

Financing women mobilising for women's empowerment

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An effective state

- An effective state – according to DFID:
Territorial control, safety and security,
capacity to manage public resources,
delivery of basic services, and the ability to
protect and support the ways in which the
poorest people sustain themselves

What's missing from that definition?

- An acknowledgement of the centrality of power and politics
- Concepts of citizenship, participation and accountability

State-society interconnections

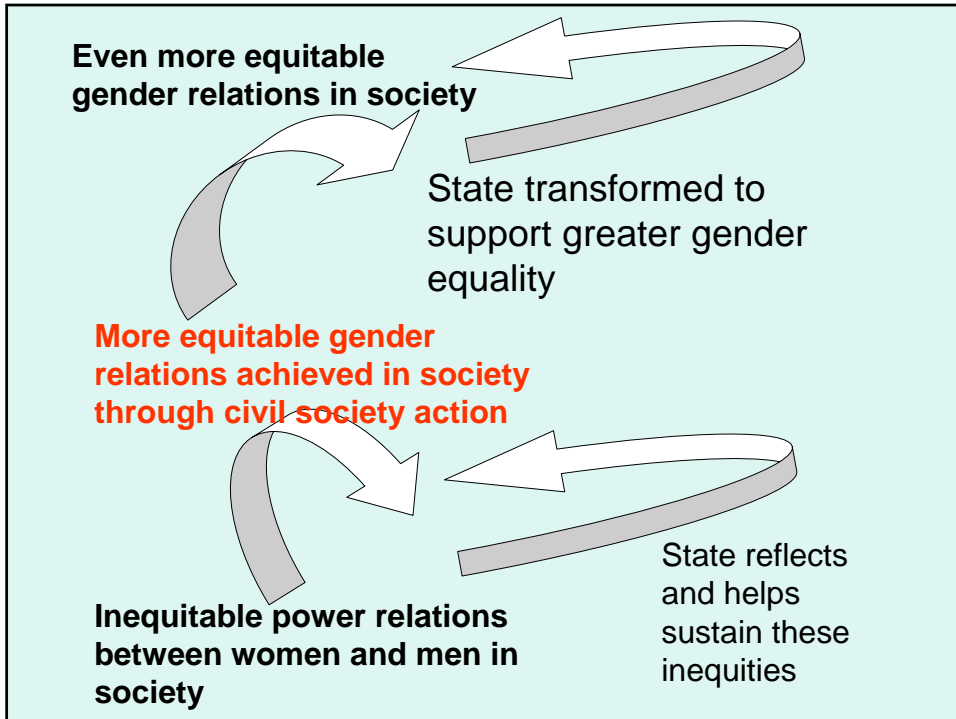
- Networks of interests shaped by power, history, resources, knowledge and culture that *cut across state-society boundaries*.
- Neither state nor civil society homogenous – there are state officials committed to social change and civil society leaders working to conserve the status quo.

One proposition about the state and civil society

- The state is autonomous from society; the role of citizens is to hold that pre-existing state accountable and place external pressure on the state to make it more effective or capable.
- This proposition focuses attention on funding women's organisations to dialogue with state organisations/monitor state activities and outputs in relation to gender equality objectives.

Another way of thinking about civil society

- The state is not autonomous but is created and sustained by societal interests, reflecting the character of power relations in wider society;
- This proposition focuses attention on funding efforts to change intra-societal relations as an essential element of improving state capacity to implement gender equality policies.



Implications of this second proposition

- Means paying attention to supporting changes in societal relations as integral to securing women's empowerment
- And simultaneously supporting those state institutions and actors who are seeking to change the rest of the state in response to processes of societal transformation that require new policy approaches

Donor financing?

- Under what conditions have external bilateral and/or multilateral funding supported transformative changes in societal structures?
- Where and how (in aid dependent countries) have people organised successfully for changing societal relations for greater gender equality without recourse to external funding sources?

Possible options for supporting civil society efforts to secure women's empowerment

- Financing those working to change *societal relations* that sustain gender inequalities
- Supporting CSOs improve *their own governance* and programming in relation to gender equality
- Supporting groups working across the state/society boundaries by *brokering connections*. And
- Supporting women's representation and voice in political parties and processes.

Caution.....

- But support must be designed so that donors' procedural and reporting requirements do not undermine the capacity of citizens and organisations to work together on their own agendas