studies from the Oxfam ReGender project, including Community Development Exchange (CDX)¹ and OLMEC. The Oxfam ReGender team have also spoken at a number of conferences across the country to raise awareness of the project, with one of the most successful being a large conference in Scotland. The Country Programme Manager for Scotland was particularly happy with the success of the conference and felt that it created a space to talk about gender issues, which she was able to use as a launch pad for future work.
- 4.21. They have also been successful in getting articles in various media and publicly available materials, including:
- a feature article in *New Start* magazine (February 2008);
 - news articles in *Regeneration and Renewal* (June, September and December 2007);
 - news article on the women and LSPs research in *The Times* (September 2007);
 - supplemental feature and feature article in the *Scottish Herald* (May 2007);
 - case studies and resources for New Start, the Oxfam website and Community Development Exchange.

¹ www.cdx.org.uk/files/u1/Equalities_case_studies_final.pdf

5

What did participants gain from the training?

Overall views of the training

- 5.1. The vast majority of respondents said that overall the training was either fairly useful (48%) or very useful (41%), and around two thirds said that the training had either met their expectations (38%) or exceeded them (31%).
- 5.2. The majority of comments (some of which are highlighted in the boxes opposite) were extremely positive – people had clearly found the training a very valuable experience.
- 5.3. When asked what they liked best about the training, the overwhelming response was **meeting and interacting with other like-minded people**. In particular, people felt that having a mix of participants (from different sectors, types of organisation and roles) was very valuable as it offered **a range of different perspectives** on the issues.
- 5.4. People also thought that the **tools and resources** they were able to take away with them were very useful and complimented the trainers on being **flexible to meet different needs** within the group.
- 5.5. The structure of the course was also seen as a positive aspect, allowing participants the **time away to reflect on what they had learnt**, try out some of the tools and approaches they had been told about in the training, and then come back with the rest of the group in the next session to share learning around what worked and what didn't work. One participant in particular explained that when the group came together, not everyone had 'changed the world', so it helped to highlight the fact that progress was about taking small steps to achieve your goal.

'The course was stimulating and challenging. The support from other attendees was also really valuable.'

'It was genuinely the most useful training that I have ever done.'

Participants from various courses

'The group bonded well which led to plenty of discussions outside training.'

'Everybody was so supportive and went out of their way to be helpful!'

'The variety of people involved, everyone was different but all had common aims.'

'The resources that I came away with were excellent and I and others in my team have used them extensively.'

'It was an excellent course and the length of time between meetings allowed for reflective learning which suits my learning style perfectly.'

Participants from various courses

- 5.6. As such, the majority of respondents (79%) had made use of the mentoring sessions, and had found them either fairly beneficial (52%) or very beneficial (35%). For those that weren't able to make use of them, a lack of time/resources was the main factor.

Benefits of participating in the training

- 5.7. Respondents were asked to what extent the training had improved their understanding of some of the key topics the training was designed to cover. Some of the most common areas that respondents felt the training had given them a better understanding of were: gender and gender equality; gender tools e.g. Equality Impact Assessments and gender analysis; and good practice and learning from other organisations. This is shown in the table below.

'The course took on a number of issues of wider social change related to both gender and regeneration, so my understanding of both was deepened, as well as being able to make a better case for a gender analysis in regeneration.'

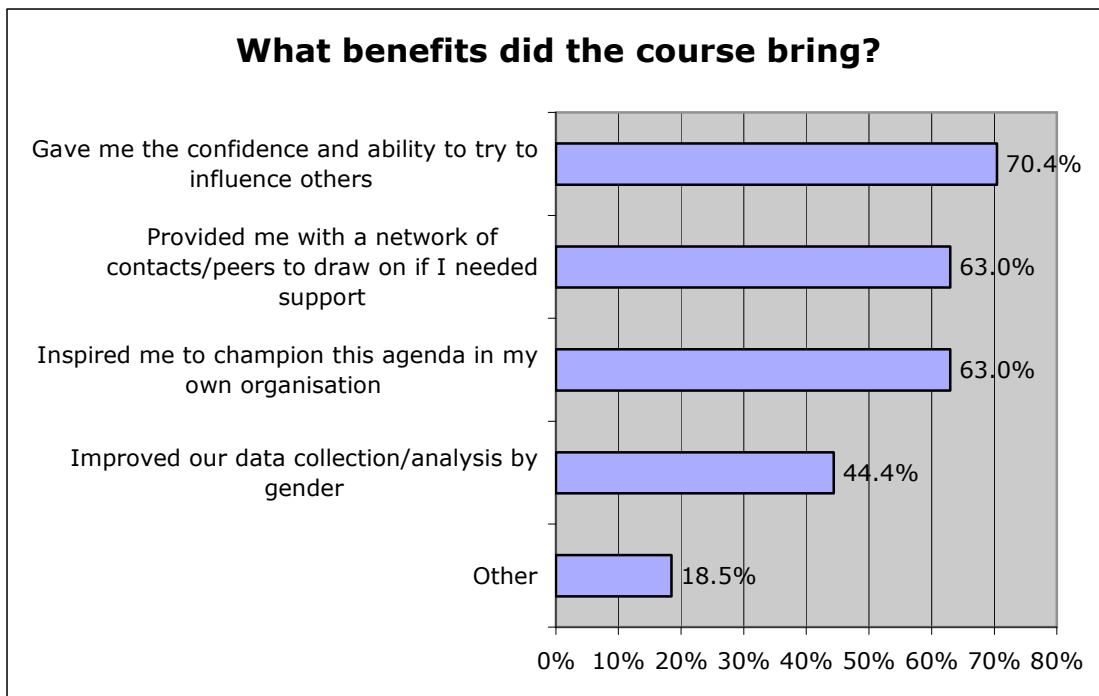
Training participant

Table: Did you feel the training provided you with a better understanding of:

	To a considerable extent	To a certain extent	To a little extent	To no extent	Not sure
Gender and gender equality	53.6% (15)	28.6% (8)	10.7% (3)	3.6% (1)	3.6% (1)
How gender equality relates to regeneration	39.3% (11)	46.4% (13)	10.7% (3)	3.6% (1)	0% (0)
Gender and participation/representation	32.1% (9)	50.0% (14)	14.3% (4)	3.6% (1)	0% (0)
Gender and physical regeneration	21.4% (6)	64.3% (18)	10.7% (3)	0% (0)	3.6% (1)
Gender and other areas of equality	21.4% (6)	42.9% (12)	32.1% (9)	3.6% (1)	0% (0)
Gender and service delivery	21.4% (6)	42.9% (12)	28.6% (8)	3.6% (1)	3.6% (1)
Gender tools e.g. EIAs and gender analysis	42.9% (12)	42.9% (12)	10.7% (3)	0% (0)	3.6% (1)
Available resources on gender and regeneration	42.9% (12)	46.4% (13)	10.7% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Good practice and learning from other organisations	42.9% (12)	39.3% (11)	14.3% (4)	3.6% (1)	0% (0)

- 5.8. In addition to this, over two thirds (70%) of respondents said that the training had given them **the confidence and ability to try to influence others**, and just under two thirds (63%) said that it had **inspired them to champion the agenda** in their organisation and provided them with a **network of contacts/peers** to draw on if they needed support. Just under

half (44%) also said that it had improved their data collection/analysis by gender. This is illustrated in the chart below.



Raising awareness among others

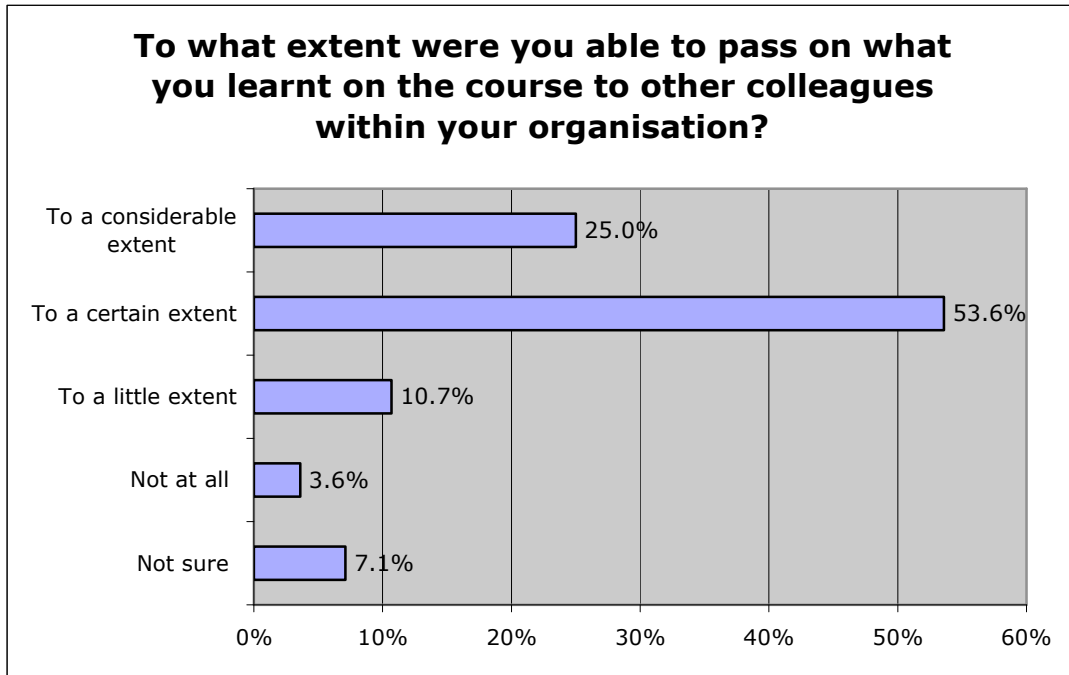
5.9. The majority of respondents (54%) felt that to a certain extent they **were able to pass on what they learnt to other colleagues** in their organisations, with a further 25% saying they were able to do so to a considerable extent.

5.10. Respondents were able to provide a variety of examples of how they had raised awareness among their colleagues, and shared what they learnt on the course, with one of the most common being a presentation or feedback session for colleagues within their own organisation after they had been on the training (which 11 respondents in total said they had done). Others said that they often brought up the issues in meetings and events where they could.

'We updated the full team after the course – this team consisted of Senior and Executive members and operational staff.'

'Raised awareness through team meetings and through co-working on projects with internal and external colleagues.'

