



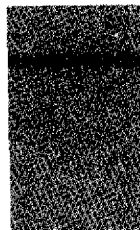
**women
moving
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MID-TERM REVIEW

Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo
Editor



UNESCO Institute for Education





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contents

- vii Preface
Adama Ouane
- 3 Putting the Gender Perspective in
Motion in Adult Education
Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo
- 11 Towards Strategies of Adult Education
for Social Transformation
Sara Hlupekile Longwe
- 25 Education Without Discrimination:
The Educational Dimension in
the Enhancement of Women's Citizenship
Paz Alonso
- 29 Some Thoughts on the Conference Processes
Alejandra Scampini
- 33 Another Education Is Possible
- 35 One World, One Fight: Building Solidarity
Lisa VeneKlasen
- 39 Women Participation: Bridging the Gap
Cellita Eccher
- 51 Advocacy for Education and Work:
Lifelong Learning for Micro- and Macroeconomics
Iliana Pereyra Sarti and Paz Alonso
- 57 Education for Women's Empowerment:
The Asia-Pacific Women Experience
Maria Khan and Nasreen Mohamed

Preface



The last decade of the 20th century has been marked by a series of UN conferences seeking to address the broad range of development issues—education for all, advancement of human rights, sustainable development and women’s empowerment. In these UN conferences, governments, a broad range of civil society stakeholders and the private sector, engaged in both animated discussions and heated debates on how to address complex and inter-related development problems.

In all these conferences, what was remarkable was the manner by which women organized themselves to lobby, to network and to transform development discourses.

For example, in the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) in Hamburg in 1977, the women’s caucus stood out as the most organized group and was able to effectively introduce the gender-justice perspective in adult education.

Women’s participation in these international conferences did not stop at attendance and advocacy on development issues. In the case of the adult education networks, women have been the most conscientious and consistent interest group in ensuring that the messages of CONFINTEA V are brought to and heard by the broadest possible audience.

The women were not only messengers; they were also actively involved in transforming adult education discourses and practices to demonstrate the importance of adult learning in addressing development issues.

The publication, *Women Moving CONFINTEA V*, is a tribute to the efforts of these women. The women’s education networks spearheaded by GEO (Gender Education Office) of the International

Council for Adult Education and REPEM (the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Popular Education), together with other women networks like DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for the New Era), FEMNET (the African women's network) and ASPBAE (Asian-Pacific Bureau for Adult Education) have shown that indeed adult education is a powerful concept for fostering and promoting democracy, gender equity and justice. They have made a powerful statement of the possibilities of transforming decades of marginalization and exclusion to becoming active agents for change and empowered citizens in their countries.

By documenting the work of the different women's networks, we aim to demonstrate the specific ways women have brought the agenda of CONFINTEA V forward.

We are confident that in 2009, when we have the sixth International Conference on Adult Education, the women's movements and their networks, will again be by our side, critically engaging with all other stakeholders and ensuring that the gender justice perspective will be a reality in the 21st century.

Adama Ouane
Director
UNESCO Institute for Education

Whether invited gladly to the policy arena or allowed no more than a grudging foothold, women's organizations have persisted in seizing every opportunity to shape and critique programs and policies that affect their lives. Their spirited engagement is all the more remarkable in parts of the world where cultural and political environments have traditionally discouraged such participation, and where civil society is still an evolving concept, and especially in the light of the tremendous financial and physical constraints under which NGOs work.

—Sadasivam

(Social Watch 1999: 80)

Putting the Gender Perspective in Motion in Adult Education



Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo*

The Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) held in Hamburg, Germany in 1997 demonstrated the capacity of organized women to engage other stakeholders in articulating the agenda of gender justice. Previous adult education conferences (Denmark, 1949; Montreal, 1960; Tokyo, 1972 and Paris, 1985), while mentioning women in their recommendations as objects of educational change, had not managed to involve women in shaping the education agenda. By 1997, women's organizations have learned their lessons well in women's conferences (Nairobi, 1985; Beijing, 1995) and a series of UN Conferences—Jomtien (1990), Rio (1992), Vienna (1993), Cairo (1994), and Copenhagen (1995) and in the process, have honed their skills in engaging governments and other members of civil society. Forming alliances across the globe, women's movement have become stronger as they learned to put forward their critique of an unjust world along with alternative discourses for transforming practices at all levels and areas of life.

The adoption of the terms “women's empowerment” and “gender perspective” in development plans of governments all over the world is an indication of the success of women's sustained lobbying

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in the decade of development conferences. Conscious that these discourses have to be translated into concrete action, women have not let up in their efforts to engage their governments and make them accountable to their commitments. At the same time, they have continuously debated with other movements and NGOs to ensure that their alternative development discourses are enriched by a gender-justice perspective.

The work of organized women before, during and after CONFINTEA is an excellent example of the critical role women's groups play in ensuring that a gender-justice perspective does not remain an empty rhetoric. In preparation for CONFINTEA V, REPEM (Network of Women Popular Educators in Latin America) produced a report which examined the documents of the previous UN Conferences in Jomtien, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing in terms of their provisions for education, gender and adult education (1996). In Hamburg, the Women's Caucus (animated by REPEM) confirmed the importance of having organized women networking not only with other women's groups but also with women and men in government and other NGOs. Their slogan "Learning Gender Justice" was easily adopted, and gender-sensitive language was implemented throughout the Hamburg Declaration and Agenda for Action.

The follow-up work of CONFINTEA V proved more challenging as the women of REPEM and a reconstituted Gender Education Office (GEO) of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) proceeded to undertake activities in four related areas: 1) refinement of the discourse and articulation with other discourses; 2) advocacy work in their countries; 3) monitoring and development of indicators; and 4) transforming their own practices.

While the Hamburg Declaration and Agenda contained statements that could easily be taken to be transformative for gender relations, Longwe (1999) explains that it actually contains three different views on the purpose of adult education. In her presentation in the CONFINTEA V Follow Up meeting in 1999, she pointed out that while accommodation, adaptation and transformation objectives are not necessarily incompatible and therefore could be pursued si-

multaneously, “there is in practice a potential conflict between policies which are accommodatory and adaptive on the one hand, and those which are transformatory on the other.” While eight out of the thirteen gender objectives of the Hamburg Agenda (under the theme Adult Learning, Gender Equality and Equity, and Empowerment of Women) could be classified as transformatory, Longwe made a distinction between a weak transformation approach (i.e. where lives of students are to be changed by the modification of their given education programs, of which they are mere recipients) and a strong transformation approach (i.e. where adult education is to provide an education which enables the students themselves to change their world).

The articulation of the CONFINTEA V gender justice discourse with other development discourses took place primarily in two venues, 1) the review processes of the UN conferences, and 2) the World Social Forum (WSF). While having provisions on increased access for girls’ schooling and women’s education, most of the UN Conferences’ statements did not address the importance of lifelong learning and the broader vision of education that can benefit women. Made wiser by their involvement in Hamburg, the women formed inter-regional teams and promoted the lifelong learning perspective in the WSSD + 5 (Geneva, 2000) and the Beijing + 5 (New York, 2000). Again the inclusion of the formulations on lifelong learning in the documents coming out of these meetings, is an indication of the effectiveness of the lobbying efforts. At the World Conference against racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination (Johannesberg, 2001), REPEN and GEO launched a campaign on education for non-discrimination. Meantime, in the World Social Forum, which has brought together the most diverse and broad range movements and NGOs in Porto Alegre (in 2001, 2002, 2003), the adult education women’s network also engaged in debate and dialogue to ensure that the gender-justice learning perspective is articulated in the WSF slogan, “Another World is Possible.” In both these arenas, the support of other women’s networks like DAWN (Developing Alternatives with Women for a New Era) has been crucial.

