

Fenella Porter  
Ruskin College, Oxford and  
Birkbeck College, University of London

**PUTTING RESEARCH INTO  
PRACTICE:  
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM  
FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY**

# What is a feminist epistemology?

- Many feminist epistemologies ...
- ... one emphasises **POLITICAL APPLICATION**
- *ESSENTIAL* for development research

# The need to 'solve' the problem of gender equality...

- The clock is ticking ...



- It looks good
- And feels good ...



# Looking for answers ...

- ◎ Simple imperatives ... to show progress
- ◎ The role of research in these spaces is often shaped by
  - the demands of policy
  - the constraints of practice

# But realities are more complex

- ◎ *We know* women's lives are:

- hugely complex,
- embedded in multiple levels of
  - intersecting,
  - and institutionalised, inequality

# Knowledge is political

- Can we know about inequality in an unequal system?
- How about understanding the bias that surrounds us as researchers, as 'knowers'

# What does a feminist epistemology contribute?

- What's wrong with instrumentalism?
- Without feminist epistemologies ...
- Development will continue to reproduce gender inequalities.