Participants from various courses



Individual vs organisational impact

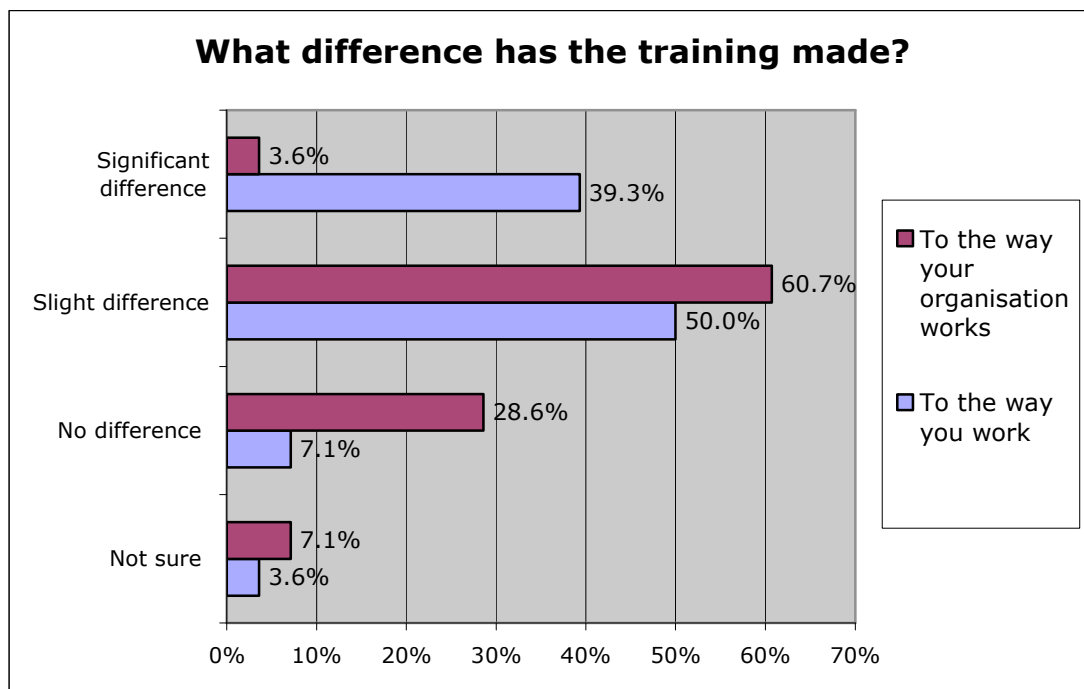
5.11. Many of the findings indicate that the training made **a significant impact on individual participants**, providing them with a deeper understanding of the issues, and the support and tools needed to make changes in their own working practices or indeed within their own teams. Moreover, respondents were able to provide examples of this, some of which can be found below.

5.12. However, it was also clear that many of the challenges in getting wider organisational change (that the ReGender project hoped to address) still exist. This is illustrated in the chart below, which shows that while 39% of respondents thought that the training had made a significant difference to the way they worked, only 4% felt it had made a significant difference to the way their organisation worked.

'I have been able to implement changes... where that's happened I've been directly managing people. It's where it's other teams – influencing other people is more difficult.'

Training participant

5.13. Similarly, while most people said that it was either fairly (50%) or very (7%) easy to put what they learnt on the course into practice, around a quarter of respondents said that it was either fairly (18%) or very (7%) difficult to put what they learnt into practice.



What were the challenges?

5.14. One of the main challenges was the **difficulty of moving awareness of the issues into practical action** (which 61% of respondents said had been a challenge for them).

5.15. A significant proportion of respondents (39%) also said that it was **difficult to persuade others** within their organisations of the importance of gender differences and that they didn't have enough **time to follow-up** on these issues after the course.

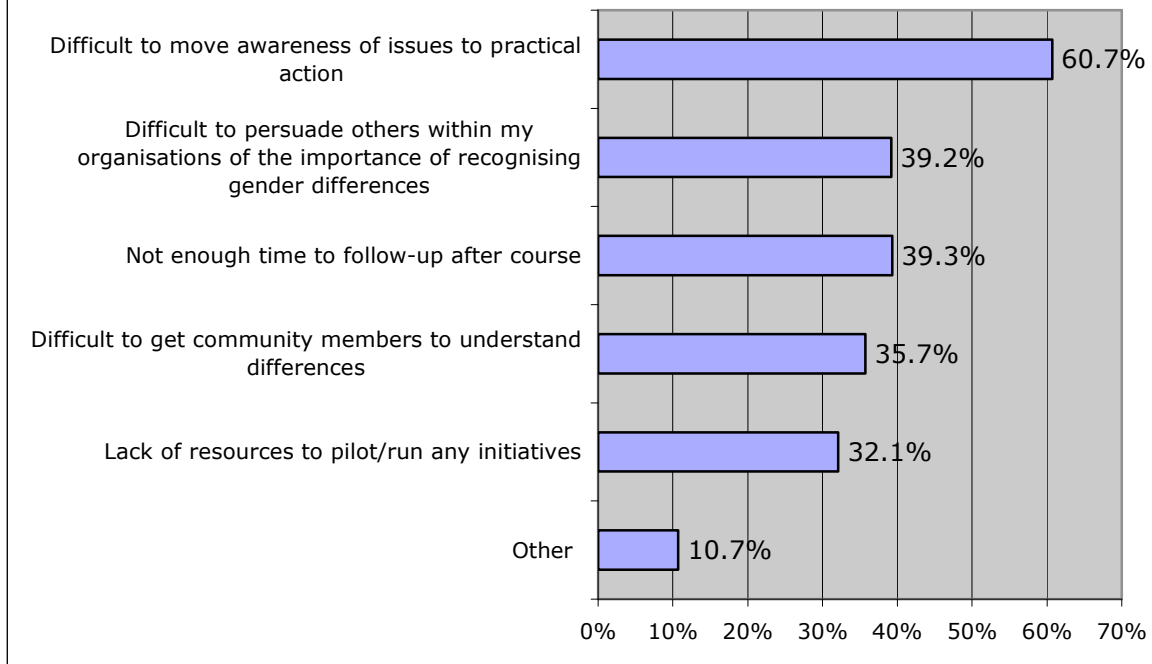
5.16. So often it was about **feeling isolated** within their own organisation or local area. Although the support of the other participants on the training was extremely valuable and probably helped to reduce those feelings, participants said that having the **support of other colleagues would really help** so that someone would be there to back them up when needed.

'It's always me and a couple of converted people raising these issues NOT everyone.'

'I think there is still a huge amount to do... it proved impossible to get anyone else from [my area] to participate. I still face challenges in getting local authorities to address gender issues.'

Training participants

Did you experience any of the following challenges in practice?



Translating it into practice

- 5.17. In spite of these challenges, there were some excellent examples of where participants had used what they learnt to make a change to their service or organisation. Some of these examples are included below.

Awareness raising among the local community

Jean-Ann Clulow, a Volunteer Chair at Northgate Community Partnership, heard about the training at a *Regeneration and Renewal* Conference and thought it sounded really interesting. She was very impressed with the interactive style of the sessions and the way the trainers bent over backwards to meet people's needs.

Jean-Ann felt that the training made her think a lot more about the issues and made her much more aware of the differences, even in her own life. Although she's found it very difficult to get others in her local area to influence others, she has tried a number of subtle techniques to raise awareness. These include using some of the facts and figures for the community newsletter and using the learning materials from the course as a topic for a pub quiz. She was also able to campaign for better lighting when the local park was recently redesigned.

'There were people not using the park because they felt vulnerable, so we were able to influence that... we have done a lot around street lighting and safety.'

Involving the community in physical regeneration

Natalie Newman, an Assistant Regeneration Manager for one of Sheffield City Council's regeneration teams, heard about the training when a conference was organised by a local Councillor at the Council. Although Natalie was at first reluctant to enrol because of the time commitment involved, she found it an extremely useful experience. In particular she enjoyed the intensive residential courses and the mentoring sessions, offering time to reflect which she saw as a real strength.

Since participating in the training, Natalie has been able to make some significant changes to the way she and her team works. For example, when commissioning urban designers, the team now asks them to commit to a community walkabout, whereby the regeneration team and the urban designers participate in a walk around the local neighbourhood with a group of women to look at what the community's needs are. This is a very empowering approach and allows women to flag up important issues to the urban designers. It is too early to say what changes this has resulted in but it is expected that this will result in more appropriate designs for women and men in the longer term. She says:

'Something [the training] has highlighted to me is that the way we do things isn't always right, it's just the way we've always done them... and that sometimes we need to look up.'

In addition to this, disaggregating the findings from a master planning exercise (which showed clear differences between the views of men and women) highlighted the need to introduce a community safety audit, which involved getting a group of women together to discuss issues of safety. Despite some initial difficulties in getting women to attend the meetings, they have become very popular, offering an opportunity for women in the community to talk about what makes them feel unsafe and what changes would help them to feel safer.

More activities for young women in Mosside

Hideaway is a youth project in Mosside, Manchester, and two youth workers from the project attended the training. They were aware that in their area, much of the focus for funding (and therefore provision activities) was going towards stopping young black men from committing crime, carrying guns, and being involved in gangs.

After going on the training, they began to ask about the activities available for young women in Mosside, and questioned the rationale for working with just young black men. They were successful in a bid for funding for a young women's project that aimed to give young women from Mosside a voice. This has included a number of activities, including setting up a women workers' forum and group for young Somali women. The Somali group in particular has really empowered the young Somali women and given them the chance to mix with others and learn about other cultures.

Achieving gender balance in the workforce

Dave Cooper is a Community Links Coordinator for Rotherham Community Transport. In a borough that is 50% rural, Dave's role involves ensuring that people who live in isolated rural areas have good access to transport.

After attending a short taster course at Northern College, Dave enrolled on the full ReGender training course and felt it had a huge impact on him, particularly as the issues were totally new to him. Since participating on the course, Dave has been far more aware of the issues and has made some positive differences. For example, Dave was asked to sit on a recruitment panel when the organisation was undergoing a big recruitment drive for new drivers, and as a result, recruited the first female driver. From participating in the training, Dave was more sympathetic to her other responsibilities outside of work and was therefore able to influence the decision.

'It's difficult because it's a male oriented workplace, but we are trying to address the gender balance. A lot of the men come from a mining background which is really stereotypical... so we have that historical challenge too.'

Dave also recognised that users of the service were 80% female and 20% male, so has been looking at ways of making the service more attractive to men and has tried to move away from stereotypical images of lone parent families by using more men in the images used for the advertising/marketing material.

