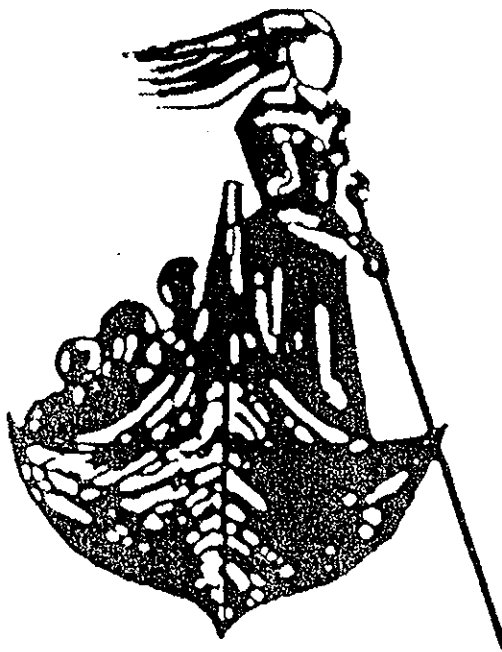


A presentation of:

**THE PROJECT:
MUNICIPAL PLANNING ON WOMEN'S TERMS
or a woman's perspective in public planning**



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THE PROJECT:

MUNICIPAL PLANNING ON WOMEN'S TERMS

- or a woman's perspective in public planning

Women are greatly under-represented in political bodies and municipal and county planning departments. An important goal therefore is to get more women involved in public planning.

In Norway, the Ministry of Environment is responsible for local and regional planning. In 1989, the Ministry initiated a 3-year experimental programme, "Municipal planning on women's terms".

The direct reasons were that:

1. The Ministry had to prepare a plan to promote equality between men and women within its own area of responsibility.
2. Local planning needed a "vitamin injection".
3. Local planning needed to be more democratic.

The project was carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Labour, the Ministry of Fisheries, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Norwegian Association of Local Authorities.

Representatives of these six organizations comprise a central steering group with responsibility for defining the essential frameworks of the project and for managing funds.

The programme was implemented in six small rural municipalities.

The objective was three-fold:

1. To learn more about women's values and needs, and develop models for incorporating these into the municipal master plans.
2. To prepare municipal master plans with a stronger women's perspective on the residential environment, economic policy, employment policy, and health and welfare policy.
3. To communicate the knowledge obtained through the project to other municipalities.

The project emphasized that women should take an active part in the planning process. The six municipalities undertook by political decision to establish planning processes which would ensure that the woman's perspective would be properly reflected in the municipal plans.

How to work for a woman's perspective

- * All the municipalities had to establish a project group headed by a woman, and all sub-groups appointed in connection with the project had to contain a majority of women.
- * The mayor or the chief municipal executive had to chair the project. This was a woman in four of the six municipalities.
- * A national team of experts was established to advise on the local efforts, and evaluate the results.
- * The local project work had the same status as the work on the plans for other municipal sectors.
- * The process followed the pattern used for strategic planning.
- * The methods were untraditional in a local planning context. Emphasis was placed on working from below upwards, with widespread mobilization and participation of the "grass-root" population. New methods included creative problem-solving sessions and use of work books.

Mobilizing methods:

- distribution of information material to all families in the municipality, and systematic use of local newspapers.
- telephone calls to prominent women, to motivate them to participate in an open meeting and to make such call a call to another ten woman themselves.
- face to face contact with prominent persons such as the administrative heads of the different sectors, politicians etc. and also house-to-house visits.
- establishment of networks between local organizations, for problem solving and implementing proposed measures.
- Mobilizing the public for special tasks, after which it is much easier to mobilize for general support.
- Mobilizing people to do something they are skilled in doing.
- Mobilizing «burning souls». Every local community has some people who are eager to engage themselves in a social situation. An important part of the mobilizing process is to contact such persons at an early stage and motivate them to join the process.

Does a woman's perspective make any difference?

The project showed four different ways of applying a woman's perspective in practice:

1. Improving the objective living conditions for women in the municipality.

One strategy is to map the actual living conditions for women in the municipality. Such knowledge is important for women to understand their own situation and for actions to change a situation of inequality. Most project groups felt that open meetings and group work for women only, or where the most of the participants were women, would provide the best description of women's situation and possible actions.

2. Incorporating "women's themes" as goals for the planning work.

A practical approach is to emphasize themes which women consider important. What themes occupy women in connection with local planning processes? Are all women occupied with the same themes - are some of them common to most women? Are women occupied with other themes than men are?

3. Achieving widespread and stronger participation of women in public life and all part of the planning process.

How are women represented in local politics, in the municipal leadership and administration, in the planning process, in interesting groups and organizations in the municipality, in business, in the local media? Two main questions:

- How can we change and organize the working conditions for local politicians, to make it possible and attractive for women to participate?
- How can we motivate women and prepare them for political activity?

4. Applying women's values as a perspective on the planning process.

Do women have a common set of values based on their experiences as women which are different from men's values as based on their own experience? If it is true, how can such values be made fundamental in public planning?