and health education. Many of these projects failed.

The failures — and a chorus of criticism against the condescending approach — led to a shift in analysis. Gradually, women came to be seen as economic agents.

Scores of agricultural and informal sector projects were set up, small factories were started, and so on. These projects were forced to confront the fact that many women are at once workers, wives and mothers. And gradually it dawned on development agencies that projects which focus on women still leave untouched the underlying —unequal — gender relations. It became clear that gender relations are part of broader social relations. One result was the "Gender and Development" or GAD approach, which yielded the "gender sensitive" criterion.

The debate around gender sensitive development hinges on the distinction between *practical* and *strategic* gender needs.

Practical needs refer to the daily problems faced by women in the course of their work — their "double day" of paid labour and household work, lack of childcare and so on. Strategic needs slot into the social relations that sustain women's subordination — who controls resources, who benefits from them, legal discrimination, and so on.

But this understanding is severely limited. Under capitalism many obstacles prevent women from taking part on an equal footing with menfolk. The distinction between strategic and practical gender issues degrades the practical needs of women. It obscures the crucial link between women's broader political and legal rights, and the conditions under which women live and struggle.

Development work aimed at empowering women must be based on a clear understanding of how broader political and legal rights are connected to the basic problems of daily life.

We cannot reject a project because it concentrates on child care. A creche can be set up in ways that challenge the division of labour (between men and women) in relation to child rearing — perhaps through a parent's education programme. It could challenge employers to assume responsibility for the care of workers' children. The bottomline is how we manage to integrate political issues and the goal of transformation

Why development is a women's issue

Men in suits might design the plans, manage the processes and reap the praise. But development is a women's issue — particularly a black working class women's issue ...

● **Women make up 53,6% of the population, but only 36% of the workforce.**
● **In the workforce, working class women occupy the least skilled, lowest paid and least unionised jobs.**
● **African working class women occupy the most vulnerable positions in the workforce.**
● **Many women classified as 'unemployed' actually work in the informal sector, where 86% of the 2,4-million people so employed earn less than R250 a month.**
● **Many women are invisible in work and unemployment statistics because they are categorised as 'housewives'.**

On top of this, apartheid has denied black working class women most of their fundamental needs and rights — shelter, food, healthcare, clothing, education and access to land.

Black working class women have been excluded from formal political institutions of the state, from the current process of negotiation and from decision-making within the broad liberation movement and civil society.

into the project.

So, the GAD approach recognises different gender needs and tries to transform oppressive gender relations. Usually it includes some training and education for the affected women. Projects are not necessarily focused on "women's issues" but might be directed at community issues such as housing or health.

And WID includes projects that deal with "women's issues" but lack the commitment to change gender relations that make for specifically "women's issues" instead of "people's issues".

The proof is in the planning

A development project's success or failure depends to a great extent on its planning. Some of the standard planning assumptions have dramatic gender implications:

● It is often assumed that men and women will benefit equally from the project.
● It is assumed that income is shared equally in the household, so women will benefit from projects which give men an income.
● Households headed by women are seldom recognised, although they are hardest hit by poverty and most in need of development.
● There is a presumption that the man adequately represents the views of all the household's members, so women are once more rendered silent.
● Farmers are assumed to be men, although in Africa they are generally women.
● Age and gender differences and divisions are dismissed among the "the poor", "peasants" or "workers".
● Women's contributions through housework, seasonal farming and storage tasks, and child rearing are not recognised.
● Planning seldom takes into account that most women have several jobs.

Sussex University's Institute of Development Studies has taken this bull by the horns by starting a training programme to promote development planning from a gender sensitive angle.

Part of the training explores how distinct gender relations are formed in different classes and cultures. The debate of how applicable western feminism is to African women is by now a familiar one. Similarly, by imposing western models of gender relations, we might doom development projects to failure — leaving the real gender relations in that community untouched.

The programme also concentrates on a critical aspect of gender relations: the division of labour in productive and reproductive work. The gender division of labour not only shapes who does what, it also ascribes value to different kinds of activity, and spreads skills and allocates resources in particular ways.

Finally, the programme tackles the horrifying extent to which women internalise ideologies of gender difference and inequality.

The individual consciousness of women involved in development projects is central to empowerment. It must be demonstrated that alternative ways of living, working and relating to others are possible and acceptable.

In our context the arena of cus-