Raising awareness at an Adult Education College

Jane Weatherby is a tutor at Northern College, an adult education college that provides a number of different courses. Jane attended one of the ReGender training courses after hearing about the project at a conference and has since used what she learnt on the course to raise awareness among others.

This has included running a short course at the college in conjunction with the ReGender team, which provided a taster for what the full training involved (which some participants then went onto sign up for). Jane has also integrated gender strands into the courses she teaches at the college and ran a seminar on equal opportunities for people working in the voluntary and community sector.

Within the organisation, colleagues have valued her knowledge of gender issues since she's been on the training and was asked to lead on the college's gender equality scheme.

'It fed into lots of other things - I was teaching a diploma in community regeneration and I used a lot of the ReGender info on using community surveys and using a gendered approach to that... In the more academic courses, I was teaching women's studies and globalisation - the [ReGender] course encouraged me to explore those in more detail.'

Use of resources

- 5.18. Participants were asked whether they had used the resources and materials produced as part of or alongside the ReGender project. One of the most

frequently used resources was the 'Into the Lion's Den' toolkit, which just under half of respondents said they used either very (7%) or fairly (41%) often. This is illustrated in the table below.

Table: Have you made use of any of Oxfam's resources following the course?

	Very often	Fairly often	Not sure	Not that often	Not at all
Into the Lion's Den: a practical guide to including women in regeneration	7.1% (2)	42.9% (12)	3.6% (1)	21.4% (6)	25.0% (7)
Where are the women in LSPs?	7.1% (2)	32.1% (9)	14.3% (4)	17.9% (5)	28.6% (8)
Not seen and not heard? Gender community engagement and representation	3.6% (1)	32.1% (9)	3.6% (1)	25.0% (7)	35.7% (10)
A place for everyone – gender equality and urban planning	0% (0)	21.4% (6)	17.9% (5)	25.0% (7)	35.7% (10)
Gender and spatial planning: RTPI Good Practice Note	0% (0)	14.3% (4)	14.3% (4)	25.0% (7)	46.4% (13)
Oxfam/ReGender website and internet pages	7.1% (2)	32.1% (9)	14.3% (4)	14.3% (4)	32.1% (9)
Other	3.6% (1)	7.1% (2)	17.9% (5)	10.7% (3)	60.7% (17)

How could the training have been improved?

- 5.19. Respondents were asked what suggestions for improvement they would like to make for the training. Some of the comments were around having **longer sessions**, with some concerns that debates and issues weren't always followed through. There were also some frustrations around other participants not being able to attend the mentoring sessions.

'Some modules were rushed through without sufficient digestion.'

'There were some good exercises to learn from but I felt that responses needed to be pulled together more. Debates were opened up but not completed in a structured way.'

Participants from various courses

- 5.20. Others commented that the **spread of participants** was not always ideal, particularly for public sector officers, who sometimes felt that the balance was weighed too much towards the voluntary and community sector. This meant that participants from public sector organisations did not necessarily have 'peers' there to support them, although the range of perspectives was seen as useful.
- 5.21. Respondents also commented that it was tricky to **get the balance right for those who were more experienced in the issues and those who were not**, and that participants might have benefited from a more upfront session on what regeneration is, who the key agencies are and how it is delivered etc, as some people felt that this understanding was lacking. However a lot of respondents did say that the trainers were very flexible in responding to participants' needs where issues like this were brought up.
- 5.22. Another issue was the fact that **not many men attended the course**, and in some cases where they did, felt alienated by the focus on women. Some respondents thought that there needed to be a better balance – both in terms of the participants and the content of the course.
- 5.23. Further details on the characteristics of those who responded to the survey and other more detailed analysis can be found in Appendix 2.

'There could have been a more representative spread of participants. Many were from the VCS who were working on very local projects and it made it difficult to look at strategic intervention across neighbourhoods/cities/sub-regions etc.'

'As an Equality Officer I found some of the sessions and exercises less useful – just because they covered things I was already well versed in.'

'Should have started with a clear idea about what is meant by regeneration and followed up with examples and case studies.'

'Felt that the programme was focused on 'women and regeneration' with tokenistic references to men.'

'There needs to be a balance of both men and women. Women were in the majority on the course I attended. I spoke to a couple of the men about this and they said that they found it difficult to 'speak up' in case they got 'shouted down'. I did see this on occasion which could possibly have resulted in the men not saying as much as they would have liked to.'

Participants from various courses

6

Benefits and challenges of the advocacy work

What did organisations value?

- 6.1. One of the key aspects that organisations who were involved in the advocacy strand valued was **Oxfam's brand and international reputation**. This was particularly true for local level organisations targeted through the advocacy work, who respected the credentials and reputation of Oxfam as a recognised 'brand' and international development agency addressing poverty. This aided their ability to influence more senior officers and decision takers. Public sector officers felt there was also value in the Oxfam ReGender Project being **grounded in women led, community based experience**.
- 6.2. For allies or partners who worked with the project, the Oxfam ReGender Project was therefore **a useful vehicle or platform from which to disseminate new research findings and/or different approaches, models or methods of working**. A good example of this is the pilots run by the Oxfam ReGender project in conjunction with the Women's Resource Centre and Urban Forum (details of which can be found below).

Women's representation on LSPs

The Oxfam ReGender project worked jointly with Urban Forum and the Women's Resource Centre to undertake action research around women's representation on Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). The research included an extensive literature review, including internet research on the websites of local authorities and their LSPs; an online survey of LSPs across the country; telephone interviews with 29 respondents; and action research with three pilot LSPs who were identified as wanting to make changes to promote women's equality. Whilst finalising the research report, a policy officer working on LSPs gave a steer on politically feasible recommendations. This input will help focus future advocacy work following the completion of the Sunderland and Thurrock pilots on specifically lobbying for increased BME and women's representation on LSPs with other national stakeholders.

- 6.3. Civil servants working at a regional and national level valued the **intellectual input, knowledge and contacts** that the ReGender project offered, which supported the development of ideas to improve gender equality in regeneration. In practice, this was utilised through running joint seminars, where Oxfam's support in shaping the agenda and identifying speakers was very valuable, and by developing structures to help mainstream gender issues in regeneration, an example of which can be found below.

Developing a Women and Work Commission at the North West Development Agency

The idea of the commission came from a seminar jointly organised by NWDA and the Oxfam ReGender Project. Key speakers were provided by the ReGender Project – Baroness Prosser, the Women’s National Commission and Jenny Watson, Chairwoman of the Equal Opportunities Commission. Both speakers participated in the plenary session where the idea for a commission on women and work in the North West was raised. The Regional Assembly took ownership of the idea and in-conjunction with the Regional Development Agency is currently clarifying the purpose and focus of a commission.

- 6.4. Civil servants also found the principles that underpinned Oxfam’s ReGender Project to be helpful in developing a more collaborative relationship. The **‘critical friend’ approach** helped develop a constructive working relationship where they would work jointly to identify solutions to barriers and challenges to mainstreaming gender equality. In addition to this, individual officers viewed the Oxfam ReGender team as **an external ally** in promoting their organisation’s progress on equality issues to a wider audience.

‘Those that work in equality in the public sector at times can feel under siege by those who approach public bodies on their commitment to equalities in a challenging way without offering ideas on solutions.’

Civil servant

Developing a collaborative ‘critical friend’ relationship with Communities and Local Government

Since phase one of the ReGender Project there has been an evolving relationship with CLG. The project was requested by the Analytical Services Directorate to provide advice and agenda setting on the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative; how it monitors the impact of its problems; and the development of a toolkit to assist the development of a community quality profile.

The team was also asked to advise on CLG’s Gender Equality Scheme (GES) and based on their experience, to identify key areas to make an impact on women’s poverty and vulnerability. The ReGender team’s recommendations appeared in the first annual report on CLG’s report on GES. Further ongoing input was given through written submissions invited or requested by representatives of CLG. For example, Jane Roberts of the Councillors Commission sought a written submission of the ReGender Project experience on the importance of confidence in gender equality – quoted in the final report (September 2007). The ReGender Project was also invited to contribute to a key stakeholder seminar on equalities and local communities for input into the Equalities Review (May 2007).

- 6.5. **Access to the materials and resources** produced by (or as part of) the Oxfam ReGender project were also highly valued and were used extensively by many of the organisations involved in the advocacy strand. Public sector officers in organisations targeted through the advocacy strand had utilised the research reports to **provide the evidence and rationale for looking at public services through a gender lens**. Use of these research reports

and policy briefings had also enabled local public sector officers to strengthen their position on getting **senior management and political buy-in** on gender equality issues in regeneration and to inform senior managers about how gender issues should or can be considered in their areas of responsibility.

- 6.6. Moreover, the **opportunity to attend the Oxfam ReGender training workshops** enabled other public sector officers to gain awareness and understanding of how to look at public service delivery through a gender lens, and made them feel better equipped to encourage others in their team or department to do so. Joining up the two in this way worked very well where it did happen; those public sector officers who felt isolated in their organisations felt that the ReGender Project provided a life line for them, offering moral and practical support.

How did they benefit?

- 6.7. The Oxfam ReGender Project created opportunities to bring people together from different geographical settings, organisational silos and public and third sector interests. As such, it has created **significant networking opportunities and the chance to share learning** across different interests and organisations.

'As a local authority officer, I valued being with others from the other regions; how they worked on these issues and how they approached these issues.'

'I found the opportunity to identify and make contact with others working in other parts of the region on how they have looked at gender equality issues and tackled them has been valuable.'

Training participants from local authorities

Regional forum for gender equality

The ReGender Project (through a regional seminar) provided a range of useful and interesting contacts to utilise at a local and regional level for Sunderland City Council. These included a local BME women-led network based in Newcastle upon Tyne that co-ordinated the North East Women's Network as part of the North East Equalities Coalition that has become a member of the City Council's Independent Gender Equality Advisory Group.

- 6.8. Oxfam's support also helped to **raise awareness within a neighbourhood-level women-led group on the concept of 'regeneration'** and the main agencies who play a key role in regenerating local areas. This also **helped to increase the profile of this group** to others operating in the locality and increased the group's awareness of other community groups in the area who were addressing other strands of equality and diversity, such as race and

'I was not aware of 'regeneration'. I didn't know what it meant before getting involved with Oxfam.'

Member of neighbourhood level women-led group

ethnicity. The group felt that as a result of this support, they more aware of the 'politics' of resource allocation at a local level.

