

EPISODE ONE, SEGMENT ONE

Sue Telingator

Our first discussion on gender mainstreaming, takes place between an academic and a gender practitioner. The academic was recorded in our studios and the practitioner joins us from Indonesia, on Skype

Jane Parpart

Hello, my name is Jane Parpart and I am an adjunct professor in the PhD program on Global Governance and Human Security at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. I'm also emeritus professor at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada and associated with the University of Ottawa and Carleton Universities in Ottawa, Canada.

My latest book is *Rethinking Silence, Voice and Agency in Contested Gendered Terrains*, published by Routledge Press. It seeks to enlarge and deepen our understanding of the power and complexity of silence in a world that tends to see silence as an absence, rather than power.

Marisna Yulianti

My name is Nina. Well, my full name is Marisna Yulianti. It's a bit long. Currently, I am doing gender mainstreaming in water resource facility program in Timor L'Este, our neighbor. I'm so eager to talk to you today. I read through your articles. I think they are very resourceful. And you gave me a lot of insights. But yeah, I can't wait to get more insights from you on a lot of different topics on gender today.

Jane Parpart

I'm looking forward to learning from you too, you know. I think it's so it's so unreal, we all have so much to learn from each other. Yeah, because you have such an impressive wealth of experience in the field. And I think sometimes academics can get too much in their heads and not enough in the field. And I think, that's why it was so I was so delighted that I'd be talking to you, because of the five years that I came and went in Indonesia, and came to have so much respect, for the work that was being done in the universities, but also by the development experts. And I realized that, that we all have lots to learn from each other. You know, I learned so much from those five years. But I'm interested, you have looked at my piece on, it's a critical piece, on gender mainstreaming? Where I'm I'm saying that I think it's very important to mainstream women, but we also have to do more than the body count, you know. It's so easy to just try to get the right number of women and the right women into male dominated institutions. And obviously, that's terribly important first step. And sometimes there's a tendency to pay more attention to the numbers, you know, how many women are where? And if they're more, it's always better. But it seems to me there's another set of questions, and I think you probably have more experience than I do with the questions of Okay, when women get into positions, say in, in government, or, or in any institution or in a development project, are there any forces that are working against them? Are there ways in which they find themselves present and but not always being listened to? What are your thoughts on that? Because it seems to me that it's people in the field, like yourself, who are actually on the

ground experiencing this, that have the most to tell us about how, how effective women are able to be when they move into sort of male dominated ,historically male dominated institutions.

Marisna Yulianti

Yeah. About the head count, it's always head counts. And, development practitioners, a lot of development organizations, it's pretty normal, like, because usually projects are funded by external donors, donors decide, you know, we will, we just want to do this, we just want to, you know, measure how many women are there, for example? If whether or not women who are there are actually, you know, being able to actively and meaningfully participate in in the activities. The resistance is real. Yeah.

Jane Parpart

And was the resistance from women as well as men?

Marisna Yulianti

Um, for me, the first resistance came from the development experts.

Jane Parpart

Oh, okay.

Marisna Yulianti

Yeah. Before we worked in the community, even like, they don't understand why we have to do this. It's always like, you know, gender expert versus the other project team.

Jane Parpart

Oh, interesting,

Marisna Yulianti

And it's quite hard. Yeah.

Jane Parpart

Are the gender experts, university people or are they working in the government development agencies or where, where's their background?

Marisna Yulianti

Um, it. Yeah, some of them are from the university, but majority of the gender experts are from the development background.

Jane Parpart

Okay.

Marisna Yulianti

It's like you mentioned in one of your articles about collaborations with between academics and CBRs, community-based researchers. Yeah.

Jane Parpart

What you're saying is, is very similar to some of the things that I've been worrying about. When these changes get made in the field, that there are kind of resistances that are very hard to see.