From the active participation of civil society at the global level in the UN Conferences, where they negotiated and built new dis-

courses, the next logical area of work was at the national level. Coming back from Hamburg, women organized national conferences where the Declaration and Agenda for Action were disseminated. In Colombia, Zambia and South Africa, the dissemination of the CONFINTEA V recommendations was part of the task of informing the citizens of commitments signed by their governments (Bonino, 2001). By organizing national fora, the women made sure that outcomes of such global conferences are understood at the national level and could be used as a lobbying tool for holding governments accountable.

The development of indicators for monitoring purposes is, therefore, a critical area if governments are to be held accountable. In addition, according to Bonino “monitoring as a form of social watch on governments’ actions regarding conference agreements constitutes a new political practice for the exercise of citizen’s rights as well as an educational practice for the empowerment of women as a whole.” With this in mind, GEO-REPEM carried out an international project which set out to measure compliance in some areas in the Hamburg Declaration. Situation indicators (quantitative indicators which are usually tracked by national statistical systems) and political will indicators (existence of programs, studies and educational campaigns were identified as they demonstrate the State’s will to act) were developed in four areas: 1) equity and access of young and adult women to formal education; 2) existence of specific supporting mechanisms for pregnant women or mothers to promote access to basic education; 3) gender equity and sexual education in formal education contents; and 4) training women for their economic and social participation.

The eleven indicators¹ that have been developed were then used by women from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Indonesia, Fiji, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Moldova, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Uruguay and Zambia. Comparing the situations of these countries has not been easy as different countries have their own information management systems with specific data requirements. Furthermore, the meager financial resources available made it virtually impossible to cover more countries. Given the limited sample, it is difficult to come up with regional or global

assessment. Yet, the researchers learned the following in this exercise: 1) while citizens have the right to ask for information, some governments were not ready and/or willing to provide such information; 2) in the process of asking for information, the women were able to sensitize some government agencies in the need for generating data on their issues; 3) there is considerable lack of government data that may be accessed to monitor the agreements; 4) as provision of adult education is not limited to Ministries or Departments of Education, one has to identify and visit other agencies (e.g. Labor, Social Welfare, Agriculture, Local Government) to get more information; 5) women have to learn to unpack and understand government data; and 6) these monitoring initiatives have the snowball effect that could generate other citizens' initiatives to monitor their governments' compliance with all kinds of international agreements (REPEM/DAWN, 1999; Bonino, 2001). Concretely, this monitoring initiative of GEO and REPEM has inspired the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) to initiate a review (known as the Shadow Report) on selected countries' compliance with the Hamburg Agenda in 2002.

In evaluating this project, Bonino (2001) explains that monitoring is an exercise of Social Watch that not only looks at governments' implementation of their commitments, but also identifies policy recommendations, and back them up with adequate information and the appropriate language to negotiate. The dissemination of the results, the replication of methodology, and the follow-up of other themes, constitute educational actions that empower civil society towards full participation of people in the exercise of their rights.

Finally, the women recognize that besides participating in the reformulation of discourses, advocacy and information efforts, and monitoring government commitments, experimenting on new and transformed practices is necessary. Leadership training workshops for women are being organized to equip them with the necessary information, perspectives and skills. Education for income-generating activities have been critically examined to see how they satisfy not only practical gender needs but also strategic gender needs. Education and training for more democratic ways of running organizations are being held.

The experience of the women's adult education network since CONFINTEA V has pointed to the many concrete ways women have been able to set a gender-justice perspective in education in motion. Implementing the gender-justice perspective in education, no doubt, is one way of pursuing gender equity, an avowed goal of the UN conferences in the last decade of the 20th century. To achieve this goal in the 21st century, it is obvious that women's organizations, with their track record, need to be brought on board. It is clear that women's organizations are key, if not necessary, partners in this endeavor.

Endnotes

¹ The eleven indicators are: 1) level of schooling of women aged 14 and over; 2) degree of inequality between men and women at different educational levels; 3) degree of coverage by sex of the literacy and basic adult education programs; 4) existence of supporting mechanisms for pregnant women or mothers to promote access to formal education, 5) existence of education programs for adults with adequate schedules and flexible timetables; 6) incorporation of contents concerned with equality and equity in gender relationships into formal education (primary and secondary curricula); 7) incorporation of contents providing for sexual education with gender equity into formal education curricula; 8) existence of government programs to train microentrepreneur women; 9) existence of state programs to train women in the civil service; 10) existence of state programs to train community leaders; and 11) and existence of training or retraining courses specifically directed at unemployed women.

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Towards Strategies of Adult Education for Social Transformation*



Sara Hlupekile Longwe**

Introduction

This paper is concerned with identifying the main strategic implications, for adult education programs, of pursuing the more transformatory objectives of recent UN declarations and agreements, looking especially at UN commitments for increased gender equality and women's empowerment.

Accommodation versus Transformation

The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, incorporates three very different views on the purpose of adult education.

Firstly, there is the view, which I would call *Education for Accommodation*, that the purpose of adult education is to enable citizens to fit within existing society, and to take advantage of the opportunities available. This view is perhaps best revealed in the statement that

Adult education denotes the entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise, whereby people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge ... to meet their own needs and those of society.
(Paragraph 3)

*Paper presented at the CONFINTEA V Follow-Up Meeting on September 1999, Manila, Philippines.

**Chairperson of the Africa Women's Communication and Development Network (FEMNET).

Secondly, however, the Declaration recognizes that society is not static but changing, so that adult education enables citizens to adapt to an ever changing world. This purpose, which I shall call *Education for Adaption*, is revealed in the statement that

The objectives of youth and adult education ... are to ... reinforce the capacity to deal with the transformations taking place in the economy, in culture and in society as a whole ... (Paragraph 5).

This purpose acknowledges the transformatory processes of change in society, but sees the role of education as enabling citizens to *adapt* to this process of change.

But the Declaration also reveals a third and stronger view of adult education, which I shall here call *Education for Transformation*. From this perspective, adult education is seen as a *means* and *process* by which society can be transformed for the better:

[Adult education] is a powerful concept for fostering ecologically sustainable development, for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, and scientific, social and economical development, and for building a world in which violent conflict is replaced by scientific, social and economic development. (Paragraph 2)

These three different views on the purpose of adult education are not necessarily or *in principle* incompatible. Undoubtedly, in adult education programs worldwide, all three types of purpose need to be pursued.

Potential Conflict Between Adaptation and Transformation Policies

Although it might be said that all three purposes of adult education can be pursued simultaneously, there is *in practice* a potential conflict between policies which are *accommodatory* and *adaptive* on the one hand, and those which are *transformatory* on the other.

This potential conflict arises in all countries where the government is undemocratic and oppressive, and will, therefore, not be interested in implementing programs concerned with promoting increased democracy, human rights, justice and gender equity. An op-

pressive government may be expected to *oppose* any NGO attempting to mount such transformatory programs, on the grounds that such programs are interpreted by the government as a potential threat to its continued existence in power.

However, on the other hand, the Hamburg Declaration puts emphasis on the *transformatory* purpose of adult education. This emphasis is perhaps most explicit in paragraph 54 of the Agenda for the Future which states that

The Agenda for the Future emerging from the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education should comply with the recommendations adopted by all major conferences of the United Nations, particularly as regard the gender dimension.

It is obvious that, if the Agenda for the Future is to “comply with the recommendations” of these UN Conferences, then it has to commit itself to pursuing a strong transformatory agenda. The main purpose of these conferences was to set out an agenda for increased social and gender equity.

Given the Agenda’s explicit focus on gender, and as an example with which to explore the relationship between education and transformation, the remainder of this paper will focus on the strategic implications of education for women’s empowerment.

Conventional Schooling Does Not Lead to Empowerment

The most up-to-date statement of international commitments for women’s empowerment are set out in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, which begins its Mission Statement as follows:

The Platform for Action is an agenda for women’s empowerment. It aims at ... removing all the obstacles to women’s active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision making.

If the Hamburg Agenda for the Future is aimed at pursuing the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action, then clearly it has set itself a radical agenda for transformatory action. Such commitment opens up the obvious need for educational strategies of ac-

tion by which women can gain their equal place in decision-making positions.

