Do international training programmes on gender equality have transformative potential?

- An exploration into a gender programme.

Saga Tullgren

Abstract

This is an exploratory study attempting to expand the limited literature covering international training programmes (ITPs) with a gender focus. ITPs are a capacity development tool used by organisations such as, among others, Sida. This study focused on one such gender ITP called "Local Democracy and Social Sustainability with a Gender Perspective", which was conducted by the International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD). The question addressed in this study was whether the Gender programme was transformative or integrationist. To answer this question, arguments were used from debates about gender mainstreaming, about the strategies towards gender equality and about transformative versus integrationist capacity of such strategies. Fieldwork was also conducted in Serbia, one of the participating countries of the Gender programme, with interviews comprising a large part of this effort. The study found that there were some transformative aspects to the Gender ITP but that there were also several issues, such as a failure to both challenge power and social relationships and acknowledge the existence of an active opposition to gender equality.

Key words: Gender Equality, Serbia, Feminism, International Training Programmes, and Development.
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Abbreviations

GAD – Gender in Development
Gender programme, the - Local Democracy and Social Sustainability with a Gender Perspective
GM – Gender mainstreaming
ICLD – The International Centre for Local Democracy
IMF – International Monetary Fund
ITP – International Training Programme (used to refer to ICLD's ITP branch)
LFA – Logical Framework Approach
LGBTQIA+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, more.
MDG's – Millennium Development Goals
MFS – Minor field studies
NGOs – Non-governmental organisations
NPP – Non-programme participant
PP – Programme participant
SCTM - Serbian Standing Conference on Towns and Municipalities
SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals
Sida – Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.
SMEs: - Small and Medium sized enterprises
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
WB – World Bank
WID – Women in Development

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1   Introduction

Capacity development is a long existing idea and belief that what countries need to develop is more capacity in the form of experience and knowledge (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011). The literature on the issue spans research as varied as how to best conduct capacity development, the obstacles to capacity development efforts, and criticisms towards the continued effort to do capacity development from the "outside" while not acknowledging local conditions and contexts, or domestic vested interests or those of the "West" (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011; Chang, 2003; Li Murry, 2007).

Literature on international training programmes (ITPs), however, is considerably harder to find. The limited literature on ITPs in existence is generally written by the main development organisations or practitioners in the field. It is often aimed at serving as guidebooks, rather than to critically investigate them as a tool towards capacity development (ex. Pearson, 2011; Sida, 2005; Chatiza & Makanza, 2017). What is lacking in the literature is research from those affected by the development efforts or by academics on whether international training programmes are meeting development goals or achieving lasting change.

Accordingly, this study will explore gender ITPs in light of the changing development discourse on gender equality, in particular the current debates on whether gender mainstreaming (GM) proved important. GM literature can give us a hint as to whether international training programmes can in fact change the social relationships and power hierarchies that create inequality between genders. This literature presents some of the main critiques that feminist development theorists have against GM. These critiques are especially focused on highlighting the failure of many GM efforts by development organisations to challenge power and the way gender relations are structured in society today (Parpart, 2014, Verloo, 2005).

I will answer the questions that this study poses through a study of the International Centre for Local Democracy's (ICLD) international training programme "Local Democracy and Social Sustainability with a Gender Perspective's". The programme was open to applicants from nine countries, one being Serbia. The participants from Serbia served as key informants and the main point of data collection. To access the participants and the data two months were spent in Serbia doing fieldwork in the form of interviews. This was possible because of a minor field study grant (MFS) from Sida (The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency).

Serbia was chosen based on the recommendation of ICLD and it being the only country I had visited of the nine able to apply to the programme. In addition to this Serbia is also a relevant country to study both based on its current reform work and its work towards joining the EU, which has meant that they have recently intensified their work towards gender equality.

Serbia might not in the most traditional views of development (those viewing it as purely about industrialisation) be viewed as a developing country. Serbia has a history of democratic practices, even if limited and restricted due to times of conflict and authoritarian rule, the first political groupings already having emerged in the 1830s. Serbia also went through periods of infrastructure development, the school systems and universities being developed in the late 1800's and early 1900's at the same time as infrastructure in the shape of a strengthened communication system across the country and the industrial sector started to be developed and grow (Thomas, 1999). But following a multi-dimensional theory of development means that other factors than infrastructure are considered. SIDA's development work in Serbia has transitioned from the humanitarian aid it was providing during the conflicts in the Balkans to being reform-centred. Today the aid is focusing on human rights issues, and institutional capacity in the country, with a heavy focus on preparing Serbia for ascension to the European union (SIDA, 2015). Therefore the research of gender ITPs such as that run by ICLD should still be considered highly relevant for the development theory.

The research question this study sought to answer with this initial exploration was whether the Gender programme (the ITP researched) was transformative or integrationist. What was found was that the Gender programme, just like GM, had some features that had the potential to be transformative if applied correctly. The transformative potential lay in the focus, at least in theory, on organisational rather than individual change, especially through the participants' change projects. The programme did, however, have integrationist features. This was especially in the parts where its focus, especially in practice, became more about integrating women into arenas they have historically been excluded from, rather than changing the arenas themselves together with women. Other integrationist features were also evident when you looked at who participated in the programme, which was mainly women, and when you looked at the focuses of the participants' change projects, which was mainly traditional GM measures such as gender sensitive budgeting.

This study would also like to argue that just as with GM, the possibility for transforming social relationships and relocating power was actively hindered by the existence, and the continued failure to acknowledge the existence, of an opposition to gender equality. This it will be argued makes me hesitate to consider the Gender programme a strategy of displacement to achieve gender equality, and severely affects the possibility for the programme to be transformative.

As this is only an exploratory study, it can neither proclaim that ITPs are intrinsically bad, nor that they are truly good. Instead the essay will serve to highlight some issues that feminist theory can raise, some parts of this particular ITP that might be problematic, and potential solutions to this, as well as hinting at future research needed on the topic of gender ITPs.

This essay is divided in four main parts: the theoretical framework, the methodology, the analysis and finally the conclusion. In the chapter on the theoretical framework we will examine how theories from the criticism of GM can be used to analyse the Gender programme and the findings from the interviews. The methodology part will focus on how the research itself was conducted. It will tell how the fieldwork and interviews were organised, who the participants were and how these were accessed, as well as ethical considerations raised and what impacts these considerations might have for the research. The chapter that follows will present the findings of the interviews as well as analyse these in light of the criticism that GM has faced, coming to the conclusion that despite having some transformative traits there are some worrying issues with the Gender programme and its implementation.

To begin with, however, this study will outline what an international training programme is and what their focus is within development. It will also introduce you to the Gender programme and the organisation behind it, as well as answer the question of why this study is so important.

1.1 International Training Programmes

The capacities believed to be necessary for development cover many different issues and arenas, which is why ITPs come in such different shapes and sizes and with a myriad of focus areas. These areas of focus can be anything from how to create accessible cities, or covers environmental issues, human rights, good governance and of course gender equality, as well as many other things.

ITPS are in effect tools. They are acknowledged in Swedish development policy as instruments to address capacity deficiencies, and should ultimately serve the purpose of alleviating poverty (Programme brochure, 2015). The definition of poverty here follows the multi-dimensional concept that was argued for by Nobel laureate Amartya Sen (Sen, 1999). ITPs can be lead and financed by a varied group of actors, as in the case in Sweden where Sida funds ITPs conducted by universities, NGOs, companies as well as public authorities (Sida, 2017).

ITPs are a way of attempting to combine practical experience with academic research and knowledge, and teach the application of this knowledge to a partner (Sida, 2017). The focus should be on the partner in a low or middle-income country's own needs and wants as well as on creating lasting organisational change (Sida, 2017). In ICLD's brochure (2015) calling for applicants to the Gender programme you can read the following: "The ITP methodology is based on the assumption that your country wishes to carry out changes and is willing to invest own resources to achieve these changes". As will be mentioned shortly in the description of the participants' "change projects", the emphasis should be on the participating municipality's needs and wants.

According to ICLD international training programmes are

> *"(L)onger term, specialist-training programmes aimed at key individuals at local level in the countries with which Sida works, such as local politicians and administrative officials"* (ICLD, 2018).

Sida adds that the focus of ITPs should always be to ensure that these individuals plan and initiate change on "organizational and sectorial levels" (Sida, 2017). Sida is resolute that ITPs are not about individuals and their training, rather the capacity of organisations.

This study has only looked at one training programme attempting to teach gender sensitivity in local government. As this is an initial exploratory study, it has focused solely on the experiences of participants from this one ITP. Following is a short introduction to the organisation conducting this programme, the programme itself and its goals.

1.1.1 The International Centre for Local Democracy

ICLD, or the International Centre for Local Democracy, is an independent development organisation largely funded by Sida. Its main office is located on the small island of Gotland, in Sweden, with a second smaller office in Stockholm (ICLD, 2018). The development work at ICLD is divided into three branches working together on ICLD's main area of focus, which is the capacity building of local government and decentralisation of power in developing countries. The target groups for this capacity development in ICLD activities are politicians and civil servants at the local or regional level in low and middle-income countries, and in some cases staff of local NGOs (ICLD nr. 2, 2018).

For this study only the international training programme branch is of interest. ICLD and its ITP branch is, at the writing of this thesis, conducting six "regular" ITPs for which they receive funding from Sida and two programmes that are a bit different. Each programme has its own key focus relating to local democratic capacities, either dealing with issues such as human rights in local democracy, training politicians and civil servants in the SymbioCity approach to local city planning, or the empowerment of politicians who are women. It is one of the ITPs dealing with gender equality that the participants of this study have taken part in.

The ITPs follow a, to Sida, (not sure what you mean for the beginning here – what do they follow?) regular pattern and span 18 months each. These months generally consist of an inception phase, training in Sweden (also called the Swedish phase), country workshops, and a final workshop (Sida, 2017; ICLD, 2018).

ICLD as an organisation is not the main focus of this paper but it is still relevant as an organisation and producer of gender focused ITPs because it is a small Swedish organisation experienced in ITPs, Swedish aid, and is known by other development actors as operating in the foreground of efforts towards gender equality.