Marisna Yulianti

I mean, like, if the resistance came from the community, I think it's brilliant. It's like, we're expecting this like, because, you know, we are assuming that there will be a lot of gender inequalities and gender gaps in the community. So resistance will be pretty much expected. But then I did not expect this to come from the project team itself. With the understanding that people who are involved in development should know, that gender equality, is important, should understand what gender mainstreaming is all about, you know, so it was double resistance. Does it make any sense?

Jane Parpart

Yes, no, absolutely.

Marisna Yulianti

Yeah.

Jane Parpart

Did you try to do anything to see if you could change that?

Marisna Yulianti

Well, my first attempt was trying to feed them with data. I mean, like, I think that's how the roles of academics really play their roles. Because when we supply them with, you know, scientific data, evidence that gender inequalities do affect the sustainability of the project, you impact how the community will be able to benefit from the projects, they slowly begin to see, ah, okay, so that's why we need to do this! But even so, it's really hard to get into that. Even in the process, it's really hard to make them realize that this is important. Sometimes I use the donor card like, okay, you don't want to do this, but then the donor was from the US government at that time. So the US government wants to do gender mainstreaming fully in place. So, if we don't do this, then you won't get the money

Jane Parpart

That probably concentrated people's minds.

Marisna Yulianti

Yeah, money. I sometimes I play that card. But for me, personally, it's kind of sad, like, gender equality, gender mainstreaming is always misunderstood that way. And us gender experts on

the fields are always, we always have to do this, we always have to always have to do the convincing, you know. Like, it shouldn't need convincing anymore, like it's 2019 already. Yeah.

Jane Parpart

Yes. But it sounds like you have to not only convince some of the people involved in the project, but also maybe people in the development world, you know, people who think development is about more economic kind of things and not social--who are, you know, technical people and are doing important work, but it's different.

Marisna Yulianti

Yeah, they tend to think that gender is always the sideline of the project. They don't necessarily think that gender inequality, gender gaps, or gender dis, based discrimination, for example, will affect the implementation of the project, and so on and so forth. So that's why they think it's a totally standalone issue, and that they don't have to deal with this right now. It's usually less prioritized, compared to the, the technical, the technical issues,

Jane Parpart

...yes.

Marisna Yulianti

Do you have experiences maybe...

Jane Parpart

Oh, very similar like that. Very, yeah very. I think that so many development experts are actually largely male, and they're very technical, you know, they're like in agriculture or they're in trade, and they're very economically driven. And, they don't think about gender. They just sort of assume that that's just sort of natural. And, and but I think that the problem that is so worrisome is that almost all societies, in fact, no matter how much they say, they're enlightened, still, there's a big difference between opportunities for women and opportunities for men. And so the men, if women start getting more opportunities, some men are going to have fewer opportunities. So, you know, it's something that we probably don't pay enough attention to, that how can we encourage men to see that if their partners, their wives, are working, that maybe that will be better for, for the household and better for everybody, but then they may have to do a lot more childcare. And social change doesn't happen quickly. You know, and in so many societies around the world, the sexual division of labor has been very established for a long, long time. So, you're kind of walking in and saying, I want to change the world that you grew up in, and the world you think is normal. And if you tell the people who have more power that they need to share their power, you know, it's hard for us who feel like we're doing a justice issue, which we are to, to think about how the people feel, who feel they're losing power. You know, the men that feel like, if the women come up, then they'll go down. It's hard to convince people that it can be good for everybody. And certainly, in so many societies around the world, there's such great resistance to any kind of change in the position of women.

Marisna Yulianti

I've never had an opportunity to work with gender academics actually. I've always been interested in doing research. Maybe that's, that's one of the issue for us practitioners. We conduct gender assessments, gender baseline, you know, to collect data about women's situations in the field. But sometimes, because we don't call ourselves researcher, we're not affiliated to an educational institution. There's not enough platforms for academics and gender practitioners to actually, you know, exchange information, maybe discuss sharing. And, for us, I don't think there's a lot of opportunities to conduct research, as well. Usually, if I come across any open call for research on Gender and Women's Empowerment, usually, it's only for people who are affiliated to a certain institution. And I'm not so there's not a lot of opportunities, I guess.