It might be claimed that women's increased empowerment can be achieved merely by the usual *accommodatory* and *adaptive* strategies of adult education. From this point of view, it might be claimed that women's increasing high levels of education will *automatically* lead to their occupation of decision-making positions within the home, community and society.

However, there is absolutely no evidence to support this assumption. On the contrary, there is plenty of evidence that it is incorrect, and, therefore, the intervention strategies of increased education for girls are entirely misplaced as a means towards increasing women's empowerment.

Looking at the relationship between women's level of education and their occupation of top positions in parliament and government, the overall pattern for Africa shows *absolutely no correlation* between the percentage of women in university in a particular country, and the percentage of women in parliament, or in the higher levels of government.¹

Taking the example of my home country of Zambia, which is fairly typical of Southern Africa, there have been about 25 percent women among students at the University of Zambia since it was established thirty years ago. During this time, about 8,000 female graduates have been produced. But up to date there are only 11 percent women among parliamentarians. Only 16 women in a parliament of 150!

In Malawi, the disparity is rather large: there are 40 percent women among university students, but only 5 percent among members of parliament. In Algeria, there are only 3 percent women in parliament, but 41 percent among university students.

For all Africa, the percentage of women among university students is definitely not a predictor of the percentage of women in parliament. Neither is there any correlation between a country's percentage of women in primary education, and the percentage of women in parliament. Nor between women's level of secondary education and the percentage of women in parliament.

The same picture is equally true for Europe—there is absolutely no correlation between women's level of tertiary education in a particular country and the percentage of women in parliament. It might be thought that the high percentage of women in parliament in Sweden (43 percent) was "caused" by their high level of education (57 percent of university students are female). A high proportion of women among university students is common across Europe, but a high proportion of women in parliament is most *uncommon*. In Yugoslavia, there are 55 percent women among university students, but only 5 percent women in parliament.²

This is, of course, not to say that increased education does not help the individual woman get into parliament. It may perhaps be the case that female members of parliament are more educated than the average women in a country. This would merely be an indication that an increased level of education gives a woman an advantage *over her sisters* in getting into parliament. This potential for individual advancement does *not* bring with it any collective advantage for women, relative to men. Inter-country comparisons clearly show that increasing women's general level of education, relative to men, will *not* increase their proportion in parliament.

The plain implication of these facts is that increased conventional "knowledge and skills" or "certificate" education does not in fact contribute towards improving women's position relative to men in the power structure. It may well contribute towards women's ability to adapt, and even perhaps materially prosper, within a patriarchal society in which she remains a subordinate.³

In looking at strategies for increasing women's representation in parliament and government, as in other decision-making positions, we should not only be looking at ways for women's increased education. In almost all countries, there are already plenty of educated women available to fill these positions. The obstacle to women's occupation of these positions is not lack of education, but the various—and often hidden—discriminatory practices which are designed to keep them out.

Assessing the Transformatory Dimension of the Gender Objectives of the Hamburg Declaration

We may consider the current level of *transformatory* focus in the objectives of the Agenda for the Future by analyzing these objectives in terms of whether they are *accommodatory*, *adaptive* or *transformatory*.

We shall only look at the adult education objectives for “gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women” at paragraphs 28 and 29 of the Agenda for the Future.

Paragraph 28 seems at first reading to reveal a transformatory claim concerning the role of adult education:

Education should ensure that women become aware of the need to organize as women in order to change the situation and to build their capacities so that they can gain access to formal power structures and decision-making processes in both private and public spheres.

But on closer examination “changing the situation” seems to be concerned only with “building their capacities so that they can gain access.” There is no suggestion here that women have to *mobilize to overcome the discriminatory laws and practices* which keep them out of decision-making positions. Therefore, the statement of principle is clearly concerned with women’s improved *adaptation* to the existing “formal power structures,” and not for them to transform these structures.

We may note, in passing, that this faint-hearted approach is in direct contrast to the position of Paulo Freire, who saw adult literacy and education as central to the process of “conscientization.” By this process, citizens came to reconceptualize their situation and problems, as the basis for mobilization and action against discrimination and injustice.

Let us now make a similar assessment of the thirteen “gender objectives” which appear at paragraph 29 of the Agenda for the Future under the theme on Adult Learning, Gender Equality and Equity, and the Empowerment of Women.

Each objective is assessed in terms of whether it is mainly accommodatory, adaptive or transformatory.

Table 1. Classification of Gender Objectives

Promoting the empowerment of women and gender equity through adult learning	
1) by recognizing and correcting the continued marginalization and denial of access and of equal opportunities for quality education that girls are still facing at all levels	Weak transformation
2) by ensuring that women and men are provided with the necessary education to meet their basic needs and human rights	Accomodation
3) by raising the consciousness of girls and boys, women and men concerning gender inequalities and the need to change these unequal relations.	Strong transformation
4) by eliminating gender disparities in access to all areas and levels of education	Weak transformation
5) by ensuring that policies and practices comply with the principle of equitable representation of both sexes, especially at the managerial and decision-making levels of educational programs	Weak transformation
6) by combatting domestic and sexual violence through providing appropriate education for men and supplying information and counselling to increase women's increased ability to protect themselves from such violence	Accomodation
7) by removing barriers to access to formal and non-formal education in the case of pregnant adolescents and young mothers	Weak transformation
8) by promoting a gender sensitive participatory pedagogy which acknowledges the daily experience of women and recognizes both cognitive and affective outcomes	Weak transformation
9) by educating men and women to acknowledge the serious and adverse impacts of globalization and structural adjustment policies in all parts of the world, especially upon women	Adaptation
10) by taking adequate legislative, financial and economic measures and by implementing social policies to ensure women's successful participation in adult education through the removal of obstacles and the provision of supportive learning environments	Weak transformation
11) by educating women and men in such a way as to promote the sharing of multiple workloads and responsibilities	Adaptation
12) by encouraging women to organize as women to promote a collective identity and to create women's organizations to bring about change	Strong transformation
13) by promoting women's participation in decision-making processes and formal structures	Adaptation

Distinguishing Between Weak and Strong Transformatory Objectives

The thirteen gender objectives of the Agenda for the Future in Table 1 are classified as follows:

<i>Accommodation</i>	2
<i>Adaptation</i>	3
<i>Weak Transformation</i>	6
<i>Strong Transformation</i>	2

It was found necessary to distinguish between “weak” and “strong” transformatory objectives because the above list of objectives suggest two very different approaches to transformatory process. This is illustrated by the difference between objectives (c) and (d) below:

c) by raising the consciousness of girls and boys, women and men concerning gender inequalities and the need to change these unequal relations. (classified as “strong transformatory”)

d) by eliminating gender disparities in access to all areas and levels of education. (classified as “weak transformatory”)

Objective (c) is classified as “strong transformatory” because it sees the students themselves as the actors in changing unequal gender relations.

By comparison, objective (d) is classified as “weak” because it presumably, or implicitly, sees the designers of the education programs (and therefore perhaps the government) as the agent responsible for “eliminating gender disparities in access to all areas and levels of education.”

Whether or not “strong” and “weak” are the right adjectives to use here, there is, nonetheless, an important difference between these two different types of objectives. The question is between two quite different approaches to change through education:

1) *Weak transformation:* where the lives of adult education students are to be changed by the modification of their given education programs, of which they are the mere recipients; or

2) *Strong transformation:* where adult education is to provide an education which *enables themselves to change their world.*

The question, simply, is who are the actors? Is this top-down or bottom-up education, where the actors are the curriculum developers and the teachers, and where we aim to change the world by providing a different curriculum? Or are we to change the world by providing an action-oriented curriculum which enables the students themselves to participate in the process of social change, and so to change their own world.

If we are talking about education for empowerment, we should be talking entirely about educating people to *be able to change their own world*, and not merely to fit into a world which the government, or the teachers, have changed for them.