1.1.2 The Gender programme

The participants interviewed for this study had taken part in the programme called "Local Democracy and Social Sustainability with a Gender Perspective" (referred to as the Gender programme). Like ICLD's other programmes, its aim was to "contribute to the on-going and new reform and change processes in the selected countries" (Programme brochure, 2015)

The capacity focused on was gender sensitivity and the work towards it in local governments. When the programme was completed the participants were to have gained theoretical knowledge, with the skill of applying it, in several areas. Most important for this study was that the participants were to have:

> *"Improved knowledge about the importance and advantage of decentralization and good governance with a gender perspective in order to achieve socio-economic development;" (Programme brochure, 2015)*

Worth mentioning is that the Gender programme did not, and was not intended to, work in a vacuum or solve gender inequality on its own. It was supposed to be "one of several methods to support institutional capacity development on the local level in low and middle income countries" (Programme brochure, 2015).

The Gender programme went through three cohorts, starting in 2013 and finishing in 2016. It was open to applications from participants from nine countries within Eastern Europe, namely: Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. Each cohort was aiming to take a mix of participants from these countries, each cohort having 25 participants. In the end the training programme taught 74 people, none from Belarus, and with varying numbers of people from each country per cohort.

The participants in the Gender programme were to apply in teams of two to five (though teams of one also participated). It was asked of all participants to participate actively with their teams, share the knowledge they had and gained with the other participants and with their home organisations, on top of the demands to create a change project.

The change projects are a central feature of all ICLD's ITPs. They are to be projects that are active and worked on under the duration of the programme. These projects are to be identified by the participants themselves and were not funded by the ICLD, but instead were expected to be funded by the home organisation.

They have to be "well established in the team's organization" and in the case of the Gender programme be "linked to local democracy and social sustainability with a gender perspective in the participant's home country." (Programme brochure, 2015). These projects were to be developed during the course of the programme so as to link the theoretical knowledge gained during the programme to actual application of this knowledge, hence having a greater chance of institutionalising the new knowledge in the home organisation (Programme brochure, 2015).

1.2 Why this study is important

This essay follows the belief of many critical and feminist ethnographers that social science should strive not just to understand and explain the world, rather also attempt to change it (O'Reilly, 2012). It is therefore the hope that this study will further the interest and understanding of the importance of continuing to develop, challenge, and evolve the ways in which ITPs covering gender equality are organised and theorised.

Furthermore, with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030, which includes a heavier emphasis on gender equality and partnership than the Millennium Development Goals, the importance to improve all development activities is clear. While, especially for gender equality, all SDGs are complementary and interlinked, there are some goals that might particularly benefit from the improvement of gender-focused international training programmes, these are:

- Goal 5: to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls",
- Goal 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" (this is mainly for ITPs working with government officials and civil servants),
- Goal 17: "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development" (SDGs, 2018).

This is not to forget that furthering gender equality should be a clear and intrinsic goal in itself (Kabeer, 2005), which is an important reason to look at how to best organise ITPs on the topic.

2 Theoretical framework

This section on the theoretical framework will look into the feminist academic work focused on how gender equality is to be achieved. It will do this through explaining the three different types of strategies towards gender equality: inclusion, reversal, and displacement. Following that it will explain how the strategies of reversal and displacement have the possibility to be transformative whereas the strategy of inclusion can only be integrationist. Through the example of Gender mainstreaming (GM) it will then be shown why being transformative rather than integrationist is so important as well as the main features of being transformative. These main features circle around power. In the analysis chapter this will all be linked to what features of the Gender programme might be transformative and which might not.

Gender and the issues of inequality between genders as well as discrimination and oppression based on gender have become an increasingly covered topic within the development discourse. Gender equality is now at least in theory accepted as an important part of sustainable development and an intrinsic goal in itself. Sen for example argues that today "the empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the process of development for many countries in the world" (Sen, 1999, p. 202). In regards to the big development organisations their policy reports, action plans, strategies and the literature they produce speak loudly of an agreement that gender equality is worth working towards (Verloo, 2005, Parpart, 2014).

Despite this perceived agreement about gender equality's benefits to development, and despite gender equality no longer being a "new" focus within development, progress in some areas concerning gender equality is still slow. Women still make up the largest proportion of those that are the poorest (Sen, 1999) and violence by men towards women is still an international epidemic (WHO, 2013). Even within the international development community itself it is clear that gender equality is nowhere near de facto, something that should be evidently clear from the #metoo uproar (Omvarlden, 2018).

One of the reasons gender equality is still a distant goal, it is argued, is that despite the constant professing from international organisations that gender equality (often in the form of a gender mainstreaming policy) is something everyone agrees on, there is in fact a large opposition to it (Verloo, 2005; Parpart, 2014; True, 2003). The opposition is still something both international organisations and feminist academics struggle to recognise but some academics, like (among others) Parpart (2014) and Verloo (2005) have begun to bring it to light. This opposition will be discussed further in the coming chapter as well as its effect on the Gender programme and its participants in the chapter analysing the findings of the study.

Not only is there an active opposition to gender equality, but within those working towards it there is still not an agreement on what gender equality actually is. Just like there are many feminisms rather than one unified ideology, there are several ideas of how gender equality would look like (Cornwall et al., 2007). It is not even agreed upon what term for gender equality is preferred. The usual terms vary between gender equality, gender equity, or gender parity (de Waal, 2006; Parpart, 2014). The definition of what these mean are usually focused on either "equality of outcomes" or "equality of opportunity", but completely different definitions exist (de Waal, 2006, p. 210). Gender equality should however be, no matter how one defines it, acknowledged as a goal in itself, as well as being instrumental to achieving many other international development goals (Kabeer, 2005). This study will use the term gender equality, but for this study what is most important is how gender equality is to be achieved and what strategies one believes is the right one to attain it.

2.1   The strategies towards gender equality

Historically the solutions to inequality based on gender have fallen under three analytically different, but not mutually exclusive, feminist political strategies (Verloo, 2005; Squires, 1999). These are the strategy of inclusion, the strategy of reversal and the strategy of displacement (Verloo, 2005, p. 345 quoting Squires, 1999). Following will be a short description of these.

First there is the "strategy of inclusion, based on the principle of equality" (Verloo, 2005, p. 345). Liberal-leaning feminists often adopt strategies of inclusion based on the belief that all individuals have some basic human rights and all should be equal and have equal opportunity (Squires, 1999). Approaches that fall into this grouping attempt to include women in areas from which they have traditionally been excluded. These areas in society are then opened up to some extent to the participation of women, but without the changing of the arena itself. Quotas set to include women in politics, or efforts to include women into the capitalist market fall under this category (if they are used as a stand-alone effort to gender equality). Various efforts such as those promoted by the WB to include women into the capitalist market would also be an example of the strategy of inclusion.

The main area where strategies of inclusion face critique, usually posed by "radical" feminists, is this issue of inclusion rather than transformation. They are criticised for including women into a world "created" by men rather than allowing women to take part in the re-structuring and re-defining of societies, norms, rules and regulations (Verloo, 2005).

The second strategy is the strategy of reversal. The arguments for reversal, made mainly by those called cultural or radical feminists, sometimes share the opinions of what has been called "biological" feminists, even though the arguments have become increasingly sophisticated over the years. These are today often far from the old "women are more peaceful" arguments which were so clearly flawed.

This strategy focuses on gender differences and the importance of recognising "non-hegemonic gender identities and cultures" to move towards gender equality (Verloo, 2005, p. 346). It argues that most women do have different needs to men, whether created by biology or current norms and power structures, and that these different needs cannot be overlooked. It problematizes the focus of men and masculinity as the norm (Verloo, 2005; Squires, 1999)

Finally, there is the strategy of displacement. It is a strategy usually maintained by postmodern or post-structuralist feminists who believe we need to move past restricting ideas regarding gender (Verloo, 2005, p. 346). The feminist theorists working on strategies of displacement try to show that the strategy of inclusion's belief in equality and the strategy of reversal's ideas based on difference do not have to be in opposition to each other (Verloo, 2005; Squires, 1999). They usually focus on gendering as thought by among others Judith Butler and the idea that "gendered identities are themselves a product of particular political discourses" (Verloo, 2005, p. 346).

Instead of inclusion or reversal, the focus of displacement is to change the process that "engender the subject" (Squires, 1999, p. 3). The strategy of displacement therefore focuses on changing the existing power structures, current norms, and how society is organised to change and move beyond the "gendered world" itself to allow for diversity of experiences and needs (Verloo, 2005, p. 346).

The issue with displacement strategies is that in practice they are harder to realise. Changing power structures is not an easy task, because those in power often fight back (Verloo, 2005). The issue of an opposition will be covered shortly and why it is important to persevere despite the difficulty.

Another issue in practice is that neither the goal of gender equality nor the strategy of how to reach it can be fully defined if you subscribe to strategies of displacement. This is because the relationship between genders and the norms around them are constantly created, re-created and changed throughout the process of moving towards attaining gender equality; often the harmful hierarchies and structures are reinstalled (Verloo, 2005). This is why gender equality programmes and projects have to be adaptable and flexible, so as to respond to the changes in power and knowledge along the way (Verloo, 2005, p. 347).

These three approaches to gender equality are, as mentioned, not mutually exclusive according to Verloo (2005) or Squires (1999). Instead, as many feminist organisations demonstrate, you can both in theory and practice subscribe to more than one of these strategies, or argue for the need for parts of different strategies, to achieve the goal of gender equality. You can, for example, both work to transform the norms dictating gender relations, the importance of gender in society, or the belief in only two genders while at the same time work with issues of unequal treatment in society between men and women right here and now.

The dividing lines between strategies is also not always sharp and clear, sometimes it can be difficult to assign an activity to one of the three. But there is a difference between them, however, which is that only the later two, reversal and displacement, are accepted as having transformative capacities (Verloo, 2005 & Squires, 1999). And being transformative is, as history and past development experience show (which will be covered in the following section), important for the achievement and long-term sustainability of gender equality.

2.1.1 Transformative capacity

For a strategy to be transformative it has to challenge power relations. It has to challenge the underlying power hierarchies dictating social relationship and relationships between genders. It has to, as the strategy of displacement does, seek to change the gendered world (Verloo, 2005).

A strategy being transformative is important for change to be sustainable (Rao & Kelleher, 2005). If an approach to gender equality is not transformative (which the inclusion, and sometimes reversal strategies, are not in some cases) then it is mainly integrationist. Integrationist in this context means that an approach attempts to change blockages to gender equality, usually obstructions such as laws and policies, the blockades being the main focus (Verloo, 2005). This means that the "other" or outsider (meaning women), can be integrated into the existing power structure and systems, rather than transform the societal structures to not discriminate and disempower some in the first place (Verloo, 2005). The most fundamental issue with integrationist policies in relation to gender is that they can preserve existing power structures, and through that serve to extend and uphold the issues and existence of patriarchal structures (Squires, 1999).

