



Just Associates

2005 Activities & Accomplishments

Strengthening **leaders + strategies + organizations** for social justice

Long-term initiatives

Design and facilitate **participatory assessment and strategic planning process** with leadership and staff of **Mott Foundation** grantees committed to reforming the International Financial Institutions. (*Sep 2004 – 2006*)

Co-founder Valerie Miller is wrapping up her work with a team from **ActionAid International** looking at **assessing advocacy impact** with a final publication titled *Critical Webs of Power and Change: A Resource Pack for Planning, Assessment and Learning in People-Centred Advocacy*, which should be available in September. (*Aug 2002 – 2005*)

Human Rights Education Associates' (HREA) human rights advocacy courses taught online by JASS Senior Advisor. (*2003-2005*)

We were fortunate to be invited to join a small group of academics and practitioners for a structured learning process on '**assessing social change**'. Through this effort we are participating in e-discussions and occasional face-to-face sessions with colleagues from IDS, ActionAid, SPARC, Oxfam and others. The focus is on four areas: 1. Understandings of 'social change'; 2. Tools/methods/processes for assessing social change and related processes; 3. Understanding and dealing with different positions in the change process (affected individuals, NGOs, researchers, funding agencies, etc.); 4. Issues of scale and interconnectedness among various social change efforts.

We held a 4-day **gathering of the Just Associates network** that brought together close to 20 of our closest associates and advisors. This was the first opportunity since the organization was founded to bring the entire network together. The results of this gathering include a clarified strategic focus and vision for Just Associates, and a meeting report that documents the analysis and insights of this diverse group of innovative activists, popular educators, researchers and academics.

Short-term initiatives

JASS worked with consultant Carolyn Long to carry out a **USAID scoping study** for **ActionAid International** to explore assumptions, requirements, conditions, and consequences of accepting USAID funding for AAI programs. (February – July 2005)

Again with Carolyn Long, JASS conducted an **evaluation of Heifer International's Washington DC office** to assess its achievements and provide recommendations for its future development. (March-June 2005)

Just Associates facilitated a **strategic planning session** at the June Board meeting of the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA). **NISGUA** was interested in engaging in a larger strategic planning process that would help them reflect on their role as a solidarity organization and identify priorities for their future work. Although the initial idea was to expand the collaboration into a longer-term planning process, insufficient resources made that impossible. (May-June 2005)

Associate Peggy Healy co-facilitated an advocacy **capacity-building workshop with Catholic Relief Services** for university students and faculty active in their domestic outreach programs. This was a follow-on to the work that JASS did between 2002-2004 with CRS. (July-September 2005)

Associates Malena de Montis and Molly Reilly facilitated a one-day session on “**Gendered Power and Inequity**” for **CARE** staff at their Atlanta headquarters office to deepen and refine participants’ understanding of gender and power as they impact development planning and programs.

Economic rights & citizen action

Ongoing collaboration with **International Civil Society Budget Fund of the International Budget Project**, as member of the **Advisory Board** and in planning new initiatives. (*since 2002*)

Just Associates, together with ActionAid International, and IDS-Participation Group organized a three-day workshop on “**Citizen Action, Knowledge and Global Economic Power: Intersections of Popular Education, Organizing and Advocacy**”. This event brought together popular educators, trade union activists, academics and a diverse array of ActionAid International staff to review and capture experiences in popular economics and to sharpen our conceptual and practical approaches for linking local grassroots organizing with national and global advocacy on economic policy and rights. A workshop report should be available in November 2005 and by the end of December we plan to develop a short article comparing and contrasting different approaches to economic literacy. (*March – December 2005*)

Women’s rights & political empowerment

In February, JASS facilitated a 5 day **International Women’s Rights Strategic Thinking & Planning Workshop** for ActionAid International staff, including gender program offices, and some thematic and regional heads. The workshop began to forge common understanding among participants of the nature of gender inequality, sharpened the strategies for select gender priorities under core themes and identified broad strokes for the overarching Women’s Rights strategy (*Jan – March 2005*)

With **ActionAid International**, JASS is developing a **toolkit** on understanding and implementing **rights-based approaches** that also address the **gender dimensions of inequality**; for staff and partners to better understand practical implications of power dynamics for their work. (*Nov 2003 – 2005*)

