

## *Part V*

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# NETWORKING

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## What is Networking? What is Mentoring?

**N**etworking is an important component of the work of NGOs and women's organisations. It is about building strategic linkages with other people and organisations that are working in the same or similar areas. Networking is essentially based on two concepts: mutual trust/understanding and mutual benefit.

In any network, there needs to be a basic amount of trust: that everybody is honest and shares the same goals (at least to a certain extent); and that everybody will support each other so that the network doesn't only work one-way. Mutual benefit in networks is created through exchanging information, building coalitions, developing common strategies, increasing the network and linking various groups with one another.

Coalitions and networks are stronger than individuals or individual organisations – the bigger and the more diverse the network, the stronger the message. If a network of very different people and organisations (for example, from all regions of the world) puts forward the same recommendations, then this can be much more powerful than if a European organisation made that same recommendation.

**Mentoring** can be described as a special case of networking – it is also based on trust and friendship as well as on mutual benefit – but mentoring refers to support from an experienced person to a newcomer. For NGOs and women's groups, active mentoring could become a much more important tool. It could help to increase their impact within rather complicated systems like the UN. Mentoring would mean that experienced women and NGOs' take newcomers 'by the hand' and train them how to operate in the space of international, regional or national meetings. For example, a person who's been involved in the annual meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women could link up with another woman who has never attended a UN Commission meeting before and teach her how to do it effectively. Even if it only entailed taking the person along to observe everything one does, simply watching and sharing would teach the 'youngster' a lot more than could be written down anywhere.

In many environments, networking and mentoring have proved to be very important and powerful tools to further somebody's work and effectiveness, which is key for NGOs and women's groups at the UN. Much like the 'old boys networks', networking and mentoring help to further the cause of gender mainstreaming and the success of all kinds of efforts.

## Networking Resources

*Also see Part III, Examples of Women's Organisations and NGOs*

For many of the organisations and networks listed below as examples, we provide an Internet address. As more and more people are gaining access to the Internet, Internet resources and organisations' websites will be useful to an increasing number of people and help connect them.

If you have difficulties accessing the Internet, contact your nearest UNDP Country office, British Council Offices (UK Institution), Goethe Institutes (German Institution), and other countries' offices and cultural institutes. Many of them offer free Internet access to NGOs and women's organisations.

### Compilations / Directories / Databases (Examples)

- **APC/WNSP**, Women's Networking Support Programme, brings women's networks together over the internet. The website provides information in research and evaluation, policy and advocacy, training, and online experiences of women. In English, French, and Spanish.  
<http://www.gn.apc.org/apcwomen>
- **IIAV, Mapping the World of Women's Information Services**, an online database of more than 325 women's information centres and libraries that are open to the public: international, national and local women's information services; women's documentation and research centres connected to universities; gender-specific information sections connected to governmental organisations; resource centres.  
[www.iiav.nl/eng/databases/mapping/index.html](http://www.iiav.nl/eng/databases/mapping/index.html)
- **International Women's Tribune Centre**, listing several directories of NGOs and UN institutions at <http://www.iwtc.org/>
- **Women's Human Rights Net** – resources section at <http://www.whrnet.org/resources.html>
- **Library of Women's Issues Oriented Web Links**, a guide to over 700 sites, updated weekly  
<http://women3rdworld.about.com>
- **WomenAction**, a global information, communication and media network on the Beijing+5 review process at [www.womenaction.org](http://www.womenaction.org)
- **Stakeholder Toolkit for Women**, links page at <http://www.earthsummit2002.org/toolkits/women/links/links.htm>

## Networks Active on Gender Issues and/or Sustainable Development (Examples)

- **The CSD NGO Women's Caucus** (*also see Part III*) and its list server – go to [www.csdngo.org/csdngo](http://www.csdngo.org/csdngo) and click on “women” under “major groups”
- **CSDGen**, general NGO list server around CSD issues and process. Send an email to [owner-csdgen@undp.org](mailto:owner-csdgen@undp.org) to join or visit the CSD NGO Steering Committee website at <http://www.igc.org/csdngo>
- **CSD NGO Caucuses**: Go to [www.csdngo.org/csdngo](http://www.csdngo.org/csdngo) to access issues and Major Groups caucuses
- **The World Wide Web Virtual Library** includes a section on sustainable development at <http://www.ulb.ac.be/ceese/meta/sustvl.html>. Listed is a comprehensive set of internet sites dealing with sustainable development, including organisations, projects and activities, electronic journals, libraries, references and documents, databases, directories or meta-databases. There is also a section providing information on software modelling techniques, Geographical Information Systems and other technologies.
- **CONGO**, the Conference of Non-governmental Organisations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, assists non-governmental organisations in consultative status to promote their common aim of supporting the United Nations Charter; works on behalf of non-governmental organisations in consultative status to develop that status and improve their relationship and cooperation with the United Nations and its various organs; and provides a forum for non-governmental organisations with common interests to come together to study, plan, support, and act in relation to the principles and programmes of the United Nations. <http://www.conferenceofngos.org>