Feminist political ecologists, in this case Truelove (2011), have shown how harmful integrationist policies can be within development. Truelove presents a case of a sanitation project aiming to ease women's access to toilets in Rajasthan, India. She reveals how the effort instead of alleviating the burdens involved in the accessing of toilets "re-shaped gendered practices, consequently producing new gendered ideologies and unequal spaces for women and men" (Truelove, 2011, p. 145). This was due to simplification of the issues at hand as well as failing to acknowledge intersecting power structures and in effect de-politicising the issue all together. Instead of furthering development processes, it in some way created further unfreedoms for those affected (Truelove, 2011).

Historically there has been a move, mind not a completely linear one, towards a more transformative approach to gender equality. In development this can be seen in the moving away from approaches focusing on the purely biological differences of most women to that of most men, towards programmes and projects focusing on righting the wrongs of the past and giving women and girls the same rights as most men. And finally the development industry has begun to acknowledge the studies showing the failings of integrationist activities in producing sustainable change. Sida for example who see themselves as one of the leading voices in the work for gender equality subscribes, at least on paper, to this def-

inition (Sida nr. 2, 2017). Transformative capacity and whether the Gender programme is deemed to have it or not should be considered to be of extensive significance, both for this study and for the Gender programme's effects on development and gender equality. Whether the Gender programme has transformative capacity or not will affect whether it helps or hinders the long-term and sustainable work towards gender equality.

One tool within development used as an effort to move towards gender equality and about which there has been a heated debate is gender mainstreaming (GM). GM is the strategy of moving gender issues from the fringe of politics into the everyday workings of political discussions. Some feminist academics have argued that GM has transformative capacities, while some have argued that there are several issues hindering GM partially or completely from being able to be labelled as a strategy of displacement.

2.2   Gender mainstreaming

Women's empowerment was created as a concept by the social justice movement in the 1980s as a way to "mitigate the harsher effects of neo-liberal policies" (Parpart, 2014, p. 383). This is also when mainstreaming became a term within women's rights and gender equality. The goal was then to bring attention to gender equality by incorporating it into the day-to-day activities of development actors (UN, 2001). The aim was to incorporate gender equality efforts into the everyday, bringing gender considerations and theories into the already existing structures and efforts of development work.

In the 1990s gender mainstreaming was created as a way to put into practice a "growing commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality" (Parpart, 2014, p. 383). This push to mainstream gender issues came from the growth of large international women's networks working towards gender equality (True, 3003). The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was where "mainstreaming was established as the main global strategy for promoting gender equality, required in all the critical areas of concern" (UN, 2001). It was a major changing point for gender equality within development and many feminist theorists and activists expected much from the change (Parpart, 2014).

In the late 1990s, however the concern and challenges of GM started to trickle in and the "gap between rhetoric and progress" was increasingly made visible by feminist researchers, and scholars and practitioners started to raise questions about the attainability of gender equality through GM. (Parpart, 2014, p. 385)

Gender mainstreaming is used in this study because, like ITPs on gender equality, it is a tool to reach gender equality and it can explain some of the issues that this exploratory study began to see with gender focused ITPs. GM is also especially relevant in the case of ICLD since GM was to be a part of what was taught. In the brochure for the Gender programme (2015) it is written that GM is part of the gender sensitive approach they try to teach the participants. GM is in

the programme meant to promote the "gender awareness and competence among women and men in the political arena" (Programme brochure, 2015).

The literature of gender mainstreaming can teach us several things about what might restrict an approach towards gender equality's capacity to transform social relations. But before looking at these restrictions, let's quickly define GM so that we can then go deeper into the main points of criticism posed by feminists.

2.2.1 Defining gender mainstreaming

Just like with gender equality there is "more than one approach to gender main-streaming" and more than one definition of what GM is. In practice GM looks very different from project to project and between organisations (de Waal, 2006). Defining GM is also not done as often as one would have thought. Organisations attempting GM often fail both to define GM and how they connect it to the achieving of gender equality. When feminist academics on the other hand write about GM they also frequently forget or leave out a definition. What Daly (2005) argues is even more problematic is that feminists in their studies have repeatedly analysed another theorist's or organisation's definition of GM, often picking it apart, but then subsequently failing to provide a definition of their own.

The most commonly used definitions of GM are usually those presented by the UN or that used by the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe's definition of GM as presented by Verloo is as follows:

> *"(T)he (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that gender equality perspectives is incorporated in al policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making" (Council of Europe, 1995 p. 15, In Verloo, 2005 p. 350)*

The main point of GM is that it is a process that is supposed to lead towards gender equality (de Waal, 2005). GM can therefore never be seen as a goal in itself; it is only successful if it lives up to its "transformative promise" (Rao & Kelleher, 2005, p. 59). Simply implementing GM is therefore not enough, and should not be seen as achieving gender equality. It should also be made very clear that GM is, and should be, "grounded in feminist theoretical framework" (Rao & Kelleher, 2005, p. 59). Feminist notions of power and structural inequality should never be separated from the definition of GM, but they are, as we soon will see.

In practice GM is supposed to be an "agenda setting strategy" that is to be used "across all policy areas" (True, 2003, p. 370 & 371). The belief is that "through deliberate and focused interventions at every level" the current order of society can be changed (de Waal, 2006, p. 210). Every policy at all levels at all times should be "evaluated from the perspective of whether or not it reduces (or perpetuates) or increases gender inequalities" (True, 2003, p. 371), and there should never be an assumption made that anything is neutral or free from these unequal societal structures.

GM is based on the understanding that gender norms and values, and the differences that gender relations create, shape and change policy processes and outcomes and makes them affect people differently (True, 2003, p. 369). These differences, and the different "interests and values of differently situated women and men" are to be taken into account so that policies and policy processes can be changed and become more equal (True, 2003, p. 371).

When gender analysis is made it should not be done in a way that reproduces the idea of the "opposite sex" (as introduced by Simone de Beauvoir, 2001) where one makes an analysis of how a process will affect women. GM activates where meant to and should instead "take into account the contributions, priorities and needs of the entire stakeholder group, women as well as men" (UN, 2001).

GM came with a promise of "gender equality, empowerment and transformation" (Parpart, 2014, p. 382) and became a "central pillar of development discourse" mainstreaming the gender mainstreaming language (Parpart, 2014, p. 382). Feminist academics generally acknowledge some of these gains and that they are in part in place because of GM. Most do not, however, give these gains all too much significance and instead argue that they are not the norm (Rao & Kelleher, 2005).

Feminists academics critical of GM instead argue that it has not lived up to its potential, and some have even come to question whether it in practice still possesses the possibility of transforming gender relations (Parpart, 2014 & True, 2003). This comes from the extensive research showing how GM policy often fails to translate into practice. The widespread existence of GM policy papers is in no way proof of overall organisational consensus on what GM is and whether or not it is important for development (Verloo, 2005 & Parpart, 2014).

The following sections will focus on the points that feminists have mainly focused on as the reason for the failure of GM. These main criticisms are that GM failed to consider social relationships and the relationship between genders, and ultimately failed to deal with and take into account power and who has it. These are the points where feminists such as Verloo (2005) and Parpart (2014) have argued that GM's transformative capacity was lost and hopefully these can bring light to what ITPs have to take into consideration to be deemed transformative.

2.2.2 Social relationships and power

Social relationships are at the heart of gender inequality, which is because power and power hierarchies that favour some and disadvantage others affect social relationships (Kabeer, 2005). Gender and gender relations are, as Hearn puts it, about relationships between genders as well as about "relations amongst and between men, amongst and between women, and amongst and between further genders" (Hearn, 2015, p. 4). It is also about change at both the individual, and the social level (Rao & Kelleher, 2005, p. 60). This means that a belief in changing social relationships and power need to be at the heart of the discussion and strategies to achieve gender equality (Kabeer, 2005; Rao & Kelleher, 2005). Both feminist scholars and activists on the ground, however, have repeatedly produced evidence

that the power component of gender equality often is removed in practice, and sometimes in theory as well (Parpart, 2014, True, 2003 & Verloo, 2005).

Rao & Kelleher (2005, p. 59) stress the importance of discussing power when working with gender equality and GM because "gender relations exist within a force field of power relations, and power is used to maintain existing privilege". Not acknowledging the power disparities is argued to be one of the main reasons why gender related policies and practices such as GM have had such unsatisfactory, and sometimes even unfavourable, outcomes (True, 2003). On the same note, Jacqui True argues that power is what in the end decides if GM has the potential of being transformative or not (True, 2003, p. 368).

Taking power out of the equation or de-politicising how to reach gender equality has been done in several ways. The two main ways pointed to as having affected and hindered gender mainstreaming from being transformative are: presenting gender equality as having no opposition and therefore being a "done deal", and secondly, giving it a technical "fix" (Daly, 2005; Verloo, 2005; Parpart, 2014). The first method of de-politicising gender equality strategies we will cover in the next section and technical fixes we will tackle now.

Purely technical fixes de-politicise gender issues. It presents highly complex and context specific issues with simple, often checklist-style solutions instead of challenging power relations (Daily, 2005). Kabeer puts it like this: "gender inequalities are multi-dimensional and cannot be reduced to some single and universally agreed set of priorities" (Kabeer, 2005, p. 23). Technical fixes also often disregard GM and gender equality as feminist concepts and present the actions to take as being possible without adopting the framework or analysis of gender inequality and feminism. In GM one such technical fix is gender sensitive data, which is sometimes used as a tool on its own and then presented as gender issues having been mainstreamed (Daly, 2005).

Of course, a simple solution is always tempting but as Rao & Kelleher (2005, p. 64) puts it, "the evolution of knowledge and values (particularly for men) is a long process, requiring practice". Addressing power structures and changing behaviours is not easy, GM should not be understood as a quick fix to gender inequality but rather a long-term process in the right direction.

2.2.3 The opposition

One of the clearest signs of an issue being de-politicized, and that power and social relationships are being taken out of a debate, is the presenting of a topic as existing without an opposition. Considering that there is disagreement and debate around most development topics it should immediately make you wonder why, according to many development organisations and some feminist theorists, there is an agreement on GM and the work towards gender equality (Parpart, 2014).