With **Action Aid International**, participatory action-research and documentation project to capture lessons and insights from **stories of women’s rights activists navigating, resisting, engaging power**. The aim of this project will be to bring to light how strategic choices on women’s rights are shaped by context, opportunity and many other factors; the content will be developed with an eye to communicating beyond the women’s rights community. (*January – December 2005*)

JASS was asked by the **AAI-Americas** region to develop a paper proposing a **Women's Rights Strategy for ActionAid Americas**, including a brief contextual analysis and general recommendations and proposed actions to focus the women's rights component of ActionAid Americas' regional strategy for 2005-2010. (*March – June 2005*)

JASS is collaborating with the Association for Women's Rights in Development (**AWID**) in a second phase of research on “**Where's the Money for Women's Rights**”. Building on research we did in 2002, this effort reached out to hundreds of organizations working for gender equality and women's rights around the world as well as diverse funding organizations to clarify trends in funding for women's rights work in the past decade since the Beijing Conference and to understand some of the factors influencing those trends and shifts. The results, which will be presented at the October AWID Forum, promise to generate some exciting ideas about how we can leverage greater resources for women's rights and strategies for building deeper shared understanding and analysis about the role of funding and fundraising as an integral and very political part of women's rights work. (*January – November 2005*)

Lisa was also on the **Planning Committee for AWID's 10th International Forum** -- How does change happen? Not only has this provided her a space to influence the structure and content of this important event, it has been an opportunity to network with leading feminists and women's rights advocates from around the world. (*March – October 2005*)

At the request of the International Women's Health Center, JASS worked with consultant Carolyn Long to design and conduct a participatory evaluation of advocacy work carried out over the last decade by the **Nigerian Coalition Against Unwanted Pregnancy** (CAUP). CAUP's experience addressing abortion through a frame of maternal health offers many strategic insights for other groups working on the issue in similarly restrictive contexts. The evaluation report was developed into an article, “Advocacy for Reform of the Abortion Law in Nigeria” that was published in the *Reproductive Health Matters* journal. (*Mar 2004 – May 2005*)

With the **POLICY Project**, JASS, led by associate Molly Reilly, has supported the design and coordination of an initiative aimed at strengthening **Kenyan women's ability to access and enjoy their rights to inheritance and family property**. The initiative supported the initial steps of a collaborative advocacy planning process among NGOs concerned with women's inheritance rights, to identify needed changes in law, policy, institutional practice, and popular behavior and belief and begin to set priorities for action. A final report with reflections on the program will be available in November 2005. (*Nov 2003 – 2005*)

Creating local & global bridges for shared political action

Just Associates' **Rights and Resources for Education** project works with education advocates in Washington, DC to build strategies that promote equal rights, challenge privatization, and create global networking opportunities. Working with a coalition of labor unions, activist teachers, parents and concerned citizens, JASS is facilitating a participatory people's platform process, tied to the November 2006 city elections that gives priority to low-income African-American, Latino and other marginalized voices in the debate on how to fix the schools. The people's platform process aims to: ignite people's sense of justice, and desire to make a difference, as well as build skills, confidence, political consciousness and organization; deepening understanding of neoliberal policies and ideology that threaten quality public education; strengthening linkages among policy groups and constituencies in order to strengthen the legitimacy and accountability of advocacy and organizing; and producing popular materials to use in media, civic education and political accountability efforts. The first dialogue in the process involves African-American parents at a school which is today for all practical purposes racially segregated, although 50 years ago it was one of the

schools at issue in the famous *Brown v. Board* litigation that struck down racial segregation in education. (August 2004 -)