This concept of “ability to change your own world” is central to the thinking of Paulo Freire, to whom the Hamburg Declaration still gives honorable mention. It is basic to the process of “conscientization” by which oppressed citizens reinterpret their world, to see themselves as “subjects” in a world which they can change, rather than “objects” in a world which is merely given, and to which they have to accommodate and adapt. Conscientization is the route to mobilization and action for change, to overcome the structural discrimination which stands in the way of progress.

It is education for “bottom-up” social change which must lie at the heart of education for women’s empowerment. As discussed earlier, gender equality and justice will not be given to women by patriarchal governments whose present interests lie in women’s continued subordination. Women can only gain equality by programs of conscientization and mobilization for action—they themselves should transform discriminatory and oppressive state laws and structures. Empowerment cannot be given, it has to be taken.

It may be noted that the “transformatory” objectives of Table 1 are also “weak” in another rather different sense. In the “strong” sense of transformation, we would expect that education for transformation would enable the participants to increase their collective knowledge and strategies to change *all* aspect of the outside world. However, most of the “weak” objectives are not only conceived as “top-down” but are *also* confined to making structural changes *within the education system*, of equal access of females to education. However, a

stronger transformatory purpose would be concerned with enabling participants to improve their ability to tackle structural equality *throughout the social and political system*, and particularly in areas where they find they are most oppressed.

Moreover, promoting gender equality within the education system is very much a “soft target” which governments are increasingly willing to contemplate. This is perhaps a result of their realization that women’s gains in access to education do not translate into increased access into the power structure.

The question, for women’s empowerment, is whether conventional—or informal and unconventional—programs of adult education can contribute to the process of women’s conscientization and mobilization. Similarly, for all the other UN declarations on social and political change, there is the question of whether adult education programs can become a part of the social process of learning and action which is developed and used by the actors themselves, or whether adult education is to be locked within the present conservative and government framework of educating citizens to conform and adapt to the existing order.

Paragraph 6 of the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning seems to run close to accepting the principle of government control over adult education programs:

This Conference recognizes the diversity of political, economic and social systems and governmental structures among Member States. In accordance with that diversity and in order to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the Conference acknowledges that the particular circumstances of Member States will determine the measures government may introduce to further the spirit of our objectives.

The question, in patriarchal states, is whether international development agencies and NGOs may introduce programs of education and women’s empowerment, outside of government. If government approval is necessary, it may even prove difficult for NGOs and development agencies to support any form of education for liberation under very oppressive and patriarchal regimes.

Conclusion: Strategic Implications

The overall implication of the analysis shown in Table 1 is that different types of objectives imply different types of programs, different learning strategies, aimed at different target groups. We cannot easily think about one single adult education program which could be aimed at addressing such very different educational objectives.

In particular, the distinction between accommodation and adaptation on the one hand, and transformation on the other, automatically raises important strategic questions. The purpose of this paper was mainly to make these distinctions in the purpose of education—accommodation, adaptation and transformation, in the hope that this line of thinking would naturally lead to identification of the strategic implications.

One obvious implication is that the more oppressive the government of a country, the less prospect there is of working with the government in pursuing policies for democracy, social justice and gender equity. Such governments may sign international declarations on the subject, but obviously it is against their interest to pursue such policies.

We may expect that programs of adult education for accommodation and adaptation can be pursued in partnership with all governments, whether dictatorial or democratic. But it is absurd to see any prospect of programs for increased equality, democracy and social being pursued in partnership with governments which oppose such principles in the very governance of the state.

This is a dilemma which has to be faced and cannot be fudged or hidden within the nice and ambiguous phraseology of international declarations. In the case of patriarchal governments in Africa, there is no realistic hope of governments themselves introducing programs for women's adult education which are aimed at educating women to recognize and challenge the structures of gender discrimination which are the pillars of the patriarchal state, and which preserve male privilege. However, depending on the limited degree of democracy, and the space for political dissent and opposition, women may perhaps find the space to organize their own educational and

action programs aimed at taking action to dismantle the discriminatory structures of patriarchal power.

In Africa, perhaps only the governments of Uganda and South Africa might be willing to incorporate educational programs for women's liberation within their own formal and informal education programs.

Overcoming these problems are, therefore, basic to the formulation of meaningful and effective programs of women's adult education which can lead to women's empowerment. In order to begin strategic thinking for programs of action within the generally undemocratic and patriarchal states of Africa, some possible directions are suggested below:

- Separate, in the UNESCO programs of support, objectives concerned with transformation from those concerned with accommodation and adaptation; design new and different programs to address transformatory objectives;
- Identify the "weak" transformatory objectives which might be accepted within existing and government adult education programs, and which are worthy of external support; such "weak" transformatory change can perhaps be achieved by working with government, or by advocacy campaigns to influence governments;
- Identify the "strong" transformatory objectives which need very different "bottom-up" strategies of education for transformation;
- Identify the present non-government change agents in a country which are concerned with developmental change, such as international development agencies, and international and local NGOs;
- Focus on the aspects of developmental change which particularly reveal the need for structural change, such as the need to change particular aspects of custom and tradition, administration rules and regulations, or discriminatory aspects of statutory law;
- Develop programs of adult education around particular issues of justice and equality which are prevalent in a particu-

lar region, e.g. in Africa around women's lack of ownership and control of land;

- Work with women's NGOs which already have programs concerned with women's advancement and empowerment, with a view to improving the effectiveness of the educational component of these programs, and developing more bottom-up and participatory approaches.

The above elements of a strategy suggest a very different approach to the conventional adult education programs which have traditionally focused on the accommodatory and adaptive aspects of education. With the above focus, adult education would be the secondary and integrated aspect of a program for social change, where the educative aspects focuses on the *learning process* of the actors themselves in identifying their own problems, including aspects of structural inequality, and themselves take action to devise and implement strategies to overcome these problems.

Increasingly, development agencies—if their published policies are to be believed—are moving towards “bottom-up” strategies of development, where the affected community are themselves the participants in the process of planning and implementing developmental interventions. There is, therefore, a great need to incorporate the participatory and self-learning process of conscientization and mobilization in the development process.

Whereas dictatorial governments may oppose such democratic participation in the development process, they are also in great need of development assistance. If development agencies make democracy and good governance part of the condition for continuing developmental assistance, then education for transformation may be neatly incorporated within the development process.

For UNESCO, this may open up new prospects of cooperation with other UN and international development agencies, for better incorporation of education for transformation in the development programs of these various agencies. By such means, we may look towards adult education making a better contribution the achievement of the objectives of UN declarations—particularly in the area of women's empowerment.

Endnotes

¹ See Sara Longwe and Roy Clarke, 1999, *Women's Empowerment Index for Africa*, Africa Leadership Forum (ALF), Nigeria.

² ALF Report, cited above.

³ For a discussion of the various ways conventional schools lead to women's continued subordination, see Sara Longwe (1997) "Education for Women's Empowerment or Schooling for Women's Subordination?" paper presented at CONFINTEA V, Hamburg; also published in *Gender and Development*, vol. 6, no. 2, July 1998.

Education Without Discrimination: The Educational Dimension in the Enhancement of Women's Citizenship*



Paz Alonso**

One of REPEM's and GEO's objectives is that of valuing the educational dimension as a strategic element to achieve justice and equality in gender relations.

The movement has succeeded in incorporating women's issues in the political and cultural debates of the region, as well as in the cycle of UN conferences and social summits, and in the alternative meetings and forums.

We have walked a long way together with women from Latin America and the Caribbean, who make huge efforts to overcome poverty and achieve gender equity.

We have to meet the challenge of passing from the global agreements to the fulfillment of these same agreements at the local level. How do we achieve the goal of more women joining the follow-up of these commitments?

Education and Empowerment

"The new millennium will be the millennium of women's rights, gender equity and justice. The women from around the world are

*Edited excerpts from *Voices Rising*, Year II, vol. 2, no. 60, 2003.

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here—in the gallery and also in the official delegations—we are with you, we are monitoring you, and we will never go away” (Gita Sen, General Assembly, UN International Conference on Population and Development +5).