GM and gender equality is a contested topic. The resistance towards its implementation is both strong, and well documented. The documentation of the resistance within development organisations against GM, and other gender equality measures, has been done both from outside of organisations, by researchers, and

from within, through internal reports (Parpart, 2014; Rao & Kelleher, 2005). This type of report has been produced both by the UNDP and the WB, sadly the response to them has often been found to be lacking (Parpart, 2014; Rao & Kelleher, 2005). There are of course organisations that have been more receptive and more successful in their implementation of GM (including theories on gender equality). Generally these are organisations that have a more "compatible worldview" to that of gender equality such as the UN and Sida rather than WB and IMF (True, 2003, p. 378).

When it comes to gender mainstreaming many feminists have focused on the importance of reforming and recreating organisational culture for it to succeed (Moser & Moser, 2005). This is also important for ITPs such as the Gender programme. Sida-sponsored ITPs also have to focus on organisational culture and change at organisational and sectorial levels, rather than at the individual level alone (Sida, 2017).

Changing organisational culture means the whole organisation needs to understand the importance of gender equality and why and how GM is to be used within the organisation for it to be implemented successfully (Moser & Moser, 2005).

Understanding this resistance and the refusal to either acknowledge or work towards gender equality is integral to understand why and how gender equality efforts are constrained. It is often in the best interest to maintain the status quo, and that is done through the use of power (Rao & Kelleher, 2005; Pearson, 2011, p. 179). Some feminist literature like Moser & Moser (2005), Parpart (2014) and Cornwall et al. (2011) have argued that, when talking about organisational culture, one social group should be focused on other than the management and that is men. This is due to the understanding that their resistance to GM has a strong connection to organisational culture (Moser & Moser, 2005). This is because generally men are still in the majority when it comes to positions of power within organisations.

The opposition towards gender equality is highly relevant for this study. If ITPs on gender do not deal with this opposition effectively or fail to acknowledge it, not only can they not develop a response to such opposition but they could also be part of the de-politicisation of gender issues. Gender equality is both an instrumental and intrinsic part of development, meaning that recognising and challenging the opposition towards gender equality would have long term positive effects for the development of countries that can partake in ITPs.

2.2.4 Men as the opposition

So who is the opposition? And where is the change the slowest? It is as we saw above those with the least compatible worldviews to efforts such as GM and it is often those with the most to lose from gender equality. And those people are most often men. Men are, however, rarely named as those who put up much of the resistance to GM and gender equality, and men are still rarely part of the solution to gender inequality (Parpart, 2014).

Yes it is true that men have increasingly been included in the development debate concerning gender equality since for example the transition from the women in development (WID) period to that of the gender in development period (GAD). Some organisations continue to equate gender with women and present gender equality as "a problem for women and girls" (Parpart, 2014, p. 388). Men are still in some instances even seen as without a gender, men and masculinities are just presented as the norm (Squires, 1999; Hearn, 2015).

When the issue of hiding men's part in gender inequality is brought up both feminist theorists and development organisations often argue that the exclusion is out of necessity. It is seen as "easier" and "less provocative" to leave men out and focus on other issues (Parpart, 2014, p. 387). What they fail to mention is that this is also far less effective and runs the risk of not transforming the gender relations that created the structural inequality in the first place. Ignoring the opposition of men, and furthering the discourse of gender equality as a women's issue, is not just a problem because it would mean gender inequality is something women can solve on their own, but because it also takes the focus away from gender relations and further serves to hide the structural nature of inequality (Parpart, 2014). It is also interesting to note here that feminist actors working with GM in particular have generally not used "confrontational political tactics", something seen and often accepted in other political movements (True, 2003, p. 374).

Of course, pointing to men as part of the opposition is not saying that all men resist gender equality and that all women support it. Many women benefit in ways from supporting unequal structures and not all men benefit equally from the patriarchy, something which theories on intersectionality and hegemonic masculinities have made very clear (Cornwall et al., 2011; Parpart, 2014).

Purely acknowledging the need to include men, and the initial attempts to do so can be seen as at least a partial success. What has however happened in some instances is that when men and boys are included in the debate they are not portrayed as change agents, as women and girls now are, and more often are depicted as the problem (True, 2003). One example of this is the discussion on how to deal with HIV/AIDS, or with violence against women (Parpart, 2014; Cornwall et al., 2011). This, like putting gender equality only on women and girls, further serves to keep change personal rather than structural (True, 2003).

Men's opposition to issues of gender equality also makes it important to understand that just adding men to the equation of gender equality and development will not be a solution. In what way to include men and how to go about including them is hotly debated by feminist organisations, activists and theorists. The focus is usually on how to bring men in without losing the focus on women's empowerment, or having men be introduced without dictating proceedings, or having men oppose changes towards gender equality from "the inside" (Svanström & Östberg, 2004; Parpart, 2014).

This concludes the theoretical framework in which this study is grounded. The following chapter is to cover the methodology and methods that guided the research.

3   Methodology

The following methodology and methods section is to outline the methodology behind this study, the ethical considerations made for it, the fieldwork done as well as the type of interviews used and how they were carried out.

This study is an exploratory study based on qualitative research influenced by an ethnographic research methodology. As this paper followed recent feminist theories of development and gender mainstreaming, which have been heavily influenced in recent years by the understanding of the complexity of gender relations, intersecting power structures and embodied experiences, the choice of ethnography was fitting for this study. Generalizable "facts" or "laws" were never the aim of this study. For this study ethnography's capacity to highlight power and power relations were much more relevant (O'Reilly, 2012; Blommaert & Dong, 2010). Further relevant is its capability of producing "richly written accounts that respect the irreducibility of human experience", highlighting and strengthening, through experiences and stories, the role of theory (O'Reilly, 2012, p. 3).

One of the main reasons for this only being an ethnographically informed study and not completely true to ethnographic traditions it is small scope and the short time spent with the participants. Ethnography is often focused on creating a relationship to those in the study and this was just not possible with the time at hand (O'Reilly, 2012; Blommaert & Dong, 2010).

Ethnography can start both in the library and in the field (O'Reilly, 2012). In the case of this study it started during an internship with ICLD when I was first introduced to the Gender programme. Reading about the programme questions arose about where in the history of gender relations and development theory this sort of training programmes fit. A longer study, one not possible due to the time restrictions of this assignment, would be required to make full use and reap all the benefits of an ethnographic methodology.

A qualitative method such as interviews was suitable for this study due to its ability to highlight the experiences of individuals and uncover societal structures and power hierarchies (O'Reilly, 2012). Focusing on the experiences of the Serbian participants' experiences of the training programme meant that their experience and thoughts about the possibility for impacting long term change of norms, perceptions and practices within local governance in regards to gender relations weighed heavily. These interviews were held in Serbia with the Serbian participants of the gender programme.

3.1   Ethical considerations

This study was conducted with a consideration to possible ethical issues following the guidelines of the American Anthropological Association and the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK. In addition to this it followed the recommendations of O'Reilly (2012) in her book *Key Concepts in Ethnography* concerning reflectivity. According to these associations and O'Reilly (2012) the first and foremost ethical consideration to keep when conducting research is to "do no harm" (AAA, 2016; ASA, 2011). It was vital for me that this research in no way jeopardised the well being of the participants, their work, their respective organisations or the communities from which they come (ASA, 2011).

The following paragraphs will cover three of the ethical considerations made during this study: reflexivity and positionality, representation, and reciprocity. Other ethical considerations more specifically connected to conducting interviews will feature in the fieldwork and method sections.

3.1.1   Reflexivity and positionality

Firstly, there were the considerations of reflexivity and positionality which requires one to adhere to the "do no harm" commitment. Feminist activists and scholars have challenged both the idea and the "possibility and desirability of a mechanistic, unbiased, scientific, value-free and objective interview" (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 19). The idea that you can be an objective observer studying social relationships without imposing your own values has faced extensive criticism (Edwards & Holland, 2013; O'Reilly, 2012).

The positionality of myself as a researcher affect the data I collect and the analysis I can make, both in regards to what information I see from my position within the field and what information I can access (O'Reilly, 2012). I was at all times made to feel welcome by participants and that the participants were open and frank with me. Nevertheless I have seen how - as O'Reilly (2012) shows is usually the case - my own personal characteristics; my gender, age, personal religious engagement and nationality, have affected how I was received and addressed during the research. My presence also never went unnoticed and the apparent belief of some researchers, that they can leave the "field" and their participants unaffected, is clearly not true (O'Reilly, 2012).

For this study it was also important to take into consideration and make explicitly clear my positionality in regards to the participants and to the study. There were several intersecting power structures between the participants and myself as a researcher worth reflecting on. As a young, female, student traveling alone in Serbia I was in many ways in a low position of power. Nevertheless the position of researcher, being the one to present stories and experiences of participants, and making an analysis based on this, is a position of power (O'Reilly, 2012, Edwards & Holland, 2013). Constantly reflection on my position in relation to the participants was a way to address some of these power hierarchies (O'Reilly, 2012).

My past experience as an intern with ICLD also affected my relationship to the participants and how I viewed the programme (O'Reilly, 2012). I was an intern at ICLD during the fall of 2017, which lead to my first contact with the Gender programme, the participants and their projects. This connection to ICLD and its officers, both of whom the key informants have a seemingly positive relationship to, is most likely why the participants have been so accommodating and open to the interviews. On the other hand, the participants might have been careful to not mention anything that they believe to be negative for ICLD and its staff to hear.

3.1.2 Representation

Secondly, there was the highly important ethical consideration and justification to make of how and why I "speak for" the participants (Haraway, 1988; Haritaworn, 2008; Mohanty, 2003). It is important, especially within ethnographically influenced studies, to understand the "politics of representation" (O'Reilly, 2012, p. 60). This study was never meant to represent the opinion of all Serbian people when it comes to gender equality or international training programmes. It was instead aiming to highlight some of the capacities of international training programmes and some of the issues they might have.

One way of assuring that the participants agreed how they were represented was to follow good interview etiquette and get the quotes pre-approved by the participants. Therefore the quotes chosen was sent back to the participants so that they could approve to the portrayal of them, the use of the data collected as well as give feedback on the study. This, and ensuring that the participants knew they have the right to request the results of the research, is also in line with the AAA's (2016) "access to results" policy.

At the same time fair representation was also part of trying to avoid being reductionist, understanding that all the findings existed within complex historical contexts and power structures (O'Reilly, 2012; Blommaert & Dong, 2010). It was attempted to at all time represent the opinion's of the participants fairly while keeping in mind that it could only be done from the position of an interpreter, through the lens and positionality of me as a researcher. The belief being, like O'Reilly argues, that reflecting on "the potential for exploitation" can go a long way in avoiding abuse (O'Reilly, 2012, Ethics, p. 60).