- 6.9. The support provided by the Oxfam Regender team also **helped to increase the confidence of members of the group** to speak at meetings on gender related issues. As a result, the women-led neighbourhood group **felt more empowered** as a result of Oxfam's support and felt more willing to assert their views and challenge others on the importance of looking at gender differences.
- 6.10. As noted in the previous section, public sector officers who attended the ReGender training workshops used the **increased level of understanding** of gender issues in regeneration to help other colleagues look at gender equality in their particular area of work, showing the real value of offering these two strands as part of the project. These public sector officers also **actively sought to raise awareness with other colleagues** on the importance of using and developing equality impact assessment tools. This has helped to propel gender equality higher up the policy agenda.

Raising the profile of gender equality in Sunderland City Council

Following attendance at a regional seminar on gender and regeneration organised by the Oxfam ReGender Project, an officer from Sunderland City Council (in conjunction with her other equality colleagues) has raised awareness with senior managers on the need to develop a gender impact assessment tool. A training session has been organised for the members of the Independent Gender Advisory Group, local authority managers, and wider Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) stakeholder managers. Training materials provided by the ReGender Project was used. Further training is planned with LSP stakeholders at the end of 2008/09 on all the equality strands including gender.

- 6.11. Public sector officers also said that having the **ongoing support of the ReGender project staff** acting as a sounding board by helping to formulate rationale, evidence base and ideas on mainstreaming gender equality in their work and that of their colleagues. Civil servants also said that they **felt more equipped because of this support to raise awareness of gender issues** where they felt they were not being considered to the extent they should be and had gained a better understanding of the role of women in regeneration and the contribution that women can make.

What were the challenges?

- 6.12. Organisations that were targeted through the advocacy strand had high expectations of the staff support that would be available through the Oxfam ReGender project, but felt that these were not met. Civil servants were disappointed at the limited staff resources available within the ReGender team and felt that **more time and resources to follow up**

'I felt the capacity of the project needed to be increased. One co-ordinator operating in several different regions was not enough across training and advocacy work. The length of time for a project needs to be longer'.

Civil servant

on the advocacy and lobbying opportunities at a more senior level would have been really beneficial. This meant that individuals and organisations targeted through the advocacy work were forced to have a greater reliance on the written resources to inform their work and thinking, and while these were very useful, they would have preferred more 'hands-on' support to influence senior managers and decision takers.

'Another successful [event] was with CLG... we had a lot of come back from those people to say we should get involved in other areas... but given that it required quite detailed work and expertise, our resources were too limited to follow up on it.'

ReGender Team Member

- 6.13. For partner organisations and allies of the Oxfam ReGender project, although they felt that they had worked collaboratively with Oxfam, some had **concerns about whether it was an equal partnership**. Allies interviewed felt that they were recognised and credited by Oxfam as 'expert', with extensive knowledge on specific regeneration and gender equality issues, but this was being utilised by the Oxfam ReGender project at times without giving kudos and proper status to those they were trying to target and influence. Although this was clearly not the intention of the Oxfam ReGender team, it brings up some significant issues on how partners or allies are engaged. There is a need to be clear from the outset about the terms the partnership or relationship is based on and review periodically for the duration of the project.
- 6.14. In the eyes of many of those involved in the advocacy work, having relatively limited resources also made it **difficult for the Oxfam ReGender project to keep up to speed with changes in the policy framework** for neighbourhood regeneration. Several of those interviewed also felt there were **missed opportunities to build upon the momentum and interest** gained from disseminating Oxfam and partner organisations' research findings and fully maximise the impact of these findings on those operating more widely at a regional level.

Outcome of collaborative relationship with CLG

Following a seminar with Baroness Andrews in April 2007, a roundtable on gender and planning was delivered jointly between the ReGender Project and the Royal Town Planning Institute to the Planning Directorate at CLG in May 2007. An internal group was set up to do further work on this priority. Although Oxfam has requested a progress update on this priority in July 2008, the CLG GES action plan states the Directorate are considering a proposal from Oxfam ReGender Project to deliver an Equality Impact Assessment Training seminar to CLG planning staff (though no firm date is given). It has become clearer more recently that there may not be significant commitment to equality issues among the regeneration heads in CLG as it is unlikely that delivery of the training seminar will go ahead as planned.

7

Conclusions

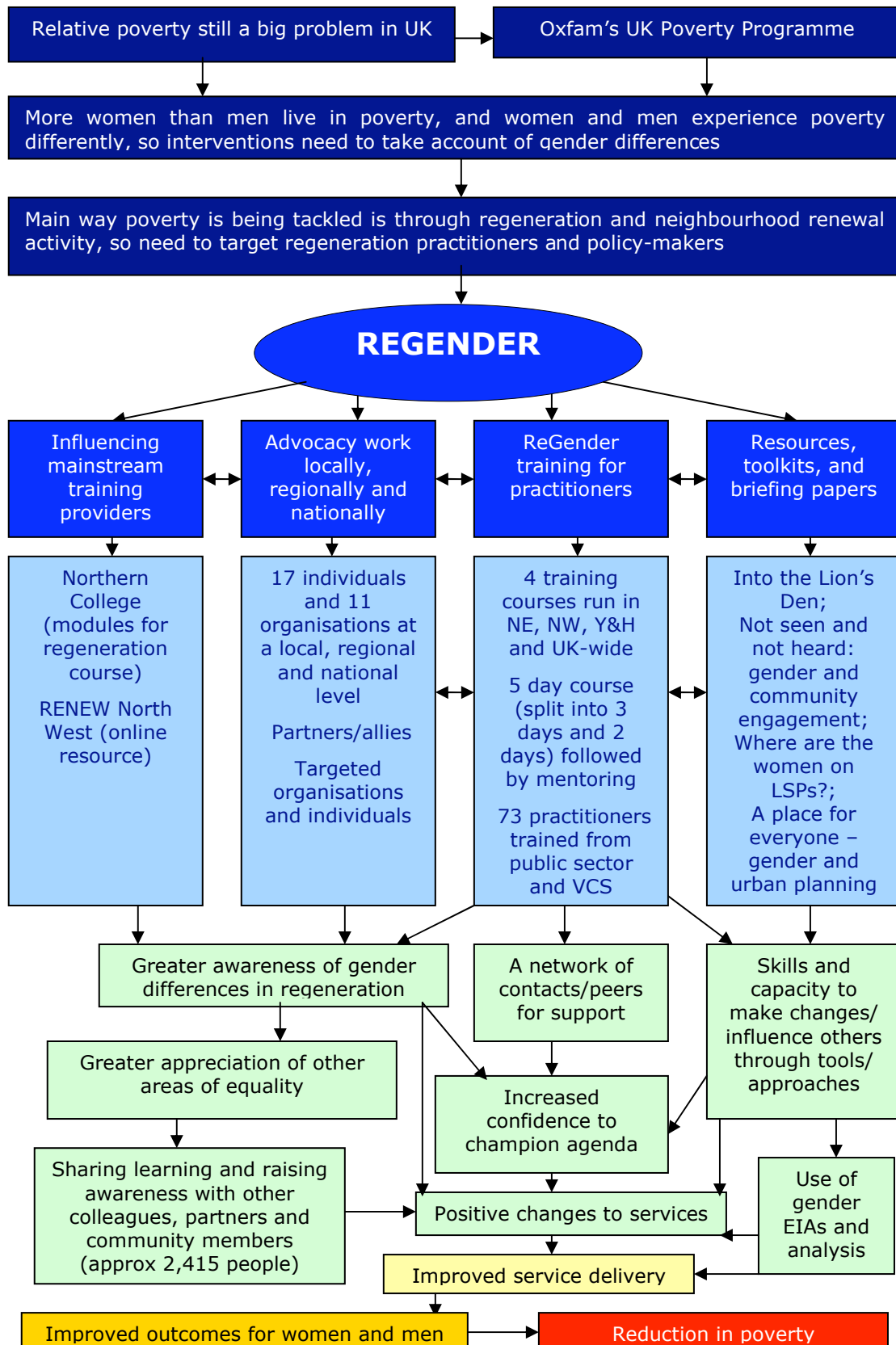
Overall impact and success

- 7.1. Overall, it is clear that the Oxfam ReGender project has **made a big difference to individuals and organisations who have been involved** in the project. The theory of change model provided below illustrates this – showing what outcomes the project has achieved through the different activities, how these link together (i.e. what activities lead to what outcomes) and what longer term impacts we would expect to see as a result (more information on the theory of change can be found in Appendix 3).
- 7.2. In particular, many of the individuals who participated in the ReGender training felt it had made a huge difference to them, by building their **awareness and understanding** of the relationship between gender and regeneration; providing them with a **peer support network**; and **inspiring them** to take what they learnt back to their own organisations and to drive these issues forward in their own areas of work. Moreover, many of the participants gave examples of where **they had passed on what they learnt to others and made changes to areas of work** that they were responsible for.
- 'It was about helping people translate it into what they could do and not be over-awed by it... I think we achieved that quite well... people seemed to get a lot out of it and a lot of people did go on and do some exciting things in their work.'*

ReGender Team Member
- 7.3. Moreover, organisations who have been involved in the advocacy strand have found Oxfam's **reputation, experience and contacts** beneficial. Those who were targeted by Oxfam have **valued their role as a critical friend**, and partner organisations and allies have found the project a useful platform from which to disseminate research findings and new approaches to working.
- 7.4. Organisations targeted by Oxfam were able to provide examples of where this support had made a **positive difference to working practices**, and although there were not many examples of changes to policy development and implementation, it is clear that **Oxfam's experience in these issues has been recognised by those involved**. For example, the Oxfam ReGender project has been asked to provide a response to the official consultation on CLG's regeneration framework, and the team is currently drawing together partners and others involved in the project and other streams of work to write that response.
- 7.5. The materials and resources provided have played a key role in this success, providing **useful practical resources** for practitioners and officers. In addition to this, a lot of work has gone into **raising awareness more generally** of the importance of gender equality in regeneration and the tools

and resources that are available through the ReGender project through attendance at numerous events and conferences, and articles in the press and other newsletters and publications.

THEORY OF CHANGE: THE REGENERER PROJECT



- 7.6. However, we do need to recognise that although the ReGender project has achieved a lot within its resources, many challenges in achieving wider organisational change still exist. Individuals who have benefited from the support of the project have faced significant barriers in getting these messages across to others in their organisations and in their local areas, which shows the need to target different levels within organisations. It is therefore important that we understand and learn from these challenges so that future work in this area can address these barriers and build on the progress that has been made through the ReGender project.