These words symbolize and reflect women’s concerns and achievements. We constantly face different challenges and we have worked in many fields, on account of many dreams.

One of this era’s characteristics is the active role played by non-governmental organizations, NGOs, particularly women’s organizations, in the cycle of the UN conferences.

The NGOs have formed a number of regional and global networks, articulating efforts to put into practice human rights in a broader sense.

One of the leitmotif of the International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V, July 1997, convened by UNESCO) is “Learning Gender Justice,” promoted by GEO and REPEM in their proposed Citizen Watch on Gender and Education, which was carried out in several countries of the world.

Education as a Strategic Dimension

The past 25 years entailed a progressive road of negotiation, transaction, struggle and conflict towards achieving a horizon with gender justice. During these years, women, the civil society, grassroots organizations, different corporative groups, governments, international organizations and specially the NGOs that support women, have brought women’s issues to the social sphere, while contributing to raise awareness towards the achievement of women’s rights.

The women’s organizing experiences are promoted by grassroots organizations around the globe; its potential was expressed in the establishment and consolidation of local, national, regional and world networks; these links are backed up by thousands of NGOs that support and contribute to recover knowledge derived from valuable practices.

All these years, a series of conferences, social summits, and various fora on social development have been taking place: World Conference on Education for All, Jomtiem, 1990; World Conference on

Population and Development, El Cairo, 1994; World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995; CONFINTEA V, 1997; World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Durban, 2001; World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, 2001 and 2002. In all these meetings, gender and education issues have been highlighted, in a direct or indirect manner.

Within the framework of the recognition of education as a human right for all persons, the World Conference on Education for All, expresses in its preamble that the world has to face a somber scenario in many countries with the increase of the external debt, the threat of stagnation and economic decadence, the rapid increase of the population and increasing economic differences among nations. These problems pose severe constraints on the efforts towards meeting basic educational needs.

It should be noted that more than 960 million adult people are illiterate, two thirds of which are women. Functional illiteracy is also a significant problem in all developing or industrialized countries. Therefore, in addition to the priority of basic education for all—children, young and adult people—it is urgent to improve the quality of education, and to guarantee girls' and women's access to education, overcoming all the obstacles that prevent their active participation in the educational process and consequently their participation in the civil society as juridical subjects.

From Activism to Policies

The challenge is to assume education as a strategic dimension for broadening persons' citizenship, specially women's. We can define education as the set of tools that allow persons to understand their environment in order to act and lead their lives, individually or collectively, in a more gratifying manner. Education is also a set of knowledge, skills, capabilities and attitudes which are acquired and modified in the course of people's life.

What is the process that enables transit from women's feeling of discomfort, from the individual feeling of discomfort, to the notion of a sector's rights?

To exercise citizenship, it is necessary to articulate what a person feels into a concrete proposal, sustained by argumentations and an organization or network to bring it forward. This passage is possible only through education. Education has a central role, as a bridge or a link, in the process of moving from discontent at the personal level, to the awareness that there are rights, and that one can look forward to exercising them.

The women's movement as a political movement puts forward demands and vindicates rights. It is a sector with different and opposing interests, and which contributes to the recognition of women's rights in the process of broadening women's citizenship.

Rights are a historic construction, they vary in time, and like citizenship, they get broader through argumentations and information, demanding from us the capacity for generating and transmitting them.

Education has always had a component of utopia and, like all utopias, it has been subordinated to the social changes and the collective constructions we make. The educational movements have developed according to utopia of welfare, of enhancing human faculties in their full development.

The wish to participate has been transformed through the educational process towards exercise of citizenship; this implies personal and collective self-esteem. The real exercise of citizens' rights entails the networking and consolidation of forces so as to defend and exercise these rights in the public and private spheres. For women, this exercise is hindered by deeply rooted and subtle cultural patterns we face.

The challenge lies in broadening the spheres of training for citizenship, organization and prioritization of demands, and coordination within the civil society through the NGOs. The interlocution with those persons or bodies responsible for implementing public policies is one of the responsibilities we have to take in the institutional spaces we have to assume, while shedding our fears and learning how to negotiate. These are very important non-formal educational processes we cannot afford to waste.

Some Thoughts on the Conference Processes*



Alejandra Scampini**

Beginning with Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing, UN Conferences have looked at education as a tool to promote the competence and creativity of citizens. Education was seen as a vital element in a strategy to nurture sustainable development processes.

The resulting documents of these conferences include measures to tackle the challenges of the 21st century—to eradicate poverty, strengthen and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, foster civil society participation, promote gender and economic justice, the empowerment of women, the respect of cultural diversity, and state restructuring.

However, these documents do not reinforce adult learning, and do not include measures to strengthen women's participation while promoting their creativity and competence. The changes that take place at the global and local levels affect education as well. There are new opportunities but the resources are decreasing. We believe that adult education is necessary to equip women and men to face these challenges. We need policies and resources to support adult education.

*Edited excerpts from *Education in motion. Women's education chronicles of a process*, GEO (Gender and Education Office of the International Council for Adult Education)/REPEM (Red de Educación Popular Entre Mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe) (editors). 2001. Montevideo, p. 51-54.

**REPEM, Uruguay.

Mainstreaming Learning Gender Justice in Beijing+5 and Copenhagen+5

In 1999 and in the year 2000, the UN coordinated reviews (known as Conferences+5) of the implementation of the international and national level commitments made at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) in Copenhagen and the Fourth World Conference on Women (WCW) in Beijing. Women's participation and activism were key forces in mainstreaming gender in the commitments made and in reminding governments of the urgency to work on those decisions agreed at the previous UN Conferences in the 1990s.

In these conferences, governments agreed on a number of specific time-bound targets. In Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing the major targets focus on education and health. The only reference to closing the gender gap is in relation to education.

REPEM (Red de Educación Popular Entre Mujeres de América Latina y el Caribe) and GEO (Gender and Education Office) formed a team of women from the different regions of the world (Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe) that advocated for Learning Gender Justice. Supported by other networks such as DAWN (Developing Alternatives with Women for a New Era), the group facilitated the exchange of information among organizations working in the area of education and adult education, increased the visibility of lifelong learning among partners, and promoted the Agenda for the Future of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V, Hamburg, 1997) in every workshop and Women's caucus at WSSD+5 (Geneva, June 2000) and at Beijing+5 to address lifelong learning and a broader vision of education that can benefit women.

Educational Targets at Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing

These conferences included not many targets, but it is important to say that education is one of the objectives and specific targets indicated. However, we can see the narrow vision of education that

still persists in these documents. World leaders address basic primary and secondary education but they do not include concerns on adult learning as an integral part of the system of learning.

For the year 2000 governments agreed¹ to:

- Ensure universal access to basic education and resume primary education of at least 80 percent of children of schooling age (ICPD – WSSD – WCW).
- Ensure gender equity for the girl child at the primary level (WCW).

For the year 2005:

- Close the gender gap at primary and secondary levels (ICPD – WSSD – WCW).

For the year 2015:

- Provide universal primary education in every country (ICPD – WSSD – WCW).
- Achieve equal levels of education for girls and boys (ICPD).

It is very important to have targets with a time frame, to facilitate easier monitoring of their progress. At the same time, we have to recognize the fact that we need resources to achieve these goals; this is part of the women's agenda in the revision process of these conferences.

Conclusion

This paper cannot capture the rich and sometimes intensive debates that REPEM-GEO group maintained with other groups of women, organizations and other members of civil society, but there are some comments we can make about the difficulties and limitations to promote this broader vision of education—lifelong learning.

- Only a few groups knew about adult education conferences and its recommendations. The language of UNESCO Conferences was poorly known by women.
- There is still a limited vision of education among women, for instance, the girl-child education and women's education were

addressed in different caucuses (the girl-child caucus and the women caucus).

- There is still little knowledge about the concept of lifelong learning.
- Due to fundamentalists strong presence and the difficulties of the negotiations, women's efforts had to concentrate on not going backwards based on what was already agreed at Beijing and Copenhagen.