3.1.3 Reciprocity

Finally, there was the consideration of how to give back to the participants for their invaluable contribution to this study (O'Reilly, 2012; Edwards & Holland, 2013). Within the MFS budget there was no room to go back to Serbia to present the findings. The finalised study will instead be sent to all who have assisted and participated in the study. This is both for ethical reasons (O'Reilly, 2012) and to show the gratitude to those who have helped make this study possible.

3.2   Fieldwork

Now lets cover the fieldwork conducted for this study. Fieldwork is not only a period when one is in a "field". O'Reilly (2012, p. 2) sees it more as "one long conversation with people and 'a field' you are fascinated with" and this was why I felt it was suitable for this study. It was as stated a chance to see the context in which the Gender programme and its participants worked and to learn from those participants about their thoughts and experiences of the programme.

Therefore for this exploratory study two months were spent in Serbia carrying out fieldwork thanks to a Minor Field Study grant from Sida. During this time data was collected and I had the chance to travel to the participants' municipalities and learn from them about their challenges in day-to-day work and what they thought about the Gender programme. The security of data collected, mainly in the form of field notes, recordings and transcribed interviews, is difficult to assure while in the field (ASA, 2011). While traveling everything was on my person at all times, and at the end of the research all recordings will be deleted.

The research conducted for this study was not linear, instead the research and its focus developed and changed during the study, especially after travelling to Serbia and meeting the participants. The research did however include the stages of theory formulation and accessing participants, followed by the fieldwork period between 21st February and the 20th April 2018 when notes and observations were collected and recorded, interviews conducted and transcribed, followed by the writing and analysis process.

3.2.1   Participants

There where two types of participants in the interviews; the programme participants who had represented Serbia in the Gender programme, and five non-programme participants who were either closely associated with the key informants or worked on gender equality and/or local governance in Serbia.

There were 74 programme participants altogether, split over three cohorts. Eight of these were Serbian. Only five out of eight participants could participate in the study, which was not a complete surprise, the participants where all public officials or NGO workers with busy schedules. Somewhat more unexpected, however, was that only one of the programme participants declined for this reason. The reason given by the others who opted-out was something I had not considered. They had left Serbia altogether and relocated to "western" countries. The brain drain and emigration that Serbia is struggling with, especially in the form of emigration of programme participants, will have a negative impact on the transformative potential of the Gender programme. The importance of considering the effects for possible results of an ITP, where a quarter of participants leave the country in which the change and results are anticipated so soon after the end of the programme, will be discussed in the analysis.

So why were the Serbian participants chosen as the focus for the study out of the nine countries open to participate in the programme? And why is Serbia an interesting country when it comes to development work and gender equality? The following paragraphs will answer that.

As mentioned, not all of the cohorts had applicants from all the viable countries. Belarus never had any participants, and Georgia, Kosovo and Moldova only had participants in two out of three cohorts. Of the five countries left: Ukraine, Turkey, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia, Serbia was the best choice for a study, both for practical reasons but also because of Serbia's interesting current context.

Bosnia & Herzegovina may have had the most participants with its total 14 participants and this might have lead to more interviews, but practically, the 8 participants in Serbia presented a better choice. Serbia was the only country that I had any experience of and for such a brief field study this weighed heavily. The Serbian teams were also in the end the teams that the ICLD officers recommended I visit because of their interesting projects, active participation in the programme and the continued contact that the officers from ICLD still had with the Serbian participants.

Additionally, it needs stating that the Serbian teams and Serbia as an aid recipient additionally have value as an object of study, in that they work with gender issues in their reform work in preparation of their possible entrance into the European Union. Serbia was the first non-EU country to "produce an assessment of how equal women and men are in the various fields of society by applying a broad scale of indicators" when they in 2016 produced their Gender Equality Index (EIGE, 2016). Despite this work Serbia still has clear challenges in relation to gender equality to tackle, such as men's violence towards women, pay equality, the strengthening and assuring of minority rights and pregnant women's rights in the labour market (Babović, 2016). Restructuring international training programmes could be one possible way for countries like Sweden, and organisations such as Sida, to further assist in Serbia's reforms.

This sampling and sample size is clearly not the most scientific in all aspects (O'Reilly, 2012). With such a small sample one cannot make strong or generalizable claims to some form of "truth". In addition, the theory and research behind a study does also affect what a relevant sample size is (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Therefore, the focus is on exploring ITPs as a way towards gender equality rather than producing generalizable claims about the same lessens the impact of the issue. At the same time, there would not have been sufficient time during this limited period to fully manage and analyse a larger collection of data (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

Before going on to describing how the participants were accessed and then how interviews were conducted we have to cover one of the most difficult decisions made for this study, and that was whether to reveal the identity of the participants or not (O'Reilly, 2012). At the start of the study the choice to remain anonymous was left open to each participant, but in the end the sensitivity of the topic meant that even if some participants were willing to speak openly about issues, it might still create inconvenience for them if their colleagues were to see the report.

Hence, anonymity for all was decided upon. Any form of identifiers; such as names, names of organisations, places or locations have been removed in the text, so as to protect the identities and best interests of the participants, although complete anonymity can of course never be fully assured.

I made the decision to not give the participants aliases in the text. Instead the participants were numbered 1-10 and referred to as PP (Programme participant) and NPP (Non-programme participant) so as to make clear who said what.

3.2.2 Access and gatekeepers

- The email contacting participants is attached in the appendix

For this essay gatekeepers had to be used to gain the initial access to participants. The ICLD officers who had worked on the Gender programme became my initial gatekeepers (i.e. persons who enables contact with participants) (Eklund, 2010). Following the interviews some of the participants became my gatekeepers in Serbia; they gave me the opportunity to speak to, and interview people I would not otherwise have been able to access.

ICLD's standing as a Swedish development organisation with a good reputation, an organisation that the participants also have a standing relationship with and whom they respect for these reasons, was of great advantage. In my initial contact with the participants I explained shortly the reason behind and the situatedness of the study, my connection to ICLD and what they could expect from the interviews (Edwards & Holland, 2013). This was in following with O'Reilly's (2012) recommendations on making sure the participants know what they can expect from the research.

In accessing the participants, it also helped using more official language and showing the connection to not only a University such as Lund, but also to Sida through the minor field study scholarship. In light of this being a study about a gender programme and with people who had worked on gender projects, the access might have been more difficult to negotiate without these institutions and organisations "at my back". As O'Reilly shows, "People often find it much easier to relate to someone in terms of a role they understand and which is accepted in the setting" (O'Reilly access, p. 10).

It should also be acknowledged that gatekeepers can affect the result of research due to their power to both aid and limit the findings (Eklund, 2010). I was quite dependant on the participants due to language barriers and they where clearly in a powerful position in relation to the findings, both because of the language and because of their ability to give me access to certain spaces and not others (Eklund, 2010).

3.3   Interviews

Interviews were chosen as a suitable method for this exploratory study because they can be used "to explore people's understandings of their lives and aspects of their experiences" (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 11). The participants' views of the programme, their understanding of gender equality and their experiences gained through the ITP were what most interested me. Development has moved further and further towards the idea of ownership, meaning that the countries supposedly benefitting from development efforts should have the right to decide about actions taken (Mohanty, 2003). What was therefore most important to me was what the participants saw as "positive" or "negative" with the programme, rather than the justifications by development organisations for ITPs as a tool towards gender equality. Another reason for doing interviews was that, like most feminists (Edwards & Holland, 2013), I was interested in power relations, and interviews can be an effective way to highlight these.

3.3.1   Semi-structured and unstructured interviews

- The interview guide is attached in the appendix.

In this study there have been two types of interviews conducted. With the five programme participants the main interview technique used was semi-structured interviews. With the non-programme participants, as well as the programme participants when interviewed outside their official roles, the interviews were un-structured interview/conversations.

Two differing types of interviews were used due to the differing data the participants could offer the study. The participants of the Gender programme could tell me more about the programme itself, whilst the interviewees who had not themselves participated, but who all had a working relationship with those who had, offered me more of an insight into gender issues at the local level in Serbia, as well as how much of the information from the programme which had spread to other parts of the organisation or to its partners.

The number of interviews and the number of participants were not the same. This is because I had the chance to interview some multiple times, others only once. There were three semi-structure interviews; two of these were joint interviews with two key informants in (ca. two hours each) and one had one participant (one hour). The unstructured interviews/conversations were conducted with five non-programme participants, as well as with three of the programme participants. These interviews were with one to two people at a time and spanned between one to two hours each.

As mentioned, two out of three interviews were joint interviews, with all in all five participants. This was purely for practical reasons. The programme participants were either in the same team during the ITP or they worked closely together within their particular municipality. This meant that they could help each other

remember things about the training and assist one another with English. Of course, this does also have some potential negative effects, in that they might have been less inclined to speak about possible problems within the teams or within the municipalities or organisations (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

For the semi-structured interviews an interview guide (find attached in appendix) was prepared and sent to the five key informants ahead of time, together with the information that the guides would only direct the interview and follow-up questions would be asked. During these interviews the guide steered the conversation but follow up questions were asked and questions dropped depending on the time restraints, the answers given, and the need at the time.

The choice whether to do interview guides at all, and how to do them was a difficult one, but in regards to the local officials the choice was in the end made for me. The local officials all asked for interview guides so that they could refresh their memories and their English before we met. Being that the participants were local politicians, civil servants or working for NGO's they all had busy lives and workdays and going with the official tone of the country was a way to gain access to these people (O'Reilly, 2012). Clearly this does have effects on what answers where given, what conclusions can be drawn and how the information from these interviews can be used.

The interview guide attached in the appendix is somewhat different from the interviews themselves due to change of focus of the study as well as the need to be flexible and let the opinions of the participants direct the discussions (Edwards & Holland, 2013). The first part of the interview guide was a reminder to the participants of what the study was about and a reminder to myself to ask for consent once again. This was to further assure the continued informed consent and willingness to participate in the study and understanding of how the material gathered would be used (Edwards & Holland, 2013; O'Reilly, 2012). Additionally it was clarified in the interview guide, as had also been done during the initial contact with the participants, that this was just an interview guide. Other questions came up, as well as follow-up questions and some questions were removed, and the participants were assured that they could at any time chose not to answer a question or cancel the interview (O'Reilly, 2012).

The topics of the unstructured interviews/conversations were generally the same, covering what they worked with, the issues Serbia is facing, and gender equality and gender equality work in Serbia, its obstacles and how local politics and governance was in the cities visited for the study. The participants were given the power to steer the conversations and when opportunities were presented follow-up questions could be asked to get more in-depth knowledge on these topics. Fieldwork notes were constantly taken. These participants were also informed about the study and asked if they would be willing to participate and given the option to check any quote used in the finalised thesis.