'We tried out a lot of approaches and as well as trying to change things, we were trying to learn about how to make change happen.'

ReGender Team Member

Challenges in achieving wider change

- 7.7. There are some significant challenges remaining that have been highlighted through our research. One of the most difficult is the fact that **equalities is often viewed as an add-on** to people's work, and not as a legal duty or intrinsic to what they do. As such, it is often seen as a good thing to do if you've got the time and the thing that gets dropped when resources are stretched.

'When working to tight timescales, [equality and diversity] is the first one that comes off the agenda – because you just need to deliver.'

'There is always the thing about being the one banging on about gender again.'

- 7.8. We have heard through our research that it is often **difficult for women in senior positions to 'speak up'**, even where they are committed to equality and diversity issues, because they don't want to be the woman that always brings gender issues up. So there is tension between their commitment to the issues and their own personal progression and circumstances.

'There is a massive assumption that the gender battle has been won – people think we've got equality, so getting people to confront that is difficult.'

Training participants

- 7.9. Many people often perceive a distinct **hierarchy of equality and diversity priorities**, with more emphasis and resources going to race and disability. This links to a widely-held **perception that the problem has been solved** and gender inequality isn't an issue anymore.

'Male supremacy is a deeply engrained thing, and there is a backlash against feminism, so often things are dismissed as political correctness gone mad.'

'One of the challenges was that a lot of these changes take a lot of time... even if you put a change in place, the impact of that is felt many years down the line.'

ReGender Team Members

- 7.10. In addition to this, **the public sector shows a significant resistance to change** (being large, bureaucratic organisations delivering many services and having conflicting priorities), so it can

take a long time to see positive results when working with public sector organisations.

- 7.11. This also means that there is a **need to target different levels of public sector organisations using different methods** if we are going to achieve real longer term change. This needs to come from the top level, to middle managers and right through to front line staff and deliverers. All levels need to be bought into this idea and understand the issues before we see long term results.

Lessons for future work in this area

- 7.12. One of the original ideas behind targeting regeneration practitioners *and* senior decision and policy makers through the ReGender project was to break down some of these barriers for individuals who consistently came up against these challenges in their own organisations. Where the advocacy and training strands did link up in one organisation, it appeared to work well, but given the challenges that many of the training participants said they faced in achieving wider organisational change, it would appear that **more work needs to be done to marry the two strands up in practice**. There is a real value in targeting different levels in this way (as indicated above), but future work in this area could do more to link the two strands more effectively.
- 7.13. Moreover, given these challenges, it is important to be **realistic about what can be achieved within the resources**. With the Oxfam ReGender project, this was a particular issue in terms of the capacity to provide ongoing staff support to individuals and organisations who had been targeted through the advocacy strand. Although the Oxfam ReGender team had clearly provided all they could within the resources and time available, it will be important to **manage expectations** in future work so that people are clear about the type and scale of support that is available. In addition, it would be worth re-thinking how resources are best used depending on the aims and context of the work – for example, if fewer organisations were targeted through the advocacy work, more in-depth support could have been provided, but the balance depends on the overall aims and objectives of the project.
- 7.14. To make the most of the resources, it is clear from the ReGender project that **linking this work up with current priorities** in the public sector can be very effective. For example, the gender equality duty has been a very important hook for this project – for both the advocacy and training strands – and in future, using other levers (such as the Local Government Equality Standard) is likely to be beneficial.
- 'Until the time that the gender duty came in, it wasn't on the policy agenda – the whole area around how men and women are affected differently by services wasn't on the agenda until then.'*

ReGender Team Member
- 7.15. In addition to this, there are questions around **how the support, experience and momentum built up through the ReGender project**

can be sustained in the longer term as the project draws to an end. The original project design included plans to build regional networks and in some regions there has been some activity (one meeting and email updates in Yorkshire and Humber, and potential linking in with the North East Women's Network funded through One North East). But there is a danger that the progress made by the project will ground to a halt as there are not many resources put aside to support these networks. More work needs to be done when planning and delivering future projects to ensure that these support mechanisms are in place when the funding ends.

- 7.16. There is an issue around **how you attract or reach out to individuals who have a responsibility for regeneration but don't understand the value of looking at it through a gender lens**. Most of the participants on the training course were already interested in these issues, so in effect the workshops mostly attracted those who were already 'converted'. This doesn't take away the fact that the training was still useful and beneficial for those participants, but it does pose some questions around how you build the understanding and awareness of those who are not converted, since they are unlikely to sign up to a training course like this. The work done around influencing mainstream training providers goes some way in addressing this issue, but more could be done to influence more mainstream civil service training courses and colleges (rather than courses specifically on regeneration per se).

'It was hard to get men involved... I think women are more interested in these issues. I had to suggest to some people that men might also be interested in attending and they were a little surprised.'

'While we did acknowledge that this was about men as well as women, we had to be unapologetic about the fact that women do experience more disadvantage than men... but it is a balance to get that right.'

ReGender Team Member

- 7.17. This links to the challenge around attracting more men to attend training courses and events on gender equality. Section 5 of this report highlighted the fact that some participants of the ReGender training felt that it focused too heavily on women, to the extent that one man left the course early as he felt alienated. **A more neutral stance that emphasised the fact that gender is about women and men might make the course more attractive and inclusive for men.**

- 7.18. Finally, for projects that are set up to tackle challenging issues like this, **reflecting on and sharing learning about what approaches work and what approaches don't work is vital**. The ReGender project team collected some really useful information throughout the lifetime of the project, but more evaluative activities that consider what's working and what's not working would have been useful.

'Maybe we [should] have looked more during the project at how we were achieving our outcomes. We focused too much on our outputs.'

ReGender Team Member

8

Recommendations

8.1. Based on the overall findings and messages that have been outlined in the previous section, we thought it would be useful to provide the following recommendations for Oxfam's future work:

- Given that we know outcomes within this area can take a long time to achieve because of significant challenges, future projects should be **more realistic about what can be delivered within the resources and timeframe** – both in terms of the project overall and for individuals and organisations that are targeted. A greater theoretical underpinning (using a theory of change model) would help to clarify what is achievable within the resources and timeframe, and would help to **communicate this more clearly to other colleagues and partners**.
- The evaluation has highlighted the fact that the Oxfam brand and reputation was very valuable, but this was often in terms of its international experience. **Much more could be made of Oxfam's UK experience in addressing poverty** which could help in getting buy-in and support from local, regional and national government.
- Future projects will need to **think about how to reach and attract those who aren't already converted** – officers in organisations that have an authority or responsibility to deliver policy or programmes of work on regeneration or neighbourhood renewal that have little or no understanding of gender equality. Clarifying what hooks will attract them and how to mainstream this kind of work will be critical in doing so.
- Some work needs to be done to **strengthen relationships with partner organisations and allies** – the research highlighted some concerns about the basis of these relationships, so it will be necessary to be clearer about why Oxfam is involving partners and how the team would like to work with them from the beginning.
- **Maintaining support and momentum after the project ends** is a real challenge (particularly when resources are limited) but it is vital in achieving long term change; resources should be put aside to make sure support mechanisms are in place when you pull out. The materials produced as part of the project are a great legacy but aren't enough on their own to deliver the kind of change this project was looking for.
- Information collected by the ReGender project team has been extremely useful, but **more embedded evaluative activities** with staff, partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries throughout the project's lifetime would

enable greater reflection and learning on progress made towards expected outcomes and challenges faced. This might have included, for example, regular interviews with partners and more follow-up work with beneficiaries. Future projects should consider how evaluation can be built in from an earlier stage either through an external organisation or by utilising in-house evaluation skills and experience.

Appendix 1: Content of the training

Day 1

Understanding gender as a concept
Gender issue, stereotypes and assumptions
Gender in my life
Gender and poverty
Overview of regeneration context
Why gender is important to regeneration

Day 2

International context for gender equality work
National context – UK legislation and the Gender Duty
Gender, community participation – including case studies
Power and what empowerment means for women and men
Doing gender aware service delivery – from 'gender blind' to 'gender aware'
Work and caring issues
Gender and physical regeneration – planning in gender

Day 3

Getting to grips with gender aware programming
Looking at toolkits and resources available
Designing a gender aware project – starting to use gender toolkits
Thinking about your own work – gender starting point, opportunities and challenges
Ideas for days 4 and 5

Day 4

Discussing practical issues resulting from discussions with colleagues

Putting it into practice: gender methodologies – what are they and why are they hopeful?

Hearing from people who have used gender methodologies

Making a case for gender – communication skills and developing a convincing argument

Poverty, pensions and older women

Gender and mu work – detailed planning of practical ways to build in a gender aware approach

Day 5

Finalising plans for follow up work on gender - with group input

Building in a participative approach to work and to monitoring

Working on gender with policy makers

Project example

Format for mentoring sessions – areas to explore further

Checklist for a gender aware approach to regeneration programming

Reflecting on own journey on gender and regeneration

Between session homework

Before returning to second sessions, participants were asked to:

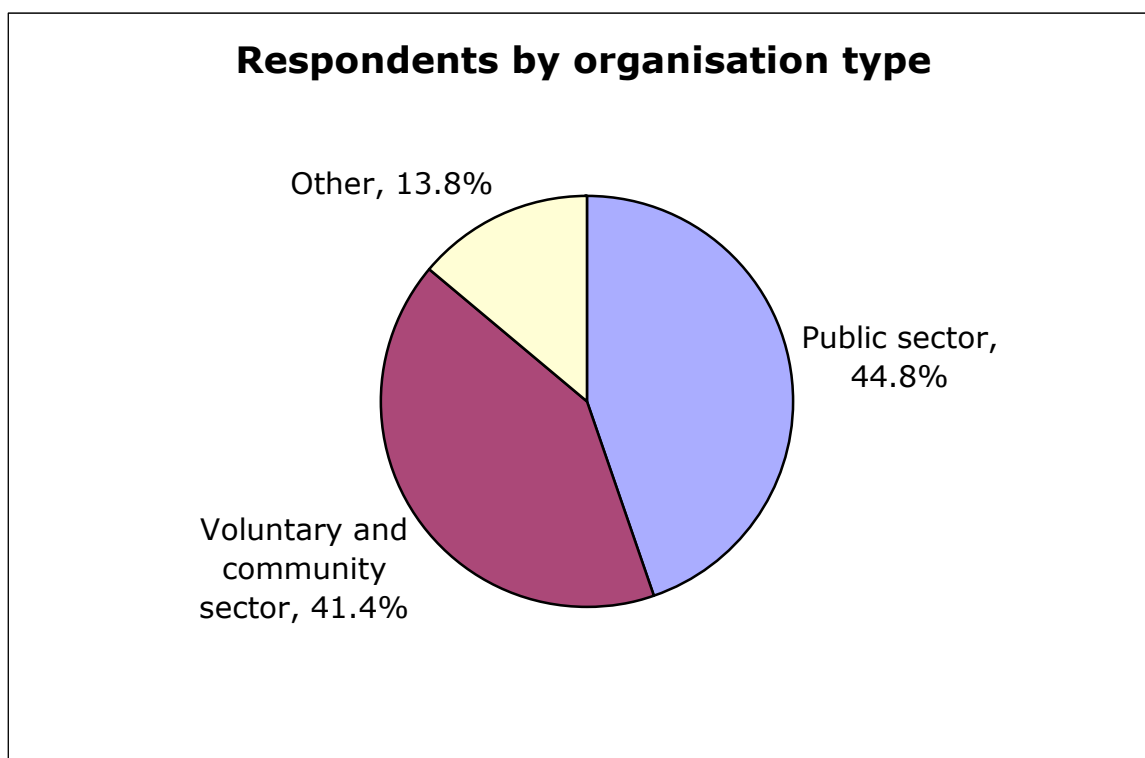
- Disseminate a flavour of the course to colleagues
- Facilitate one awareness raising exercise with colleagues
- Discuss what gender aware programming could mean in their area and make initial plans for the follow up work
- Bring back any issues/questions/concerns/ideas