Jane Parpart

Yeah, that's, that is so, such a terrible situation, because it means that the people like yourself, who are, who are out in the field, you're, you're the ones that really has a feel for what's going on. And you should play a key role in the analysis of how you understand that. But I, it is true, a lot of times academics can look at reports, without even knowing anything about the person that wrote them or the team that wrote them. And it would be so helpful if there were more interchange, and I think it's a great weakness. I think that part of the problem is that when you're in development, that's an institution. It's in the government it's, or in an NGO world, and those worlds have their own rules about, you know, what's important, what's not, and things like that. And then you the academics, of course, are busy trying to publish and get their careers moving by getting grants and doing things. And so it's, it's a shame, because it seems to me that, it would be much more productive if we could have people with field experience working with people who have more theory and learning from each other. I mean, I've learned so much from development practitioners, who know so much more than I do about the nitty gritty of what's going on.

Marisna Yulianti

But would you agree that this, there's not a lot of platform and opportunities for practitioners and academics to work together?

Jane Parpart

Yes, I think this is, it's way too rare. And I think, you know, it would maybe be a good thing for you to discuss with the authorities you're working with saying, you know, wouldn't it be useful to bring someone in to spend a few weeks and give some seminars and meet with students in small groups, you know, everyone would gain from that. I think there need to be academics who are involved in development who support local practitioners in a call for more integrated discussions and sharing because anybody would learn from that. I think anything that increases communication, and makes people feel that they know each other and they understand each other and they're learning from each other, then that's a good thing. It's, because the danger is that we always slip back into being basically in our own institutions. And if we're trying to cross from the university world, into the development world, which those of us that have been in both development and universities, even if we're more in universities than development, and

you would be more in development than in universities, there needs to be more effort poured into bringing connections together, that help us to, to learn from each other. I think that's very important. But it is easy to get caught up in whatever it is that you're doing, you know, that when you're in a project, or if you're teaching classes. I think it's important for us to think try to think about how to set up ways to have things like this exchange happen, you know, like, where we can actually talk, learn something about our common lives and things about differences and commonalities. It's so wonderful, because I feel like I know you now much better, so much better. And, and, you know, it's hard for someone in the development side to, to connect with the academic, and it's hard for the academics to connect with the development because both groups are having to, to think about their main home, and how they're surviving and managing in that, as well as how can we connect and learn from each other.

Marisna Yulianti

For me, I think I try, although I should try more. But, you know, aside from if there's no specific project that would involve both sides, I don't think there has been any link built between the two. I think if the academics have certain development issues, they could also involve us, I mean reach out to us, but at least to share experiences. Because practitioners are the ones who are out there on the field and, and talking and engaging with the community. Maybe before the researcher, before the academics would go out there and collect data, they would talk to us and we could formulate a better planning, maybe? And for us too, I think, in my experiences, developing a research plan is not easy,

Jane Parpart

Right.

Marisna Yulianti

So for me, I think, for practitioners as well, we need to reach out, as much, to the academics to get more insight on how to do a good research, I think.

Jane Parpart

It might be useful to try to set up, you know, see if you could find a few people in academe, as well as some practitioners. And if they could get together in a small meeting, and sort of just talk about, how can we make more cooperation work? It's terribly important. This is such a wonderful moment because it's too easy to stay in your own little pond, you know, and not reach out and try to say, how can we think bigger? You know, how can we think of new ways of collaborating? To build a bridge between the people in the field like yourself, who are who are doing such important work. And the people who are in academe and sometimes forget about the connection between everyday life.

EPISODE ONE, SEGMENT TWO

Sue Telingator

Our second discussion, called Gender 101, is also on the topic of gender mainstreaming, between two gender practitioners. One is based in Washington, DC, in the United States, and the other is calling in from Kigali, Rwanda, on the African Continent.