3.3.2 Interview settings and interviewing in official role

Some of the choices made in regards to how the interviews where conducted affect what kind of analysis can be made. One of these choices was the choice to interview the participants in their formal roles as elected officials or civil servants, rather than as citizens in their private roles. This choice, like the setting of an interview, can affect the answers provided by the interviewees (O'Reilly, 2012; Edwards & Holland 2013).

Concerning settings for the interviews the choice of where to conduct the interviews was in effect made for me in me not knowing the cities I was to visit. This meant I had to rely on the participants to recommend places for the interviews. The interviews therefore took place in cafés, during walks and in offices at the municipalities. This goes against recommendations such as that given by O'Reilly (2012) who argues for conducting interviews away from a participants work because they might feel freer to answer questions openly. But by taking another advise from O'Reilly's (2012) and researchers such as Edwards & Holland (2013) about being flexible and adaptable to the situation, all the interviews ran smoothly despite not always being in the perfect interview setting.

3.3.3 Using a translator

Finally, concerning methods and how the interviews were conducted, there is the use of a translator to consider. Initially there was no intention of using an interpreter during interviews. This was largely due to limitations in the budget of the study, but also because the assumption was made that it was not needed since the participants had taken part in an ITP conducted in English. In hindsight this assumption was incorrect. The cohorts were all completed at least a year ago and most participants were not used to working in English. For the participant's comfort and to be able to go into greater depth a translator would have helped. Luckily some participants brought their own translators, colleagues usually who helped out when words or meaning faltered.

The use of a translator is always risky in that it can effect what is being said (Eklund, 2010). Especially in an area such as gender were, for example, a male translator might not be comfortable, agree with what is being said, or know the terminology. This can affect what and how he chooses to translate words and meanings, not necessarily intentionally (O'Reilly, 2012). One way of getting around this to some degree might have been to use an "own" interpreter; possibly a student of politics or gender studies, well versed in the language of local politics and gender issues in Serbia.

Now lets advance to the presenting of the findings of the fieldwork in Serbia and the analysis of these based on the theoretical framework.

4   Analysis

This chapter is dedicated to presenting the findings from the interviews and analysing these in light of the arguments about power found in the GM debate. Firstly, it is important to be clear that the Serbian participants were all very satisfied with the Gender programme. The five participants I interviewed all spoke of the programme as a great experience and learning opportunity. They were full of praise for the ICLD officers and how they had organised the programme, and thankful to the mentors for their assistance as well as happy about having had the chance to visit Sweden and the experiences they had there. PP1 for example spoke about how they were "very satisfied" with the programme, its duration and how "splendidly organised" it was. PP5 on the other hand said: "the only bad thing (with the programme) is that participants can only attend this type of programme once, it's a pity".

The first visit to Sweden in particular had been an eye opener for the participants. For some it was the first time they had visited a country so far away, and for most interviewees travelling this far away from Serbia was a rare luxury (PP2, PP3 & PP4). PP1 spoke about how the experience was enhanced due to a sense of respect they had felt in being treated as "high government visitors". This was partly because of how well they argued the workshops had been, but also being given opportunities such as being introduced to the Serbian ambassador to Sweden while in Stockholm.

The mentors assigned to the different groups were also spoken about with fondness. The mentors offered assistance, in addition to that presented by the ICLD officers, in the creating of and conducting of a change project. They were considered "well educated and well informed about the topic" (PP3). One of the groups had a Serbian-speaking mentor from Sweden, which was clearly very well received. PP1 & PP2 told me "it was very important to be able to speak in my own language" and that it had helped having someone with a deeper knowledge of the country-specific context.

The workshops most favoured and seen as most relevant in their work by almost all participants were the classes in the Logical Framework Approach (LFA). LFA was, as in ICLD's other ITPs, used in the Gender programme, namely as a tool for planning and implementing projects (Programme brochure, 2015), and the high popularity of the LFA classes was impressive despite the varied prior knowledge in how to use it. For those with experience in using LFA it was a good repetition and way to improve ones day-to-day work on the change projects and other tasks back in Serbia (PP2), for those new to LFA it helped them plan how to realise their current and future projects more effectively (PP3 & PP4).

The interviewees who had not participated in the programme also had a generally good view of the programme. They saw that it had been a positive experience

for the participants to travel and widen their views on gender equality through new knowledge and experiences (NPP10, NPP7 & NPP8). Interestingly, they all referred to it as a good experience for the *individual*. The interviewees who had not participated in the programme saw it as more of an individual experience rather than an experience that would change the local community or how they worked with the municipality. This was true for all but NPP6 who argued that the participation of two people from their municipality had meant that the cooperation between their organisation and the municipality had been strengthened. This was echoed by PP1 and PP2, who argued that the programme had helped them come closer to grassroots and civil rights organisations in their work, in addition to the general public. Their focus had, according to them, shifted to more participatory methods such as surveys in their attempts in gauging the views of the people (PP1 & PP2).

Verloo (2005) introduces an interesting idea about GM in her article. This argument is that for GM to be truly transformative it has to create "space for subaltern counter publics" and empower non-hegemonic groups through organizing this space (Verloo, 2005, p. 348). The Gender programme can in this instance be seen as having achieved this. It has created at least an initial connection between the people, organisations active in challenging and holding public officials accountable to the people and the officials themselves. It would be interesting to further analyse how the power relations in these contacts span out, as well as if the cooperation will last.

4.1 Transformative aspects

There were some aspects of the Gender programme that could be considered transformative. Through the information gained from the interviews I would argue that these transformative aspects were the drive behind the aforementioned start to a more active cooperation between NGOs and government officials and civil servants, as well as the attempt to make the learning spread throughout the organisation, rather than being focused on the individual.

Sharing of the knowledge and making the knowledge gained through the Gender programme part of the home organisation was an important focus of the Gender programme, as well as a focus of most ITPs in general (Programme brochure, 2015; Sida, 2017). When it came to forwarding the knowledge gained during the programme the approaches of the participants after completing the programme differed. Some participants had shared their knowledge only fleetingly to other colleagues at the Serbian Standing Conference on Towns and Municipalities (PP1 & PP2). Others encouraged people they knew from other organisations to apply for the same programme or programmes with the same organisation (PP3 & PP4). PP1 told me how "(the knowledge) is slowly spreading" through their organisation and Serbia, and started our interview with showing me the poster depicting their change project, and its results, that their team had made as part of the final ITP workshop.

The change project is one of the tools that have transformative capacity, since it is meant to put the knowledge gained into practice. It was clear from the way the programme participants spoke about continuing their projects or starting new ones that some practices and ways of going about their work was changing, at least on a personal level. Budgets were being re-made and improved, action plans continued and implemented. The continuation of the change projects is not a sure thing however. The participants had either had to use their normal budget assigned to them or needed to apply for funding, and any continued funding was rarely assured (PP1; PP2 & PP4). Another issue affecting the longevity of the change project and the spreading of knowledge within the organisations was the effects of emigration; this will be covered later in this chapter.

Most participants acknowledged that they or their organisation could have done more to make sure that the information and experience was institutional rather than individual. The attempt to cement the new knowledge in the home organisation did sometimes fall short, and as stated previously those who had not participated in the programme spoke about the Gender programme as an individual learning experience. This was also generally true for the participants who spoke of the Gender programme as a great personal experience, an outcome both against ICLD's aim for the study and Sida's directives for ITPs (Programme brochure, 2015; Sida, 2017). Much of the spreading of knowledge was clearly down to the enthusiasm of the participant. A person with drive and great enthusiasm for the issue at hand can do much for the institutionalisation of knowledge into an organisation and is of great value to an ITP (Pearson, 2011). One should however not rely on such a person to be present; instead a structure for the spreading of the teachings of the Gender programme might be needed.

4.1.1 Integrationist aspects

The change projects had the possibility of being either transformative or integrationist. Whether they were transformative or not depended among other things on the institutionalisation of the knowledge gained, what the aim of the change project was (being a strategy of inclusion, of reversal or of displacement), as well as if it succeeded. The change projects all had different goals; one focusing on the integration of women into small and medium enterprises (SMEs), while others were aimed at creating gender sensitive budgets or action plans. These are tools often used in GM and it is therefore not a surprise that the same issue of frequently only being integrationist appears here. Much like GM the change projects were often more about including women into the existing structures rather than changing the structures themselves.

NPP10 spoke to me about something that brings to light one of the issues of strategies of inclusion and policies to integrate women into existing structures. NPP10 told me how some women's organisations in Serbia who fought for the increased inclusion of women into Serbian politics now are facing a backlash and a call for proof that it has brought change for the better for women. This is because Serbia has in recent history seen the introduction of women into politics thanks in

large to new laws about representation and the quotas for women put in place (Babović, 2016). Serbia, in relation to equality in decision-making, currently ranks "among the top ten EU member states" (EIGE, 2016). The percentage of members of parliament who are women is now at 34 percent, higher than several EU countries (Babović, 2016). Scoring high in this regard is of course good but one should remember that 34 percent is not equivalent to equal representation. NPP10 told how in the campaigns for quotas the arguments used was that women's greater representation into parliament would lead to better coverage of women's issues. This sounds much like the how women's representation was covered in the Gender programme brochure, which is as follows:

> *"An increase in the number of women in decision-making arenas can create a level playing field for women and men to engage in the way cities and towns are governed, how resources are allocated, and basic services are provided" (Programme brochure, 2015).*

The backlash seen by NPP10 is based on the fact that, despite women's equal representation being important in itself, the change due to the introduction of women into government politics is in reality limited. Speaking of the tragic, well-covered-by-Serbian-media, incident of two relatively recent deaths of women in social care centres in Belgrade, NPP10 tells how some people have argued that this should be seen as an example of "the failure of women's organisations and feminism in Serbia".

So, rather than acknowledge that gaps in Serbia in relation to power still exist, feminists, women's organisations and gender equality have been blamed for the apparent failure of gender quotas to change the lives of women and men. There is still a clear underrepresentation of women in Serbian politics and power hierarchies are still in favour of men, meaning that the women within politics can affect little change (Babović, 2016). There is for example an unyielding need to address the challenges created by norms on what is masculine and feminine, something also true in the areas of politics and power. What ministries and areas women and men in politics are assigned to or work with is still often based upon stereotypical notions of gender, and women are struggling to get access to political positions that provide real power to affect change (Babović, 2016). Women's positions within municipalities were often discussed by the participants, especially the lack of women in the parts of local government where the budget was greater and power was concentrated, for example forestry (PP1), acquisitions (PP3) and finance (PP2). Not only has the failure to challenge norms about gender, as well as challenge power structures that result in women being excluded from political areas where power is concentrated, affected who is blamed for the failure of gender integrationist policies, it has also had continuous negative effects upon Serbian development more broadly.