Appendix 2: Detailed survey responses

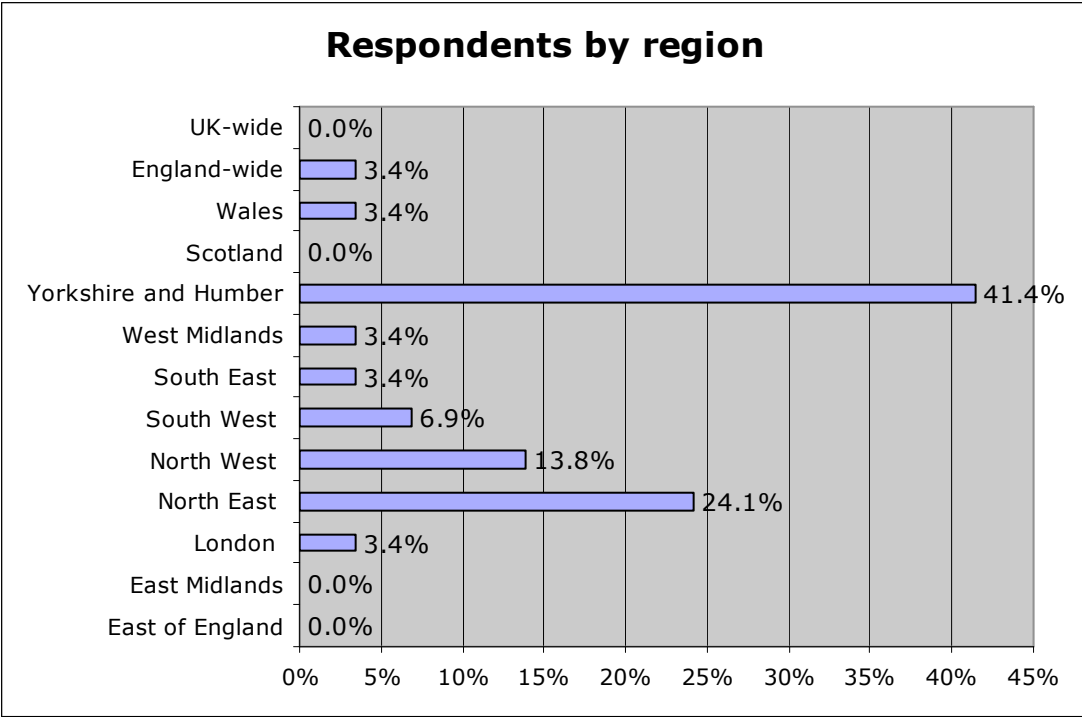
Who responded to the survey?

A total of 29 responses to the survey have been received to date (out of a possible 73). Significant efforts have been made to increase the response rate, by sending two follow-up email reminders and ringing all contacts to either remind them to complete the survey or offer them the opportunity to do it over the phone (some participants had moved on and so we had no way of contacting them).

There was a good spread across the public and voluntary and community sectors (as shown in the chart below), with other respondents coming from the private sector.

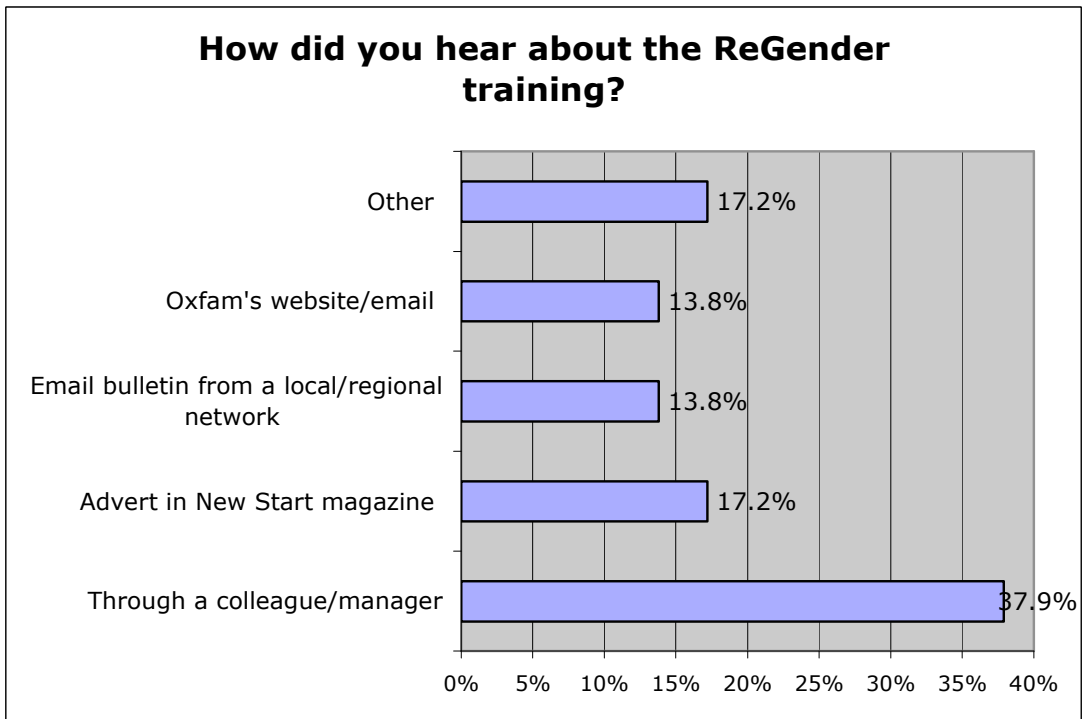


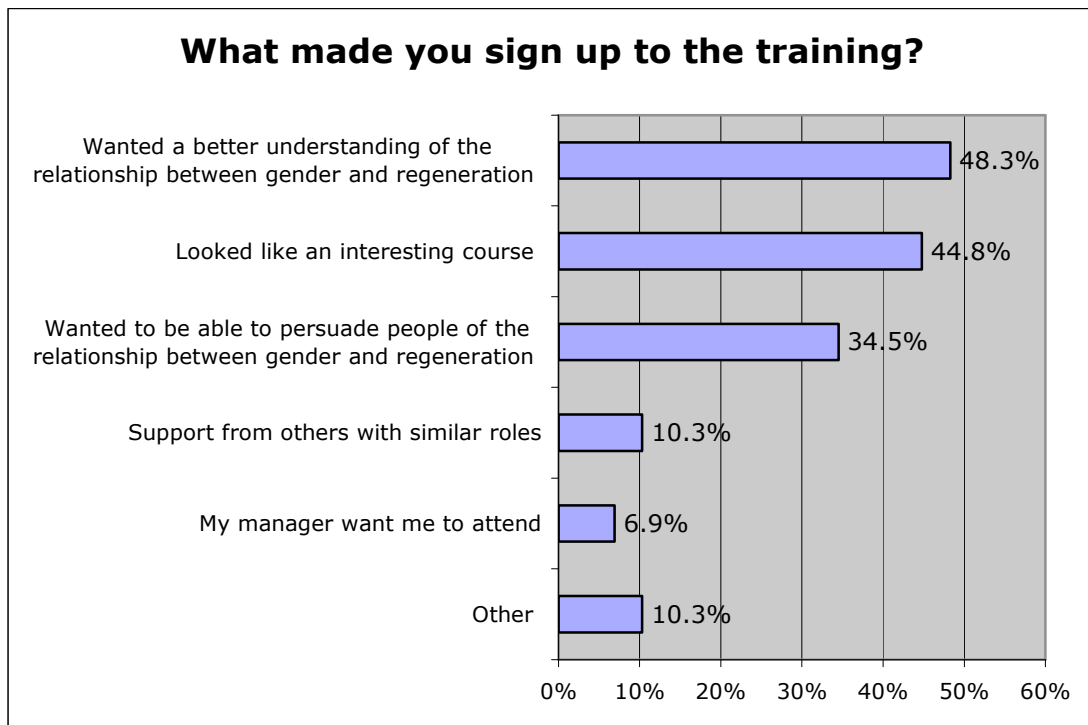
Participants were relatively well spread across the regions, however a large proportion (41%) were from the Yorkshire and Humber region.



Before the course

The majority of respondents had heard about the course through a colleague or their manager (38%), and had signed up to it because they wanted a better understanding of the relationship between gender and regeneration (48%). Most people also thought that it looked like an interesting course (45%) and wanted to be able to persuade others of the relationship between gender and regeneration (35%).





Just under a third (31%) of respondents had done similar training before, which ranged from a short course delivered by Northern College or an earlier ReGender conference, to more generic training around the use of Equality Impact Assessments and a masters degree in gender research.

Views on the training overall

The vast majority of respondents said that overall the training was either fairly useful (48%) or very useful (41%). Around two thirds also said that the training had either met their expectations (38%) or exceeded them (31%).

'The course took on a number of issues of wider social change related to both gender and regeneration, so my understanding of both was deepened, as well as being able to make a better case for a gender analysis in regeneration.'

'The course was stimulating and challenging – the support from other attendees was also really valuable.'