Alice Bamusaiime

Hi, everyone. My name is Alice Bamusaiime. I am a gender expert and currently, actually, for the last almost 16 years have been in this field. And I've been back and forth doing full time consultancy, and also, at some point, doing full time work. Yeah, that's me.

Dina Scippa

My name is Dina Scippa. I am a gender practitioner. I have been working in international development, primarily with USA ID but also with a number of other donor agencies for about 15 years. So really excited to be here today.

Maybe Alice, we can pick up where we've always sort of left off and maybe talking about what you see as being the greatest challenges when we're thinking about really putting gender integration into practice. I mean, I feel like one of the greatest challenges is really getting buy in. And whether it's for a project, or if you're doing gender, you know, serving as a gender advisor within an organization, making sure that everyone is on the same page and really is bought into the idea can ultimately determine success or failure. Alice, what has been your experience when you've, when you've worked on projects?

Alice Bamusaiime

Yeah, thank you, Dina. Like you said, it's a handful of a few people that really understand this gender mainstreaming, although some people take it for granted and think everybody can do it. But if somebody is coming in the seat for the very first time Dina, it can be really, really challenging, when people think they know yet actually, there's some skills gap. How do you start? You start by doing a gender analysis. So it takes a gender expert, somebody who is really an expert in the field to do this. You find that you're coming on a project and the baseline study has already been done. And analysis of different things has already been done but there was nothing like a gender bit of it. So if somebody starts by working without doing the gender analysis, they will surely meet challenges. Dina, what do you have to say about this?

Dina Scippa

I completely agree with you, Alice. I think Gender Analysis is one of the most fundamental elements of a commitment to process when we're addressing gender integration or gender mainstreaming in a project. I couldn't agree more. It's sort of a double edged sword. I think what's great is that there's so many different examples of Gender Analysis. There's so many different resources out there, but at the same time, it can kind of be overwhelming, like where do you begin?

For me, Gender Analysis offers a really rich opportunity to gather data, trends, observations, perspectives and opinions that are so critical to informing project design, that I think any project that demonstrates a real and true commitment to wanting to address gender, and it's, and it's design, really should put the upfront investment, to making sure that a gender analysis is done early on.

I think the other thing that I oftentimes reflect on is the level of engagement with the findings and recommendations. And you and I, Alice, both know, we're extremely passionate about this work, we pour our heart and soul into these reports. And I think figuring out the best way to communicate the findings and recommendations and that enthusiasm around it, is so critical for the client piece that I was talking about earlier. I have found that if you don't engage with the data, with the recommendations, with what you've learned with other colleagues, then it's hard to sort of bridge that gap with having or generating that enthusiasm around your commitment. And I think being able to facilitate dialogue on what the findings mean, whether the recommendations are practical and feasible, will, will really have an influence on how much staff feel brought into the process and feel committed to driving donor's agenda forward. Right. And I think it also offers an opportunity for team members to kind of reflect on their own perceptions of what gender means, because at the end of the day, we're human beings, we're influenced by our own, you know, socio-cultural, you know, expectations and perspective. What has been your experience Alice, when you think about sort of communicating the findings? What's worked well for you in the past?

Alice Bamusaiime

Yeah, thank you, Dina, like you say, definitely, when done a gender analysis, you have to communicate the findings. And for me, possible before I go to how I communicate the findings is, even before I do the gender analysis, I really, really treasure and put my efforts on the senior management team. So for me, my mission here has been to work with the senior management team, once they understand it, it's so easy to roll it out. It's so easy for them to say, Alice I'm going to give you five days for training for staff, or you do three days for training and do two days in the field. So if you have the support from the senior management team, you have it all. For me, that's what I've always said. Because like during the reporting time, they always like put too much pressure and always hold accountable the implementing staff. How far have you gotten with this? And then I always, with the senior management team, I don't forget the M and E, the M and E, the monitoring and evaluation experts on this specific project, because the M and E is part of this and they also understand the process for this project, they push for it. That is what I have used and it has worked so well for me.