All gender equality efforts should of course not be suspended because some efforts so far have failed to create lasting change, instead integrationist policies and the strategy of inclusion's inadequate capacity to challenge power has to be taken into consideration, and a clearer move should be made towards strategies of displacement. ITPs also have to take responsibility and ensure that displacement is in the focus so as not to negatively impact gender equality efforts.

4.2 Challenging power and implementing change

Despite the overall positive view of the training programme, when pressed further all participants acknowledged that they doubted the possibility for long term and transformative change within their organisations and in Serbia at large. This was also true for those who hadn't participated. They saw that, as with other policy implementation in Serbia, they were likely to "get stuck on realising changes" and that "implementation is the real issue" (NPP10). The more practical tools such as LFA were seen as easier to implement as well as addressing issues such as communication and participation within local government, but changing norms and ideas about gender was seen as a rather daunting, and maybe impossible task (NPP10).

With implementation of gender equality initiatives already an issue in Serbia, implementing the knowledge from the ITPs was clearly not going to be different. Serbia has in recent years done a number of improvements to its laws in regards to gender and gender equality. This was also evident from the interviews. All participants spoke about the improvement of the gender policies and laws in Serbia, even though there are still some issues and loopholes (NPP10, PP3, PP1, NPP6 & PP4). NPP10 for example, who was not a politician but worked closely with them, saw how the laws have given organisations, both state run and non-governmental, something to hold politicians and civil servants accountable to as well as use to push for/pressure politicians for change on gender issues.

The biggest issue with the laws the participants agreed however was translating them into practice. This is not uncommon, especially in relation to anti-discrimination laws regarding gender (Verloo, 2005, Parpart, 2014). Power hierarchies and different forms of opposition towards working with gender relations are often what derail the process, and it is ultimately not surprising that there is an issue in implementing other gender equality efforts (Parpart, 2014 & Verloo, 2005).

Some of the other reasons argued by the participants and non-participants of being behind the failure in the implementation of activities aimed at forwarding gender equality were among others: corruption (NPP10), lack of political will (PP2; PP3 & PP4), lack of knowledge about gender equality (PP1), lack of wanting to learn about gender equality (PP1 & PP3) and lack of data on gender inequalities (PP2 & NPP7). NPP10 also argued that non-compliance with the laws and regulations still carried little consequence and that this was part of the reason that the laws and policies did not transfer into practice. Finally, the laws and poli-

cies are also affected by what NPP10 called the "copy-paste" approach. NPP10 argued that civil servants or politicians often take a policy document, project or approach from another municipality or from the SCTM and without adapting it to their own municipality's local context or needs start to use it. NPP10 also saw this as a potential problem with development initiatives like ITPs, where participants see and experience things abroad and then try to implement them in Serbia without any relevant adaptations (NPP10).

All of the participants were careful to stress that the problems of implementation was not the fault of the programme, rather it was due to the political climate and social context currently prevalent in Serbia. I would however argue, that as many ITP guides stress, ITPs taking the country-specific contexts into consideration is enormously important for the success of the programme (Pearsson, 2011).

4.2.1 The brain drain

As previously revealed, emigration heavily affected the change projects. Not only had participants active in the projects left Serbia, but also other staff and colleagues involved in the programme and the workings of the local governments had emigrated, in effect often halting and hindering the projects and the work in the municipality in general (PP1; PP2; PP3; NPP7). This is a major issue in Serbia, and organisations such as the SCTM who train those working for the municipalities – it is a seemingly never-ending task at hand. The constant loss of those working in the public sector to private (better paid) jobs or due to emigration means that they have to begin their work from scratch over and over again (NPP10). NPP10 argued that there was a lack of "institutional memory" in many areas of government in Serbia.

The issue of emigration came as somewhat of a surprise, at least to the extent in which it had affected the programme. Despite the literature about Serbia's struggles with emigration and brain drain it was still hard to realise the full extent of the problem. All of the participants had friends or family who had emigrated or had considered doing so themselves. It also meant that the participants of the programme had often lost a partner believing equally in the importance of gender equality, this being an issue due to the strong opposition to gender equality as a whole, where the need for backup and support is great, as will soon be discussed.

The "brain drain", the issue of Serbs emigrating, is affecting Serbia in a myriad of ways. Half a million young Serbs left Serbia during the 1990s alone, and one of the many effects this has had is that the ratio between young and old today is currently the fifth highest in the world (Sida, 2015; Babović, 2016; Thomas, 1999). Emigration also means that not only during elections, which often turn out to be a zero-sum game where staff are replaced if there is a change in power, the work towards gender equality is left suffering due to a lack of qualified people working with it (NPP10, PP3, PP4 & NPP7).

The Gender programme had all in all 74 participants. Out of these only eight were Serbian. Gender equality and gender-sensitive governing is a lot to put on the shoulders of eight individuals, made even more burdensome when you add

that two out of eight participants from the three cohorts in Serbia had left the country just two years after the final cohort; one for Canada and one for Germany. This is clearly problematic, with such a low number of participants from the start, and gender equality being a topic that often needs several actors pushing for it, a "critical mass", from different positions, the emigration further weakens the programme's capacity to create change. Or as PP2 put it: "I only can try to change something, but two people cannot organise the whole country" (referring to him and his team-mate). PP1 on the other hand spoke about the importance of having backing from "a big group of people" to change anything, mentioning participants and colleagues as well as having the support from the government.

This problem has impacted all interviewees both at work and personally, and I would argue that it has also heavily affected the transformative capacity of the Gender programme. This issue is a large one, in that it means funds spent on aid and development have in effect been able to do little else than strengthen an individual (not nothing) who in the end did not stay in the country to pass on the knowledge and experience gained during the programme.

Let's remind ourselves that without change in social relations and what power is and who has it, gender equality will not be achieved. Training one person who does not spread that knowledge means that when that person quits another person has to be trained and the process starts over again. If an ITP does not serve to transform the existing structure of society and social relations, or to institutionalise new knowledge then when will they ever cease to be needed? One of Kabeer's quotes is very relevant here:

"Today's inequalities are translated into the inequalities if tomorrow as daughters inherit the same discriminatory structures that oppressed their mothers." (Kabeer, 2005, p. 16)

The emigration issue, the small number of participants, as well as the issue of who can apply (not those who do not speak English or with small children, the time away being to long) meant that the impact of the programme on gender equality could be at best significantly limited. In the future it should be advised that programmes working in Serbia need to take this context into consideration and do some form of evaluation on how this is to be addressed, if there should be more participants from the country or if in the end the potential problem of losing participants is too great an issue to run such a programme in the country.

One solution could possibly be to do ITPs in Serbia in the Serbian language. This is because as I both experienced and the participants all told me that many people in local politics in Serbia do not speak English, or at best have limited use of the language. If they do speak English they are likely to be offered positions for private companies, national government or leave the country all together (NPP10). Holding ITPs in Serbian would both serve to make the programmes more accessible, ensure that those most relevant for the programmes can participate, as well as limit some of the risk of participants leaving the country.

It would also be interesting to see how the issue of brain drain and emigration affected the other participating countries, some of which have similar issues with emigration. It is difficult to say how the programme would have played out in another context because, as many "how-to" manuals covering ITPs argue, ITPs have to be context specific (Pearson, 2011). But based on the fact that gender equality efforts face extensive opposition, only having eight participants in any country or contexts might be problematic despite not having to face the issue of losing participants.

The limited possible long-term effects of the Gender programme feel even more far away when considering what the idea of gender equality is set against, because as we saw in the theory section gender equality does face serious opposition, often from those with more power. Following we will look at the participants' views on the opposition and connect this to the theories of among others Parpart (2014) and Verloo (2005).

4.2.2 The opposition

Regarding the issue of people's opposition to gender equality the participants were frequently quite contradictory in their answers. They often said that they had not faced that much opposition, but when pressed further several of them recalled how their work or gender equality in general had been questioned.

What was often mentioned as the reason for the opposition to work towards gender equality was "traditional views" (mentioned by all, PP1-5 and NPP6-10). The adhering and expressing of traditional views were seen as an issue among both women and men in Serbia, young and old. Traditional views in the case of women were depicted as the issue in that, despite change in laws and policies, there was a continued tendency to stay in or defend traditional gender roles within the home (PP3, PP4 & NPP9).

Traditional views here were seemingly, among other things, meaning the view of women as subordinate to men, children as subordinate to parents and a general disregard for minorities. Traditional views were generally frowned upon, but concessions were at times made for some of the views regarding minorities as reasonable, especially around negative views on the LGBTQI+ community, immigrants and Romani people. The Gender Equality Index also acknowledges, if only in rather limited ways, the issue of intersecting power structures such as sexuality, class, ethnicity, religion, rural vs. urban, and age, meaning that some people in Serbia are generally more disadvantaged than others (Babović, 2016). Discrimination against minority groups is, by international development actors, a well-documented issue in Serbia. Especially Roma and the LGBTQI+ face discrimination, and violence against people from the LGBTQI+ community is a recurring problem. Some steps have been taken to strengthen both groups' positions and rights in society, often in relation to the work with gender equality, but there is still a lack of respect for minorities in general (Babović, 2016, p. 20).

PP1 for example showed me something that she had kept from their visit to Sweden, two keepsakes that had made an impact on her. She proudly showed me her Västtrafik card (Gothenburg's public transport card) saying she was very impressed with the public transport in Sweden. The other thing she had brought was a bracelet that the participants had gotten, needed to access Gothenburg's Pride parade, which was at the time of their visit. PP1 told me how pride parades were allowed in Serbia but that the police often outnumbered those who participate and that the life of the LGBTQIA + community in Serbia was still difficult and dangerous.

NPP7 and PP2 changed the topic relatively fast after this. NPP7 said that he understood and agreed with those traditionalists saying that women and men should have kids - meaning together - and by doing so effectively ended the discussion on the rights of LGBTQIA+ community's rights.

In the end, all those interviewed told me at least one story of how their own work on gender equality or that of another activist or organisation had been opposed. Many politicians and people might agree, at least on paper, to the premises of gender equality, but there are also those who both in their private lives and public roles argue that "gender issues are not important" (NPP10).