## Examples of Issue Based Networks & Internet Resources

- **ENERGIA**, a global network on gender and energy (*also see Part III*).  
**Contact:** Sheila Oparaocha, ENERGIA Secretariat, ETC Energy, Kastanjelaan 5, P.O. Box 64, 3830 AB LEUSDEN, The Netherlands  
Tel: +31 (0)33 4326000, Fax: +31-(0)33-4940791, Email [energia@etcnl.nl](mailto:energia@etcnl.nl)  
**Website:** <http://www.energia.org/>

- **The Gender and Water Alliance**, a network which grew out of the 2nd World Water Forum (The Hague, March 2000) has its secretariat at the Institute for Water and Sanitation in the Netherlands.  
**Website:** [http://www.irc.nl/wwforum/pr\\_gender.html](http://www.irc.nl/wwforum/pr_gender.html)

- **Women's Human Rights Net (whrNET)**, in English, French and Spanish, is a collaborative Information & Communication Technology (ICT) project developed by an international coalition of women's organisations. whrNET aims to strengthen advocacy for women's human rights through the effective utilisation of information and communication technologies. The sponsoring organisations are part of a global movement for women's human rights that has grown steadily since the World Conference of Human Rights (Vienna, 1993) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). whrNET provides information on: women's human rights issues; advocacy/strategies; news and urgent action alerts; capacity building, etc.  
**Contact:** email [whrnet@whrnet.org](mailto:whrnet@whrnet.org)  
**Website:** [www.whrNET.org](http://www.whrNET.org)

- **Human Rights Internet (HRI)** was founded in 1976 and is a world leader in the exchange of information within the worldwide human rights community. HRI communicates by phone, fax, mail and the Internet with more than 5,000 organisations and individuals around the world working for the advancement of human rights. The organisation supports the work of the global non-governmental community. <http://www.hri.ca>

- **SocialWatch** is an NGO watchdog that monitors government commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) and the Beijing World Conference on Women to erase poverty and achieve gender equity. A facilitator of NGO networking, SocialWatch publishes and disseminates NGOs' reports on poverty, employment, social integration, gender equity, structural adjustment and more. The website provides practically anything pertaining to the WSSD and Beijing conference and review, relevant UN news, current trends and assessments on social policy issues, and NGO initiatives and findings worldwide. <http://www.socwatch.org.uy>

- **WICEJ**, Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice, is an international coalition representing 32 organisations from all regions of the globe. WICEJ works to link gender and macro-economic policy in international inter-governmental policy-making arenas. The website features WICEJ's Declaration for Economic Justice and Women's Empowerment and activities related to Beijing+5, links to WICEJ organisations, WICEJ contributions

to the World Conferences Against Racism, Financing for Development, and the Commission on the Status of Women. <http://www.wicej.org>

● **WLP**, Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace, is an international, publicly supported, non-profit organisation dedicated to empowering women through dialogue, choice, and participation to restructure their roles and to improve their status in their families, communities and societies. WLP creates culture-specific educational publications and multi-media programs for radio, video/television, CD-ROM and the Internet. <http://www.learningpartnership.org>

● **Women's Caucus for Gender Justice**, formed in the spring of 1997, built upon the recognition that women's human rights are human rights and the call for accountability for violations and integration of gender concerns throughout the UN human rights system. The Caucus was successful in incorporating a broad range of gender concerns in the statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and monitors the Optional Protocol to the Women's Convention, CEDAW. <http://www.iccwomen.org>

● **World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts** enables girls and young women to develop their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world. The World Bureau of this large network is located in London, UK. The website provides documents relevant to the Girl Child in English, Spanish, and French. <http://www.wagggsworld.org>

● **WWB**, Women's World Banking, is a women-led global network with the vision of providing economic access through credit to poor women. WWB network members currently provide micro-finance to over 10 million poor women. A network of over 50 affiliate organisations spreading over 40 countries provides women access to financing, information and markets. In English and Spanish. <http://www.womensworldbanking.org>

### News & Information Sites

● **Aviva**, a free "webzine" being run by an international group of feminists based in London, UK. An international women's magazine, enabling women all over the world to network, and acting as a "host" site to women's groups and services globally. Services include news, and tutorials. <http://www.aviva.org>

● **IIAV, Mapping the World of Women's Information Services**, an online database of more than 325 women's information centres and libraries that are open to the public: international, national

and local women's information services; women's documentation and research centres connected to universities; gender-specific information sections connected to governmental organisations; resource centres. The database is updated weekly and includes web site links.