Dina Scippa

One of the most effective ways to really affect change in gender and social inclusion on a project is when you have a team that's fully brought in, fully committed, who is, feels capable and prepared to identify those opportunities in real time. So that gender isn't an afterthought. And I think Alice, you and I have probably seen the pressure when it comes to the reporting time, well what have you done on gender? And so if it's done, if it's considered after the fact after activities have moved forward, it's kind of harder to back in and it's obviously not, not our

ideal, but if you have built, if you've front-ended the time, front-ended the process to really build capacity across the team, then team members feel equipped to be reflecting on what they've learned and what they've been reading and discussing with their colleagues to identify those opportunities in real time.

In terms of ensuring buy in, you sort of have to remind colleagues and maybe project teams or organizations writ large, of the requirements that they're beholden to by certain donors. What, what I've been seeing is an uptick when it comes to trends. And at least with USAID, that there's been a lot more emphasis on integrating gender considerations into the overall scope of work. In comparison to previous years, when you saw gender as more of a sort of an add on at the end of at the end of the scope of work, and there's been a lot of progress made. I really applaud USAID in that regard. I know, a lot of other donor agencies have made a lot of advances themselves. So, we should all be committed to addressing gender, and social inclusion considerations, because it's the right thing to do. And it's a smart thing to do. And we've heard those arguments over and over, but really holding a bit more accountability, to understanding sort of the consequences by not addressing it has an implication on obviously, compliance and making sure that you're hitting all of the right requirements, but also the consequences of not addressing gender and social inclusion considerations in a project might actually impact your objectives. And I think being able to prioritize the space and time for these types of conversations, with decision makers, with leaders, within whether it be the project structure, or even the organization, really trying to draw out some specific examples. How if a project or an organization is not addressing gender considerations, what can that mean? And it can mean negative consequences, poor outcomes with respect to the particular project or initiative. But it can also mean that, you're sort of inconsistent with what has been committed and not delivering against, I don't know if that makes sense. And just, I think, really trying to front end the conversation to building in that buy in. And, like you said, Alice, the, the compliance piece is, is really important. But I also think encouraging organizations and teams with a bit of healthy competition can also go a long way. Making sure that, you know, right now, it with a lot of organizations and a lot of donors, the pressure's on and gender is not something that can sort of be added on. Resources are being devoted to this in greater numbers than ever before. So I think long gone are the days that you can sort of just get past it and check the box.

Alice Bamusaiime

Yeah, you're right, Dina, when you talk about resources. I remember back in 2004, when I had just started my first job as a gender expert in this institute, academic Institute. It was an engineering technology related, related Institute. And they used to ask me, but how do you think gender is going to be mainstreamed in technology? And they went and located me in the darkest corner in the offices. And slowly by slowly when African Development Bank came, and they're like, this office is going to be empowered, we are giving them some money for two years. And we are funding them. I want to tell you guys, I was brought near the chancellor's office, because everybody was like, now we are getting money because of Alice. Because of the resources, which was not the case before. That was after two good years of being frustrated, I'm like, no, I think I should look for another employment somewhere where they implement

and give value to gender. But wait, I said, I should hang on. I am supposed to be like Dina said, with this gender mainstreaming passion and enthusiasm also has to apply. And it was after two years, I got this grant. And people started pampering me. And people started looking after, after me and have, calling me in meetings. But before then, during the strategic planning meeting, I was not anywhere. But when you're given this ample value, and the donors, like Dina said, are really devoting efforts into this, to make sure that they really drive gender mainstreaming, that is also a very good plus, for buy-in.