What seemed to me problematic with the Gender programme's aim to create more gender-sensitive governance was that the women who had participated were already prior to the programme interested in gender equality or had worked actively with it in some way. PP1 for example made a strong impression on me when she said with pride: "I am a feminist". It was important for her that I knew; it had been such a large part of her life and work. The already existing belief in the importance of gender equality was also explicit in why the women had applied to the programme, arguing that it was especially because of their genuine interest in gender equality. They all however also acknowledged the gaps in their knowledge on the subject and the problem of not knowing how to put it in practice, still making their participation relevant. So why were men not a larger part of the programme and the solution to gender equality?

4.2.3 Men

In the section on men as a large part of those opposing gender equality efforts in development, it was argued that men are beginning to be included in some gender equality efforts and that this is important for the success of these efforts. When it came to the Gender programme there were all in all 74 participants trained over the course of the three cohorts, of which only 14 were men. Out of the eight Serbian participants, only one was a man. As was argued, that change is slow is not unusual, but one would have hoped that with a Sida financed programme that has an outspoken policy to "strive for a gender balance among the participants", the figures would have been better (Programme brochure, 2015).

NPP6 was one of the few who talked about the issue of not working with men when working on gender issues. Gender, they argued, was in Serbia still considered as "only about women's issues" (NPP6). NPP10 and NPP6 both spoke about

how gender equality efforts were often run by women in underfunded departments, who also had a multitude of other activities to run since women often also covered minority issues and/or youth efforts. These women in effect had no time, "no budget", "no real power" and were doing "a bit of gender on the side" despite the new laws in place (NPP10).

The programme participants only mentioned men in relation to the large problem of men's violence towards women (PP1; PP3; PP4 & PP5, Babović, 2016). PP3 and NPP8 spoke of how in some of the municipalities in the south the violence is almost a norm, and the man's "right" to violence towards "their" women and children still often go unquestioned (PP3 & NPP8).

The men I spoke to who believed in gender equality adhered to feminism more resembling that of biologically motivated feminists, or traditionalist feminists (but they would not label themselves as feminists). NPP7 for example stated that he tried to share work with his wife because, as he put it, "women can have children" and this is why he should "respect and help women".

Looking forward I would argue that, based on the findings of the GM literature as well as from listening to the participants of the Gender programme, a greater effort needs to be given to assure a gender-balanced group of participants in ITPs. This is already happening in other ICLD programmes, such as their new programme based in Zimbabwe. Here, four different programmes have been conducted, and both a significantly larger number of public officials have participated (83), with a much greater percentage being men (Chatiza & Makanza, 2017).

5   Conclusion

The question this study sought to answer with this initial exploration was if the Gender programme was transformative or integrationist. It did so through using literature on gender mainstreaming and its shortcomings in managing to change gender relations and solve inequality based on gender. The study covered the three general types of strategies argued to be needed to achieve gender equality, these being: the strategy of inclusion, of reversal, and of displacement. Following that the theory section covered how to a certain extant the strategy of reversal, though mainly the strategy of displacement, had transformative capacity, and that this strategy was that needed to change gender relations.

There are further examples, such as the one presented by Truelove in the section on transformative capacity, which show the problems strategies of inclusion can create (Truelove, 2011). These issues need to be taken seriously and the risk that strategies of inclusion re-create and prolong gender inequalities is a dire one (Verloo, 2005). Gender equality in development and gender ITPs need to follow a strategy more solidly based on the strategy of displacement and actively work to challenge power hierarchies and change social relationships.

The methodology section was focused on how the fieldwork in Serbia and research process had spanned out, what ethical considerations were made and why interviews were the right method for this type of study.

The chapter analysing the findings covered the data collected. Most important to note was the overwhelming happiness and support the participants felt for the Gender programme. They were all in agreement that it had been a great experience and learning opportunity. The interviews also produced some findings that could hint at the programme having some transformative aspects to it. These would be the heightened cooperation with NGOs on the issue of gender equality, as well as the Gender programme's goal to institutionalise the knowledge achieved from the programme and make the learning focused on the organisation rather than the individual.

The interviews however also resulted in questions about the possible long-term impact the Gender programme might actually have. Several things pointed to the programme being more integrationist rather than transformative, creating the possibility that the impact of the programme in reality would be limited. These things were for example that, despite the attempts to institutionalise the learning, the programme was seemingly more beneficial to the individual than to their organisation. The focus of the change projects also made the programme more integrationist, because they were often focused on women's inclusion rather than changing power hierarchies. What heavily affected the programme's transformative capacity further was that it did not sufficiently deal with the opposition to

gender equality, both through its lack of acknowledgement of the issue of emigration in Serbia as well as failing to include more men in the programme.

The study can as stated not make any generalizable claims for the transformative capacity of all ITPs. This is mainly because ITPs come in such varied shapes, sizes and focuses, but also because of the small number of participants interviewed. The study can however hint at the previously mentioned possible issues with the Gender programme and argue that these are worth exploring further. That brings us to our final section, covering some potential future topics concerning gender ITPs that would be worth delving into.

5.1   For further research

The need for research on ITPs covering gender as an area of development is extensive. Some particularly interesting areas to research, among others, could be how gender equality is in practice taught in ITPs: what is included, who is included and who is supposed to change for gender equality to be reached? Studies on this would have to be of a larger scope, possibly covering several international training programmes and maybe even following them through the whole training process.

Additionally a study focusing on the change projects, which this study could not cover, would be of great importance. What kind of projects are produced through these programmes, what are their focuses, do they transform gender relations, change them or reproduce unequal social hierarchies? This small study could not do the projects justice, seeing as they are themselves quite large and there was so much work put into them. These projects involved, among other things: the realisation of a new gender sensitive budget, another the creation of gender action plan, and yet another one focused on the furthering of SMEs with a gender focus.

It is the hope that the research on ITPs quickly intensifies so that the literature covering it expands from "how-to" manuals by development actors and instead becomes focused on critical examination of ITP's role in development.

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NPP9 (2018), Personal communication, 16 Mars 2018
NPP10 (2018), Personal communication, 16 April 2018

Picture on the front
TKV – the Fairy Princes (2018), "Muriel by Serbian graffiti artist TKV", photo by Saga Tullgren, 20 Mars 2018. Belgrade, Serbia.

Email to key participants.

Interview for study on ICLD and its gender programme.

My name is Saga Tullgren; I am a master's student at Lund University in Sweden who this fall worked as an intern with the International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) in Visby.

I am writing to you, as you were a participant of the international training programme "Local Democracy and Social Sustainability with a Gender Perspective" of which I am doing a study. I would like to ask you for the opportunity to interview you regarding your involvement. The study would contribute towards my final master's thesis, which ICLD will also get the chance to view and hopefully benefit from.

I am preparing to be in Serbia for two months, the 21th February - 20th April 2018, and will be going to the cities that have had participants in the programme. The questions revolve around gender issues and gender mainstreaming and the individual change projects that were created during the 18-month period. The interview would take maximum two hours. You would be welcome to look at the questions in advance and pre-approve them before the interview. You would also be able to approve any eventual quotes I use and be anonymous.

I am hoping you would consider letting me interview you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Finally, if you think of anyone else who partook in your project or the training that might want to participate in the interview please feel free to forward this email to him or her.

Kind regards:

Saga Tullgren

Master's student at Lund University, Sweden.

Saga Tullgren

Interview guide

Short information on the study

Thank you again for accepting my interview request! The purpose of this interview is to explore how successful the ICLD's Gender Program has been in strengthening local government officials' capacity to mainstream gender equality. Particularly, I am interested in your experiences of the training program and how you have applied the tools and knowledge that you have gained through this program in setting up a change project in your organization.

I have been awarded a Minor Field Study scholarship, which is a scholarship given out by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). This scholarship is for students to do an in-depth study in another country and to further students' knowledge and build international relationships. I do this study as a part of the final thesis we are to produce for the master's course in Development Studies, held by Lund's University in Sweden.

The study I am conducting is a study of International Training Programmes as a tool to further gender equality, with a focus on the International Centre for Local Democracy's (ICLD) Gender programme (Local Democracy and Social Sustainability with a Gender Perspective) as a case study.

I will be recording the interviews to be able to use the information later on in my study; the recorded material will only be heard by me and then deleted once my study is finished. Any quotes used in the final version of the thesis will be anonymous and pre-approved by you. As a participant you will also be sent the finalised thesis at its completion.

INTERVIEW SCHEME (SEMI-STRUCTURED)

The following questions are my main focus of this study. I might however ask follow-up questions, which might not be on this list. Feel free to let me know if you do not want to answer a particular question or if there is any other thoughts or concerns.

<u>Intro</u>

1. What is your current job/position?
2. Could you please describe your most important tasks?
3. Why did you apply for the ICLD's Gender Programme?
4. Who recommended you/how did you find out about it?
5. Have you participated in any other international training programmes? With whom?

<u>Experiences and application of the training programme</u>

6. What were your experiences of the program?
7. What were the most positive and what were the most negative aspects of the program?
8. What is the most useful knowledge that you have gained through this program? And, why?
9. What is the least useful knowledge that you have gained through this program? And, why?
10. In your view, did the Gender program take into account the importance of national contexts in their course material?
11. Have you been able to share this knowledge in your organization?
12. If so, could you please describe how you have shared this knowledge? If not, what are the main obstacles to share this knowledge in your organization?
13. What were the most useful tools that you have gained through this program? And, why?
14. What were the least useful tools that you have learned through this program? And, why?
15. Have you been able to use these tools in your organization?
16. If so, could you please describe how you have used these tools? If not, what are the main obstacles to use these tools in your organization?

The change project

17. Could you please describe your change project?

18. What acquired knowledge of the Gender program could be applied in the change project, and what acquired knowledge could not be applied?

19. Could you please describe the process of your change project, from setting it up, to its final implementation?

20. What were your experiences of this process? Was it easy/difficult?

21. Which acquired tools of the Gender program could be applied to set up and implement the change project and which tools could not be applied?

22. What were the main challenges for your change project?

23. What were the main results of your change project?

24. Has the change project been a success in your opinion? If so, why? If not, why not?

25. What has happened to your change project afterwards?

26. Has it been continued? If so, are you still involved in the change project?

27. In your view, has your change project led to (other) changes in your organization, or even in your society as a whole, after its completion?

About gender equality in Serbia

28. What does gender equality mean to you?

29. How well does Serbia in terms of gender quality?