Rather than seeing these reflections as obstacles the group sees them as challenges.

Education for women is essential for improving women's lives and living standards, enabling them to exercise their rights as citizens and to have a voice in their communities, in the places of work and in politics. There seems to be an agreement on the fact that literacy and basic skills are vital to women's empowerment in society. There is still a lot to do until governments, the international community and social movements understand that education goes beyond the skills acquired by women in primary and secondary education. There are no sufficient efforts and commitment to achieve an education free of gender stereotypes, to close the gender gap in science and technology or see the relationship between education and income for men and women.

Adult education and lifelong learning still have to be fought in two fronts, one against the silence of national governments, and the other against the multiple economic, social and political exclusions that surround and affect the subjects demanding inclusion and participation.

Another Education is Possible*



GEO, ICAE, REPEM, DAWN, FEMNET

We live in a world of unprecedented poverty, conflict, environmental degradation, epidemics and exclusion, where women pay the highest price. This is translated into fragmentation, fundamentalism and disempowerment of individuals, communities and societies. Education in all forms, in all spaces and for all ages has the potential to transform these realities. Unfortunately, at the moment, education is a factor that reinforces discrimination, reproduces inequalities, divides communities, fragments individuals and fosters violence.

Education is a basic human right and the State has the primary responsibility to provide it. Basic education should not be narrowly understood as the provision of educational opportunities for young girls and boys but should also include women and men. *But not any kind of education.*

We need education that promotes democratic participation and solidarity, values pluralism and guarantees equal opportunities for women and girls of all ages.

We need education that understands and respects our cultural, ethnic, and sexual orientation, physical disabilities, and lifestyle differences.

We need education that understands the centrality of gender relations and sexuality in the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

We need education that develops the capacities of women and men to be environmentally friendly and to feel and act as part of nature.

We need education that promotes gender justice which considers women and men as equal political and social subjects in the private and public spheres.

Another world is possible... education with gender justice!

*Statement made at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, 2001.

One World, One Fight: Building Solidarity*



Lisa VeneKlasen**

Movements sometimes have difficulty in learning from one another and tapping the best in their respective experiences to strengthen collective analysis and action. Finding common ground among distinct, and often disparate, movements is vital for mobilizing the influence necessary to project these alternatives into reality. For example, while the impact of corporate globalization has been clearly understood to have both significant gender and class implications, approaches towards economic alternatives have often been weak or lacking in gender analysis. To a large extent, social movements are working separately, with the so-called “women’s issues” left to be the responsibility of the feminist community, peace-building to be left to the peace movement, indigenous rights to be fought for by indigenous peoples and so on.

Ultimately, although many diverse movements are critical to chip away at the consolidation of power from different angles at different moments, mutual validation between social justice movements increases both the individual and collective impact of movement work. The urgency of the current political moment demands strategies that draw strength from the collective impact of numerous groups working together—not via a common strategy, but by finding a common

*Excerpts from the World Social Forum III taken from *DAWN INFORMS*, April 2003.

**Lisa VeneKlasen of Just Associates, Washington, was one of the convenors and facilitators of one of the workshops of the World Social Forum III and gave a report, from which we take these excerpts.

vision around which multiple efforts can mobilize, interact, and build on each other's political action and analysis.

Gigi Francisco (DAWN) described the two main ways that linkages or encounters between feminist and other social movements take place:

1) When coalitions and networks have already established themselves without the participation of women and feminists. Feminists are either invited in, or they have to push their way in, and somehow try to influence the agenda.

2) When feminists effectively link their agendas to the other movements' agenda without compromising, e. g. using language that is familiar to others, while at the same time not compromising feminist ideas and analysis.

The nature of these linkages raises tensions around integration and autonomy: how we as feminists strategize integration with other movements while also promoting our autonomy. There are also major tensions between militant/feminist women and grassroots women. Often, men use these divisions among women to discredit the feminist agenda. However, there are increasingly genuine attempts among women to align their agenda.

The political spaces that are opened up for mobilization around local, regional and/or international agenda, such as the WSF, are important sites of convergences for feminists and other social movements. When these convergences or encounters take place, feminists are generally able to preserve the bonds that come with having a common consciousness and agenda. In the end, feminists may be both combatants and allies but we are dependable members of coalitions. We

Gaudi García, REPEM participant, President of the Association of Women Producers of Bottling Fruits, Venezuela: *"For me, being at the WSF was like looking at the whole world at a glance. Faces expressed deep emotion in a show of solidarity, sisterhood and friendship. I think that we women who were able to be there, participating in different events and workshops, are on the right track and we are moving to the same destiny 'Another world is possible'."*

link up and work together, side by side, even when we still have differences.

Nonetheless, we have to contend with persistent blind spots—for example, the notion (not just found among men) that gender “doesn’t matter.” Or similarly, the perception held by some women, that class and race do not matter. Yet, feminists are maturing as a movement and are beginning to deal with these issues more honestly.

There is also what could be called a “reigning in” symptom—where a woman is brought to the table to represent feminist issues. It can be said that this gives one control over the agenda, but in fact it creates a superficial tension by pitting women against other women. We, therefore, need to be clear, in order to avoid these divisions, that everybody’s story is equally important.

In sum, feminists must be very clear on why we are engaged, what our relative strength is, and what we will do after strategic alliances have been built.

Irene Ferrer, micro-entrepreneur, a REPEM representative from Uruguay: *“Getting to know Porto Alegre, its people, its wonderful movement, and sharing with people from all over the world has marked me. It was a great experience and it reassured me in my mind that another world is possible. Being together, united in concern on common issues, created an atmosphere of harmony, solidarity and respect that felt like a balm for my low spirits due to the situation in my country. My feeling was that people gathered not in search of power but in search of solutions, with the purpose of sharing experiences and ideas to achieve a more sustainable world for everyone—men, women, plants and animals.”*

Women Participation: Bridging the Gap*



*Celita Eccher***

Since the early 1990s, women have been involved in UN Conferences, which increased awareness of certain issues that until then were not part of the global debate. This cycle of Conferences highlighted two developments. First, there is the emergence of a global framework. The state and civil society organizations have gathered to discuss issues such as education, environment, human rights, poverty, population and social development. The Fourth World Conference on Women (WCW) in Beijing was a major step forward. Second, there is the improvement of NGOs' capacity to monitor developments and intervene in conferences since Eco-Rio, particularly in women's capacity-building as was beautifully symbolized by the Femea Planet.

Women's caucuses have become a remarkable participatory tool and have proven to be an excellent exercise of women's global citizenship. This exercise has been accompanied by constant and stubborn political pressure to broaden and better understand women's citizenship, defined as the right to have rights and to exercise them.

*Edited excerpts from *Breaking Through: Engendering Monitoring and Evaluation in Adult Education* (pp 141-150), edited by Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo, UIE, Hamburg, Germany, 1999.

**ICAE Secretary-General, former REPEM Coordinator.

Furthermore, and quoting Gita Sen,

Globalization requires actions at the global level ... International Conferences have become important events and arenas in which feminist organizations have to struggle against patriarchal forces. Globalization offers new spaces in which new demands can be presented and global commitment can be assumed. But local demands and local ways of mobilization must persist... (Sen, 1998).

Given this global context, many women around the world have begun to recognize the importance of learning and participating at both the global and the local levels. In other words, women have to be everywhere. Some of us must work at the local level and others at the global level. The challenge is to create linkages between these two levels; that is to say, to improve our capacity for articulation.

Participation at the global level proved to be a good exercise of human rights, in which the women's movement worldwide has had the chance to raise its voice, ask for accountability and monitor the actions of governments as they relate to the recommendations assumed in the Conferences.

In this global context, some civil society organizations have been forced to evaluate and modify their strategies and actions that until then had not considered the articulation with the state and other international organisms.

I believe that the most important change in the civil society organizations' approach is the interest in intervening in governmental and inter-governmental decisions. This implies a movement towards negotiation and sharper articulation. (Bonino & Eccher).