Dina Scippa

It's so true. I'm thinking about it, as, as I'm listening to you about, you know, absolutely passion and enthusiasm are so important in the work that we do, and across, you know, all for gender practitioners. I think, you know, in line with the growing interest and demand for efforts to address gender and social inclusion meaningfully in programming, has sort of upped the ante, if you will, with organizations' leadership, to communicate a commitment to gender equality, and that clear commitment to including it in process. But I think if you look at those two factors, because they're so critically linked to this, to this theme that we're talking about in terms of buy in, but if you're not matching that with resources, you're really not setting out to do this well. You know, I'm thinking about, you know, resources can mean people, but it can also mean allocated budget resources. It's ensuring that the proper attention is paid to making sure that workshops and events get the same type of attention and support in terms of logistics as, as the others, and earmarking enough time to making sure that opportunities are seized, where gender can be integrated into those activities. So I think resources are really, really important to make sure that an approach and commitment that's echoed somewhere is matched with the appropriate resources.

Alice Bamusaiime

Relationships are really, really important because if they if there is no mutual understanding, things won't work out. But if the relationship is well built, you always have people to run to, you always have backstops to support you. I was with Land O'Lakes for five years. And I used to have somebody that I worked with, this person on almost a daily basis. And we had a very good relationship working together. When I needed support, sometimes she would come and support me. There are things that she will push, but for me many people are so much used to me that they sometimes won't listen to me. So, when she comes, she helps, she supports me, we train concurrently. And we kind of really make it fun. That is one important importance of relationships. The second one is at USAID, they also have like gender experts. So, you always have people in the network to build on and to always call to come and back you up. So relationships are so important, because they act as backstops. Like building relationships with other organizations, through, like a platform or a stakeholder's platform, where you map out some partners that are working on gender mainstreaming, that you are so much aware of that are even working well almost on the same things with you, and you bring them on board. Be assured you will learn one or two things from these other experts and implementing organizations in the field. So for me, relationships are so important. I want to hear from my friend, Dina, what she has to say about this.

Dina Scippa

Oh Alice, I can't, I'm sitting over here shaking my head because I can't agree with you more on these things. You know, when I think about relationships, I am thinking about relationships from two perspectives. And one that is I know very important to both you and I Alice is making sure that relationships are fostered from the beginning with local women's organizations, like you were mentioning in that stakeholder mapping process. It's so important to cultivate those relationships with women's organizations and not just women's organizations, but local organizations at large. To make sure that their inputs, their considerations and their engagement are part of the design. I think also on that piece of fostering relationships with women's organizations to also appreciate intersectionality. To not think that because you've invited or engaged with one women's organization that they represent the views of all women. And maybe that sounds as sort of obvious to some folks. But I think oftentimes, women's organizations in different countries that that have the clout, or that level of influence can sometimes not represent the full scope or picture. So, engaging young women's organizations, you know, engaging associations, or even informal groups of women who have different lived experiences, can, I think, add to that that richness that I was that I was talking about. The other piece, I think, when it comes to relationships, comes down to relationships with the core staff, whether it be on a project or a, an organization, because even if you're in charge of doing a Gender Analysis, or supporting gender mainstreaming across a project or initiative, that the relationships that you're building with staff, with colleagues are obviously going to last well into the future, if it's done well.

Alice Bamusaiime

Thank you, Dina. And this also came to my mind. Like we know, when we're looking at relationships, we look at the internal, the external influencing, influencing factors. I'm also looking at a beneficiary point of view over a certain project. The relationship should be built in a way that... I remember the model that I used. Last year the training for the beneficiaries of the project or the project partners, I got some people that I called, where I got the people that I call supermodel, let's say, if they are farmers, supermodel farmers or supermodel business women and men. So when you get those people on the ground converted, and they understand that it is important to mainstream gender, even at family level, even at some level, these are the people that you bring to train and teach others--you use role, role models. So that relationship of like mutual agreement that the same people, living in the same situation, is also very important. I see it as also another relationship that pushes gender mainstreaming into action.