'Really enjoyed exploring the subject in depth although it raised a lot of questions – everybody was so supportive and went out of their way to be helpful!'

'It was an excellent course and the length of time between meetings allowed for reflective learning which suits my learning style perfectly.'

For those whose expectations were only partially met (24%), there was a feeling that discussions/debates could have been more structured and that

some exercises were less useful for those who already had some experience of the issues. Others felt that the balance wasn't quite right – between gender and regeneration, and between the difference for men and women.

'As an Equality Officer I found some of the sessions and exercises less useful – just because they covered things I was already well versed in.'

'There were some good exercises to learn from but I felt that responses needed to be pulled together more. Debates were opened up but not completely in a structured way.'

'Some modules were rushed through without sufficient digestion. Disregard of views contrary to expected mind set.'

'Felt that the programme was focused on 'women and regeneration' with tokenistic references to men.'

'I would have liked a more in-depth exploration of some issues and more techniques on influencing others regarding the importance of considering gender within regeneration projects.'

The majority of respondents (79%) had made use of the mentoring sessions, and those that had found them either fairly beneficial (52%) or very beneficial (35%). For those that weren't able to make use of them, a lack of time/resources was the main factor.

When asked what they liked best about the training, the overwhelming response was meeting and interacting with other like-minded people. People also liked the tools and resources they were able to take away with them and complemented the trainers.

'Meeting new and different people and hearing their perspective.'

'The group bonded well which led to plenty of discussions outside training.'

'The variety of people involved, everyone was different but all had common aims.'

'The resources that I came away with were excellent and I and others in my team have used them extensively.'

Respondents were also asked what suggestions for improvement they would like to make. Some of the comments were around having longer sessions and frustrations around not being able to keep the mentoring sessions going, and others were about changes to the content and the spread of participants.

'Should have started with a clear idea about what is meant by regeneration and followed up with examples and case studies.'

'There could have been a more representative spread of participants. Many were from the VCS who were working on very local projects'

and it made it difficult to look at strategic intervention across neighbourhoods/cities/sub-regions etc.'

'There needs to be a balance of both men and women. Women were in the majority on the course I attended. I spoke to a couple of the men about this and they said that they found it difficult to 'speak up' in case they got 'shouted down'. I did see this on occasion which could possibly have resulted in the men not saying as much as they would have liked to.'

Benefits of participating in the training

Some of the most common areas that respondents felt the training had given them a better understanding of were gender and gender equality; gender tools e.g. EIAs and gender analysis; and good practice and learning from other organisations.

Table: Did you feel the training provided you with a better understanding of:

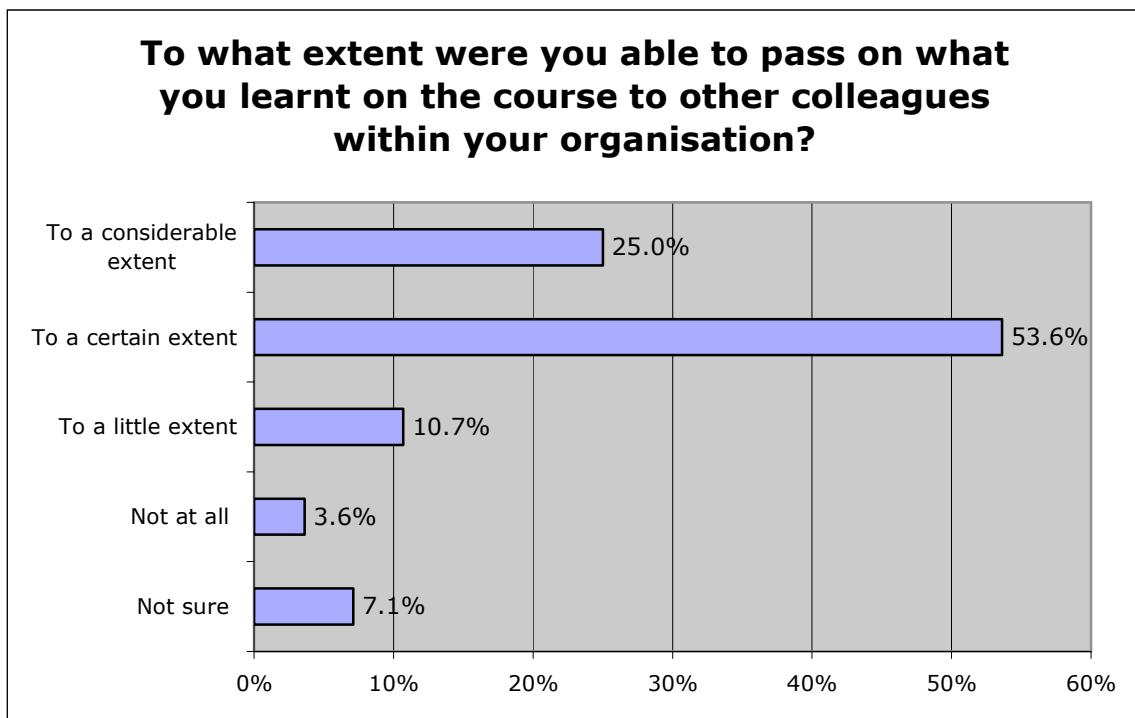
	To a considerable extent	To a certain extent	To a little extent	To no extent	Not sure
Gender and gender equality	53.6% (15)	28.6% (8)	10.7% (3)	3.6% (1)	3.6% (1)
How gender equality relates to regeneration	39.3% (11)	46.4% (13)	10.7% (3)	3.6% (1)	0% (0)
Gender and participation/representation	32.1% (9)	50.0% (14)	14.3% (4)	3.6% (1)	0% (0)
Gender and physical regeneration	21.4% (6)	64.3% (18)	10.7% (3)	0% (0)	3.6% (1)
Gender and other areas of equality	21.4% (6)	42.9% (12)	32.1% (9)	3.6% (1)	0% (0)
Gender and service delivery	21.4% (6)	42.9% (12)	28.6% (8)	3.6% (1)	3.6% (1)
Gender tools e.g. EIAs and gender analysis	42.9% (12)	42.9% (12)	10.7% (3)	0% (0)	3.6% (1)
Available resources on gender and regeneration	42.9% (12)	46.4% (13)	10.7% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Good practice and learning from other organisations	42.9% (12)	39.3% (11)	14.3% (4)	3.6% (1)	0% (0)

The majority of people felt that they were able to pass on what they learnt to other colleagues in their organisations to a certain extent, and respondents gave lots of examples of how they had done this. One of the most common ways was doing a presentation/feedback session for colleagues within their

own organisation when they had finished the training (which 11 respondents said they did). Others said that they often brought up the issues in meetings and events where they could.

'We updated the full team after the course – this team consisted of Senior and Executive members and operational staff.'

'Raised awareness through team meetings and through co-working on projects with internal and external colleagues.'



In addition to this, over two thirds (70%) of respondents said that the training had given them the confidence and ability to try to influence others, and just under two thirds (63%) said that it had inspired them to champion the agenda in their organisation and provided them with a network of contacts/peers to draw on if they needed support. Just under half (44%) also said that it had improved their data collection/analysis by gender.

'The course gave me the confidence and courage to take gender issues forward. We are now in contact with the Women's Resource Centre, Take Part and Changes UK and are planning a regional event around gender issues.'

Use of resources

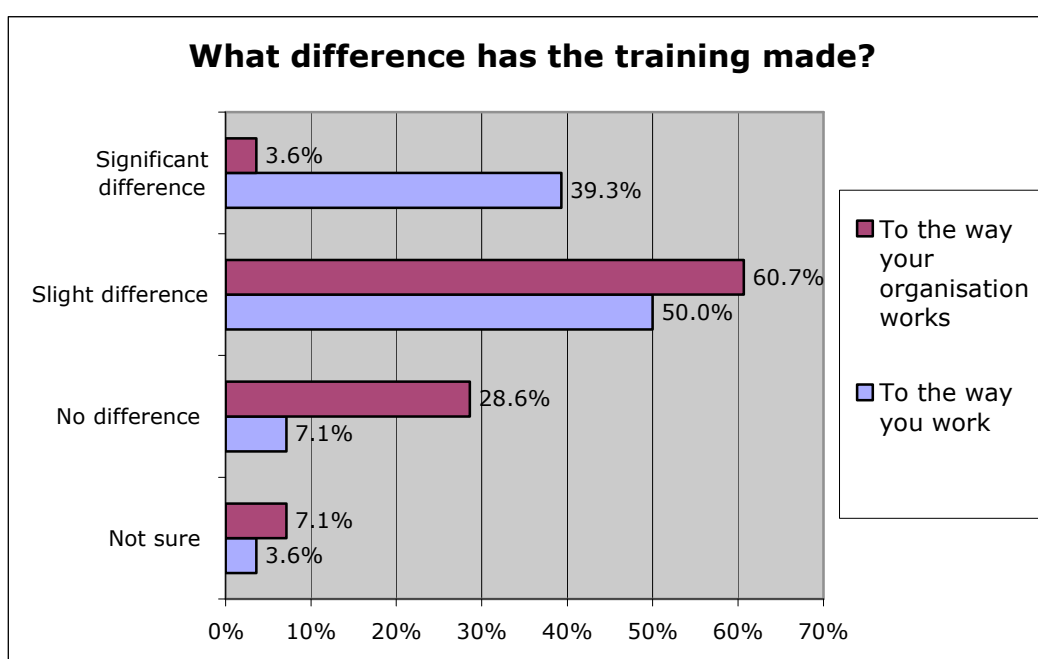
One of the most frequently used resources was the 'Into the Lion's Den' toolkit, which just under half of respondents said they used either very (7%) or fairly (43%) often.

Table: Have you made use of any of Oxfam’s resources following the course?