This new vision requires NGO capacity-building, sharper articulation, and above all, the creation of alliances and linkages for negotiation. We have learned that we walk the same path, backwards and forward.

However, the relevance of intervening in Conferences and influencing decision-making is still being debated among NGOs. I am the coordinator of two networks and I would like to share with you our experiences in this respect.

The Popular Education Network of Women (REPEM), an active regional network in Latin America and the Caribbean specializing in women's adult education, participated in preparatory events for the UN International Conferences. REPEM was also committed to follow up, through its own program on poverty and education, the Social Summit, the Fourth WCW Platform of Action, and the CONFINTEA V Recommendations, as they relate to education, gender and poverty. REPEM's programs strive to improve the situation of grassroots women in the region and foster their participation through the exercise of their rights.

REPEM supports the gender-oriented programs of the Gender and Education Office (GEO) of ICAE based in Uruguay. Formerly, the ICAE Women's Program, served as an international network linking women, organizations and educators working with grassroots women from all over the world. At the NGO Forum of the World Conference on Women in Beijing, ICAE's Women's program organized a workshop on the role men play in the education of women. The participants concluded that there was a need to educate both men and women about oppression, equality, marginalization, empowerment, changing gender roles, and the rigidity of patriarchal structures.

Given this inclusive perspective, the need to introduce a new approach to the problem emerged. On the eve of a new century, the ICAE elaborated a strategic plan called, "A Seven-Year Plan for Major Institutional Change." REPEM-CEAAL proposed the creation of the Gender and Education Office within ICAE's new seven-year plan, and after some consultation, the Women's Program became the Gender and Education Office.

GEO's main aim is to highlight and analyze the educational dimension through gender-oriented activities. GEO promotes the use of political pressure and lobby with the state and civil society organizations about public policy, reproductive rights, democracy, and communication in order to reach a more comprehensive approach to women's adult education.

In light of its principal mission, GEO committed itself to preparations for CONFINTEA V. This was made possible through the

support of REPEM, which maintains strong ties with the women's movement. As a result of this collaboration, GEO was able to convoke a large group of women every morning at the Women's CAUCUS at CONFINTEA V to formulate political strategies and prepare the amendments to the documents.

As a follow-up to CONFINTEA V, GEO began work on a proposal for collecting data in several countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe for the Index of Accomplished Commitments on Gender and Education developed by REPEM. GEO and various women's NGOs in the different regions organized collaborative regional meetings to present the proposal and to discuss strategies for its implementation. To date, we have more than one country study per region, and these will be published and distributed in the form of regional booklets. Some have been actively involved in GEO's program of "Learning Gender Justice." Through these regional meetings we hope to identify other groups and individuals in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe whom we hope will also work with GEO.

Latin America

The first follow-up meeting hosted by REPEM, was held from June 22 to 25, 1998 in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. Forty women from twelve different countries—Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela, Canada and the United States—discussed how to improve their political pressure skills and how to contribute to the initiatives of Educational Watch. Five women from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay, who had worked on the indicators on gender and women's adult education at the national level, are disseminating the results of this meeting. This year's edition of Social Watch published these results in its 1999 edition, representing another avenue of coordination and collaboration.

Africa

The meeting in Africa was organized by GEO together with the Adult Educators and Trainers Association of South Africa and the

German Association for Adult Education or DVV, and was held from August 30 to September 2, 1998 in Cape Town, South Africa. A total of 29 women from seven African countries attended: Botswana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia, and South Africa. The Index of Accomplished Commitments on Gender and Adult Education, developed by REPEM in Latin America, was adopted and adapted at the Cape Town meeting. Representatives from Zambia and South Africa worked to elaborate on the political indicators in the Index.

Asia

The meeting in Asia was organized by GEO together with the Asian South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education. It was held from September 26 to 27, 1998 in Thailand. A total of 17 participants from women's education groups in the following countries attended the meeting: Thailand, Philippines, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Hongkong SAR, Nepal, Japan, Indonesia, India, Taiwan. The proposal on the Index of Accomplished Commitments was received with a lot of enthusiasm. Through Development Alternatives with Women for the New Era or DAWN, we contacted a group of women who agreed to carry out country studies in the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Fiji.

Europe

The meeting in Europe took place in Florence, Italy from November 27 to 30, 1998. It was hosted by GEO in partnership with the *Commune di Firenze* and the University of Firenze and with the support of UNESCO Institute of Education (UIE) in Hamburg. The REPEM Index was presented and three countries—Moldavia, Portugal, and Spain—are committed to presenting their country studies.

The follow-up process, according to some of the facilitators, was enhanced by the following factors:

- 1) the wealth of experience of the women's movement and the collective commitment to disseminating its findings;

- 2) the contribution and support of global networks such as DAWN, WEDO, IWTC, the Gender Unit of the UIE, and Social Watch;
- 3) the constant flow of ideas from the women who engaged in this process with GEO and who shared their experience and knowledge about follow-up strategies; and
- 4) the women's will to learn and to exercise their citizenship in a more conscious way.

But we also encountered the following obstacles:

- 1) New proposals have to be considered in the context of less advanced institutional structures and perspectives, and this provoked some resistance and created some misunderstanding.
- 2) While many government representatives and NGOs recognize the importance of monitoring actions, some, particularly those who do not belong to the women's movement or any other social movement, still lack sufficient knowledge about the real significance of these actions.
- 3) There is a lack of resources.
- 4) We encountered some difficulties in the organization.
- 5) There is still a lack of ability to promote alliances especially within male-dominated contexts.

As feminist activists, we are aware of the importance of participating and lobbying in International Conferences. But participation should only be part of our interest. The hardest work is monitoring the recommendations that come out of these Conferences. Since CONFINTEA V was held in Hamburg in 1997, many monitoring exercises have been conducted to ensure that the CONFINTEA V recommendations are being taken seriously by the different governments.

As the final stage of GEO's project, we are going to publish regional booklets that will include different monitoring experiences relevant to each region, CONFINTEA V recommendations on gender and education, and guidelines on how to implement follow-up exercises in the different regions.

Each stage of GEO's project required a lot of time and effort from both staff and collaborators to improve our monitoring exercise and affirm the need for effective follow-up actions. We are glad to say that GEO has gained recognition and strength, thanks to the precious work that NGOs and individuals who share our concerns did in the different regions. The improved technological infrastructure of GEO, better communication among GEO partners, and the use of electronic mail have resulted in a continuous flow of information that enriches our work daily. We have also created a monthly electronic magazine called "Voices Rising" which features GEO's activities as well as relevant information from the different regions. Despite the strides that we have made, however, GEO is still a relatively young global network and as such its continuity depends on several factors, namely, political will, ICAE and its regional programs' decisions, resources, and last but not least, women's creativity.

The next section describes three monitoring experiences, namely, the REPEM proposal on the Index of Accomplished Commitments on Gender and Education; the REDEH monitoring activity in Brazil; and the Network of Women of Columbia's plan, "Social Justice for Women: A Plan for the New Millenium."

Social Watch on Education and Gender: A Proposal from REPEM

An outstanding characteristic of the recent world social conferences—from Cairo to Hamburg—has been the presence of civil society through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and thematic, regional and global networks. Never before have organized sectors of society had such capacity for influencing global meetings. Complementing this strong participation is another and equally new process: civil society's commitment to follow up on the agreements reached at these conferences. Follow-up implies, among other activities, monitoring the fulfilment of the agreements.

Within this framework (following the line launched at the Social Summit by Social Watch), REPEM has set itself the task of monitoring some of the Social Summit agreements on education and gen-

der equity, initially, in five Latin American countries. While the Social Summit presented the major themes in these areas, the Fourth International Women's Conference (Beijing) refined the concepts of equity and equal opportunity in gender relationships. The UNESCO Hamburg Conference elaborated on the Beijing agreements and advanced them on more specific levels, such as "education and adult women."

What are we monitoring?

The fifth and sixth Copenhagen commitments provide the basis for this monitoring activity, as they cover both gender equity and the need to integrate gender equity in the educational development of the whole population.