Just Associates (JASS), led by Molly Reilly, has been working with ActionAid International USA (AA-USA) on a **Research, Networking and Advocacy Planning Project** designed to inform future education advocacy. Initially, this effort focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the intersections between international education policies and US domestic education issues and politics, identifying advocacy gaps and opportunities, and building relationships with education advocates and organizers working in many contexts. Background research was complemented with open-ended consultations with over 50 people from grassroots organizations, universities, donor institutions, development groups and think tanks. This initial phase of work culminated in a Roundtable Discussion in July, with 25 education advocates, organizers and activist scholars from the US and the global South. The discussion revealed a remarkable consensus around the threat posed by forces pushing for privatization of public education. Urgent new areas for further investigation and inquiry—such as militarization of US schools—also surfaced at the Roundtable. AAI-USA and JASS are continuing the collaboration to bring local and national US domestic actors in education advocacy together with education advocacy partners in the Global South with the intention of forging new relationships, clarifying and deepening understanding of common threats such as privatization and disinvestment, and re-energizing education action strategies through exchange and learning about innovative approaches. (January 2005 – 2006)

JASS is working with the **DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence** to design and facilitate a strategic planning and organizing process. Coming out of a long period of organizational crisis, DCCADV is now interested in strengthening their coalition and engaging a broad array of allies in more effectively addressing issues related to domestic violence in Washington DC. Through this process, we will draw on the long experience of several associates working in the area of violence against women around the world. (April 2005 – 2006)

Annie Holmes has been working with members of the **Treasure Island Homeless Development Initiative** (TIHDI, pronounced tie-dye) to assess interest in, and possibly help form, a residents' organization on the island. Treasure Island had been taken over by the military as a base and during the transition process from the military back to the city of San Francisco, homelessness advocates campaigned successfully to ensure that 30% of housing on the island would be earmarked as supportive housing for formerly homeless families. 15 years later, homelessness organizations and advocates are rethinking the reliance on non-profits, and moving towards greater accountability of local government, hence TIHDI's interest in exploring the possibilities for building a strong residents' organization. (2005)

Building **knowledge** and cultivating **communities of practice**

The **Spanish translation and publication** of *A New Weave of Power, People and Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation*, was completed by ActionAid-Guatemala and CEDPA-Guatemala. The Bahasa Indonesian version (by Pergurakan, a new Advocacy Studies Institute in Jakarta), is expected to be completed by the end of 2005.

JASS received a small grant from **Hivos** to develop a second ***Making Change Happen*** resource, with the intention of expanding the initial report into a series of case stories, frameworks and tools for citizen-centered advocacy. We expect to complete the second report in the series, with a focus on power and gender equality, by the end of this year. (October – December 2005)

Other **Conferences/Activities** this year that have given **visibility** to JASS

- In the context of the “where’s the money?” research for AWID, Cindy Clark attended the **Feminist Dialogues and World Social Forum** in Porto Alegre, meeting with women’s rights advocates and facilitating one session at the WSF related to the research project.
- Also in the context of “where’s the money?”, Lisa VeneKlasen and Cindy Clark were in New York for the Commission on the Status of Women meetings and events around **Beijing +10**.
- Lisa VeneKlasen gave a plenary speech on “Building and Transforming Economic Power for Women” at the annual **Women’s Funding Network conference** in San Diego in April 2005.
- JASS had a major presence at the **10th AWID International Forum**: coordinating a series of participatory processes to construct regional women’s rights timelines; organizing sessions on “Strategic opportunity or black hole? Assessing policy spaces to advance women’s rights”, “Your Net, My Work: Pitfalls and lessons learned from coalitions, alliances and networks at regional, national and international levels”, “Claiming Space for Women’s Rights in Mixed Organizations and Movements: Can change happen within mixed-sex organisations?” (with ActionAid), “Learning for a Change: Challenges of Measuring and Assessing Equality Gains (and Losses)” (with ActionAid), “Demystifying Economics: Local Education and Organising Strategies for Confronting Global Economic Power” (with Solidarity Center); presenting at “Where is the Money for Women's Rights: A Funders Forum” and “Mobilising More Resources for Women’s Rights Work: A Strategy Session”; and finally, Lisa will be speaking at the final plenary “How does change happen? A wrap-up”.
- Just Associates is participating in an informal advisory group for **CARE’s Women’s Empowerment Strategic Impact Inquiry**. We have provided feedback on conceptual frameworks for the evaluation process and associate Malena de Montis participated in a meeting of the evaluation team.
- Lisa VeneKlasen spoke at an internal planning meeting of the **Center for Community Change** on her experience and perspectives on the relationship between ideas/ideology and social movements internationally – May 2005