[www.iiav.nl/eng/databases/mapping/index.html](http://www.iiav.nl/eng/databases/mapping/index.html)

● **IISD – Linkages**, International Institute for Sustainable Development, an electronic clearinghouse for information invaluable to any policy maker or activist working in the field of environment and/or development. The website provides multimedia resources broken down into regional work and sectoral work in the sustainable development field. It contains archives of journals, a large directory of key organisations, subscriptions to e-zines, international documents, calendar of international conferences, video clips of ongoing negotiation processes and more.

<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/index.htm>

IISD Key Resources on Women and Sustainable Development at <http://www.iisid1.iisd.ca/women/read4.htm>

● **WFS**, Women's Feature Service, is a news-feature service that reports from 40 countries in all regions of the world. WFS's network of women journalists produces over 400 articles a year, written from a women's perspective, with a special focus on developing countries. The website provides recent articles and news from different parts of the world. <http://www.igc.org/wfs>

● **WINGS**, Women's International News Gathering Service is an independent radio production company producing and distributing news and current affairs programs by and about women around the world. <http://www.wings.org>

### Internet Discussions Groups/ List Servers on Women's Gender Issues

As for many other groups and movements, internet discussion groups (or "e-groups," "list servers," "electronic fora," "online discussion groups") have become a very important tool for NGOs and women's groups. They allow us to network, exchange information, gain support, agree on positions, share strategies, and spread the word more quickly than ever before.

Today, there are probably thousands of such groups where gender and women's issues, sustainable development, human rights, urbanisation, climate change and so forth are being addressed. This is a great resource and worth tapping into – if you only want to join for a short period of time to obtain

particular information, if you want to find out if one is a good resource for you, or if you are looking for a stable network you can work with.

Also, consider setting up an electronic group yourself. This might be useful in preparation for a meeting, to keep in touch with a group of colleagues on a particular issue, etc. You can also set up groups which function as news-groups: Only you yourself can post messages – and you can use the group to let subscribers receive your latest newsletter, information about updates on your websites, etc.

**Note** that in many cases, you can subscribe in various ways:

- **by email:** you will receive every single message that has been sent to the group individually;
- **by “digest”:** you will receive one email message daily (sometimes weekly) which contains all messages sent during this time period;
- **on the web:** you will not receive emails but have to visit the group’s website to read the messages;
- **by summary:** some groups also provide summaries of the discussions during the summarised time period; in some cases you can subscribe to the summaries only.

## Homes and Listings of Discussion Groups

There are very useful sites, which list great numbers of groups that offer important networking opportunities for you. Many of the above-mentioned networks provide listings of relevant discussion groups. We have picked just a few:

- **Gender-related Electronic Fora** at <http://www.research.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/forum.shtml>: Joan Korenman’s frequently updated website is an excellent resource of discussion groups, providing annotations and subscription details of publicly accessible electronic fora related to women or to women-focused gender-issues.
- **Yahogroups.com** (used to be [egroups.com](http://www.egroups.com) & [onelist.com](http://www.onelist.com)) at <http://www.yahoo.com>: a site hosting several hundred thousand discussion groups with several million members. You can search the site for groups (issues) of interest to you and access the postings of most of these groups. You can also very easily set up your own list; there is an option free of charge (with very little advertising).

- **Mailbase UK** at [www.mailbase.ac.uk](http://www.mailbase.ac.uk): a site hosting more than 2000 discussion lists with several hundred thousand members worldwide. Based at the University of Newcastle, UK, the site is easy to search, provides the latest postings of discussion groups, and subscription forms.
- **The Toolkit Networking Opportunities page** offers a large number of annotated links to discussion groups dealing with gender, sustainable development, and Internet-related issues. You can join existing networks; participate in online conferences; and sign up for newsletters. <http://www.earthsummit2002.org/toolkits/Women/network/netopp.htm>

Many of the groups you will find on these sites are communicating in English – but not all of them. Some are multi-lingual. English is the dominating language of the Internet – but French, Spanish, Japanese, and others are becoming more frequent as people publish more and more material in these languages on the Internet.

In addition, many UN bodies or processes nowadays establish list servers to keep NGOs informed about the ongoing work. These are not necessarily discussion groups but newsgroups – only the body that established the group can post messages. Thus, you might not be able to contribute yourself but will receive updated information at regular intervals.

Some UN bodies and other institutions also conduct **scheduled discussion groups**, for example to discuss a draft report (e.g. the electronic discussion group on the World Bank draft report 2000 which had over 1500 participants over 6 weeks). You might want to actively participate or “listen in” to learn about the issues, the process, and the current thinking of your colleagues. Look out for announcements of scheduled discussions, e.g., on the website of those bodies or general information list servers.