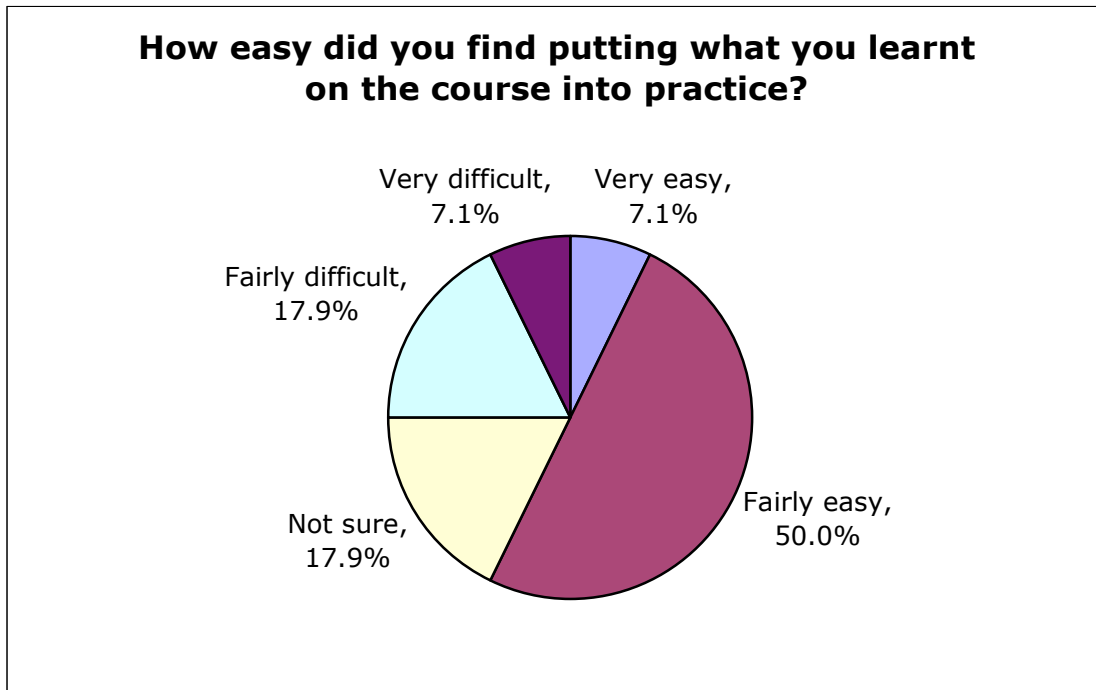
	Very often	Fairly often	Not sure	Not that often	Not at all
Into the Lion’s Den: a practical guide to including women in regeneration	7.1% (2)	42.9% (12)	3.6% (1)	21.4% (6)	25.0% (7)
Where are the women in LSPs?	7.1% (2)	32.1% (9)	14.3% (4)	17.9% (5)	28.6% (8)
Not seen and not heard? Gender community engagement and representation	3.6% (1)	32.1% (9)	3.6% (1)	25.0% (7)	35.7% (10)
A place for everyone – gender equality and urban planning	0% (0)	21.4% (6)	17.9% (5)	25.0% (7)	35.7% (10)
Gender and spatial planning: RTPi Good Practice Note	0% (0)	14.3% (4)	14.3% (4)	25.0% (7)	46.4% (13)
Oxfam/ReGender website and internet pages	7.1% (2)	32.1% (9)	14.3% (4)	14.3% (4)	32.1% (9)
Other	3.6% (1)	7.1% (2)	17.9% (5)	10.7% (3)	60.7% (17)

Using what they learnt

However, while the training had clearly made a significant or slight different to the way many of the respondents worked, it had often not made any difference or only a slight different to the way their organisations worked.

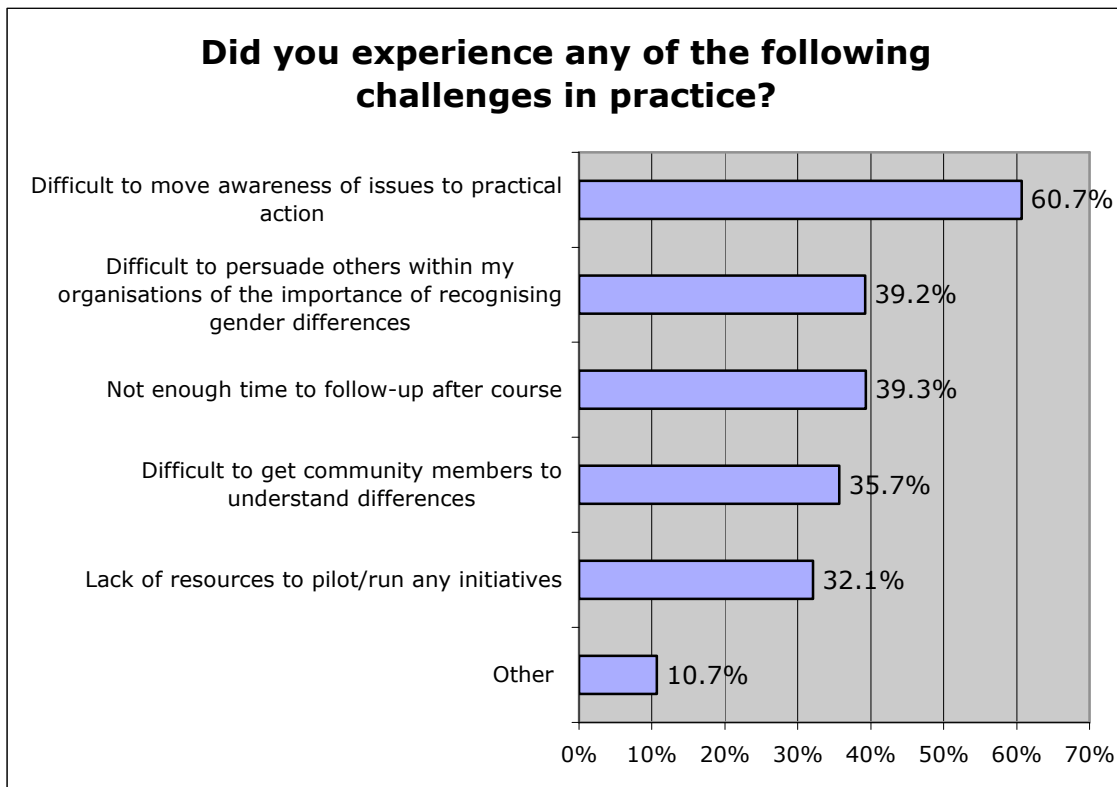


Similarly, while most people said that it was either fairly (50%) or very (7%) easy to put what they learnt on the course into practice, based on the findings above, this is likely to have related more to their own individual working practice rather than practice throughout their own organisation. Moreover, around a quarter of respondents said that it was either fairly (18%) or very (7%) difficult to put what they learnt into practice.



One of the main challenges in doing this was the difficulty of moving awareness of the issue to practical action (which 61% of respondents said had been a challenge for them). A significant proportion of respondents also said that it was difficult to persuade others within their organisations of the importance of gender differences (39%) and that they didn't have enough time to follow-up on these issues after the course (39%).

'It's always me and a couple of converted people raising these issues NOT everyone.'



Good examples

In spite of these challenges and difficulties, there were some really good examples of how participants had used what they learnt on the training in practice. These included:

- a change in the funding for youth activities through a request for more activities for young women;
- raising awareness of the issues among students, prompting them to think about how their services and resources were directed;
- raising the issues to the local council through feeding in ideas to the campaign steering group;
- the development of a scheme for lone parent families in rural locations to access better transport and the appointment of a female driver at a community transport organisation through a greater understanding of flexibility required for female applicants with caring responsibilities;
- gender proofing of consultations, projects and funding applications;
- consultation with some women's groups which resulted in proposals for a new bus route;
- the introduction of community safety audits for a large district centre and community walkabout with urban designers so that difference needs are taken into account;
- a new small grants programme (£90,000 over two years) which is likely to include a significant proportion of women-led organisations;

- the re-design of a community shop;
- representation on the 'Town Team' (regeneration for the town centre) to make sure gender awareness is there;
- use of gender impact assessments and gender analysis;
- delivery of a bespoke gender and regeneration course at a community college; and
- development of a programme of activity for all officers working at a neighbourhood level to look at community based projects from a gender perspective.

More detailed examples will also be available through the follow-up interviews.

Other comments

It was clear from respondents' comments that they thoroughly enjoyed the training and found it very useful. Some of the comments can be found below.

'Great tutors, great colleagues, inspirational stuff.'

'Was a joy to attend.'

'It was genuinely the most useful training that I have ever done and it was enjoyable as well.'

'It was good to have the space to talk about gender with other people and learn about the voluntary sector in the UK. There were some good exercises and training techniques and I appreciated the sensitivity of the facilitators to our needs.'

'It was extremely enjoyable – full of useful information. As an organisation that does not focus on gender issues, it has made us much more aware and we are determined to take at least some of these issues forward – well we are taking them forward through grant aid and a regional partnership event with the Women's Resource Centre.'

Appendix 3: Theory of change

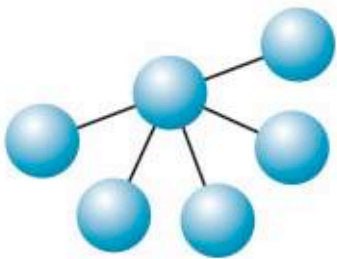
The Oxfam ReGender project aimed to **change the attitudes and behaviours** of regeneration practitioners and decision-makers to be more aware of gender differences and embed gender analysis into their work.

In these circumstances, it is useful to use a logic or **theory based evaluation framework**, which places a strong emphasis on surfacing the underlying assumptions in an intervention – for example, which activities are expected to lead to what outcomes and why – and exploring the implementation processes involved. This is especially relevant to this kind of approach as the logic framework can be used to ‘test out’ the links between the project’s design and delivery arrangements, and the expected outcomes.

The framework is also helpful in dealing with the issue of **attribution**. When a number of different factors are at work, it is difficult to ‘prove’ that improved outcomes are the result of the project, but we can better assess the likely contribution the project has made if we try to understand the underlying change mechanisms at work.

The theory of change framework is shown below in terms of what each section of the chain represents, and can be used as a template for other projects in future. The theory of change framework can be adapted and developed as a project progresses, and the final version should be used to illustrate what the project has achieved overall (the full theory of change for the ReGender project is included in section 7 of this report).

Issues/ context	Rationale	Actions taken	Short term outputs	Interim outcomes	Long-term impact
Key issues that need to be addressed – the reason for setting up your project	Why this requires an intervention and the reason behind choosing the kind of intervention you have proposed or developed	The nature of your project and its activities – what you are delivering and to whom, what staff will be involved, where you will be delivering, what other organisations will be involved etc	The immediate results of your work – numbers of people reached (including their characteristics), numbers accessing support, staff and beneficiary perceptions of service etc	Assessment of progress made by participants/beneficiaries – change in attitudes and behaviour, increased awareness and confidence, any changes to the way they work etc	The ultimate aims and objectives you are hoping to achieve and expect to achieve through delivery – for individual participants, your organisation or wider social aims



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