From Commitment 5, sub-paragraphs (f) and (j) have been selected:

Establish policies, objectives and goals that enhance the equality of status, welfare and opportunity of the girl child, especially in regard to health, nutrition, literacy and education ...; and Formulate or strengthen policies and practices to ensure that women are enabled to participate fully in paid work and in employment through such measures as positive action ...

From Commitment 6, sub-paragraphs (c) and (g) were selected:

Ensure full and equal access to education for girls and women, recognizing that investing in women's education is the key element in achieving social equality ...; and Develop broad-based education programs that promote and strengthen respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development; and promote the values of tolerance, responsibility and respect for the diversity ...

On the basis of these major principles, some specific agreements related to adult women from the UNESCO Hamburg Conference were also selected. This selection took the following criteria into account:

- 1) They should be representative of substantive areas regarding women's educational opportunities.

- 2) They should be able to be transformed into indicators.
- 3) Information on these agreements should be relatively accessible.

Some of the agreements selected on this basis deal with adult women's education. Others are concerned with the governments' political will to change inequitable and unequal situations.

There are various problems with the information gathered. In the first place, since the data on situation indicators come from household censuses or continuous surveys, it has not been possible to integrate all the information for the same year. In all cases, information was taken for the last year available. In the second place, for indicators on political will, information was not always available and monitoring criteria have not been totally homogeneous. Where discrepancies occurred, the criteria used in each case are clarified.

Brazil: An NGO in Collaboration

Another monitoring experience took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It started as a project of the NGO Red de Defensa de la Especie Humana or REDEH in collaboration with the Rio de Janeiro State (REDEH, 1998). It proved to be such an outstanding success that the Government of Brazil decided to include the proposal in the national educational syllabus and distributed one million copies to teachers nationwide.

This project was created in line with the following commitments:

- Emphasizing the importance of literacy for human rights; participatory citizenship; social and political, economic equity, and cultural identity in Chapter 3, 25b of the Agenda for the Future of Adult Learning.
- Taking measures to eliminate discrimination in education at all levels on the basis of gender, race, language, religion, national origin, disability, or any other form of discrimination in Chapter 1 (13b) of the Agenda.

The right to basic education is guaranteed in the Federal Constitution of 1998, which states that the State must facilitate citizens'

access to education. Millions of Brazilians are over the regular schooling age. We, therefore, face the challenge of looking for the means to guarantee people's access to basic education, and enable them to participate actively in politics, culture, and the economy. Women are the most disadvantaged in the country. But since they make up a large portion of the population, and are still growing in number, they can join forces and strengthen ties with the State and other civil society groups to improve their situation.

Non-gender-oriented education is considered by the women's movements as one of the obstacles to the creation of a more democratic society where gender justice exists. Given this, CACES, REDEH (Red de Defensa de la Especie Humana), and DECIM (Consejo Estadual dos Direitos da Mulher do Estado de Rio de Janeiro), with support from the Secretaria de Enseñanza del Ministerio de Education y Deporte, have established linkages with teachers working with adolescents and adults to discuss a gendered and non-racist educational alternative. They have put together an educational kit, consisting of audio cassettes, a video cassette, and a booklet, that raises awareness on many of the issues in women-men relationships. This kit is a useful tool in paving the way for democratic education that promotes equality among men and women of different ages and ethnic origins as well as between human beings and nature. It was created for teachers who believe in the need for transformation. Within this framework, cooperative work is a must and we call on everyone who shares our beliefs to join this project.

Colombia: A Plan for the 21st Century

Each new government in Colombia is required to present to the National Council a four-year plan for discussion and approval. The National Council is represented by different social sectors including the women's movement.

The Network of Women of Colombia, which is composed of eight women's networks, presented a formal proposal for planning to the National Council and to the Congress of Colombia in response to the Plan of the New Government of Andres Pastrana (FemPress, 1999).

The objective of the Network is to introduce a gender perspective in policy-making. It prepared a 79-paged document, "Social Justice for Women: A Plan for the New Millenium," which addresses issues such as gender justice, equity, and poverty, and covers the areas of health, women's participation, environment, and the rural women's situation and place. It also emphasizes the need for women's issues to be given special attention in the Government Plan which, in its original form, lacks positive measures to overcome discriminatory practices against women.

Each member-network of the Network of Women of Colombia worked on different sections of the document according to its specific experience. REPEM-Colombia collaborated on the section on Rural Women's Situation and Place, referring to the recommendations of CONFINTEA V as they relate to education and gender, to draft the amendments. The document was edited by Ana Cristina Gonzales and Cecilia Barraza. The elaboration of this document is part of the project called "Strengthening Political Action of the Women's Network as Part of the Social Movement of Women," which was made possible with the support of German Co-operation and the National Department for Equity.

This document proved to be an excellent exercise towards two key objectives. The first objective was to intervene in policy-making in order to effect structural transformation, particularly in regard to the subordination of women, while building a plan for development that fosters women empowerment, equal opportunities, and people's awareness of the role that women play in the development of their own citizenship. The second objective is to achieve full recognition of women's rights and women's contribution to national and economic development, and to peace construction.

To this end, the Network demands that the Plan recognize the role of women in society and commit political and economic resources to achieving equity.

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Advocacy for Education and Work:
Lifelong Learning for Macro- and Microeconomics



Iliana Pereyra Sarti and Paz Alonso*

REPEM, Red de Educación Popular Entre Mujeres, is a network of organizations, of activist and academic women from countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Its main objective is to strengthen and consolidate balanced articulation processes among the national, the regional and the global organizations, in order to contribute to the achievement of social, economic and gender justice.

Its aims are: to enhance the educational dimension as a strategic element to achieve justice and equality in gender relations from the inputs of feminist theory and practices; to increase the network's capacity for proposal and influence, particularly in the sphere of public policies on education with gender justice; and to exert influence at the national, regional and global levels.

REPEM aims to "promote the empowerment of women leaders of income-generating projects in order to effectively influence governments' social and economic policies." It has also contributed to the rethinking of the budget, conceptually and methodologically, from a gender perspective as a fundamental tool to broaden the dimension and exercise of women's citizenship. It is also a privileged tool to foster greater involvement of women in various areas of citizens' participation.

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In the field of macroeconomics, the basic concerns refer to fulltime employment, price stability, economic growth, and balance of payments. The development of macroeconomic fiscal and monetary policies is privileged. However, these macroeconomic objectives are not enough to account for human development; it is necessary to put these objectives within the framework of economic justice and economic freedom.

The economic model and the sectoral priorities determined by a government reflect on the composition of the national budget. Despite its importance for every citizen, these aspects are kept away from the knowledge and scrutiny of the population.

In this light, it is necessary to implement an education proposal which would enable professionals and institutions to contribute to the development of a conceptual framework and the necessary tools that would allow people, and specially women, to participate in the determination of socioeconomic priorities and objectives, in the preparation of national and local budgets, and in the monitoring of national and local expenditures.

This implies the need for development of methods to create new knowledge around the area of economics, while encouraging people, and specially women, to understand that the field of economics is a field in which everyone is involved, in which everyone can engage, and which can be changed.

Education becomes the core of this process, and the challenge lies in linking the discourses on education with those of economic literacy.

The challenge lies in moving forward in women's formation around economic issues, around how economic systems work, and around how women can deal with these issues. It requires the need to equip women with skills and awareness on how they can create change.

In this sense, the work conducted by REPEN since 1994 provides a privileged space in the countries of the region to do advocacy work on budget negotiations and debates, while providing conditions for the consolidation of groups with the necessary qualities to assume and carry out actions in this regard. It also favors the identification, in the experiences and strategies conducted, of those aspects

that might generate processes that would enhance citizen participation and democracy.

To this end, the actions, analyses, debates, and assessments are highly enriching and useful for the work that has been done by women engaged in income-generating projects in their organizations.

The aim is to promote the empowerment of women leaders of income-generating projects in order to influence favorably social and economic policies of local governments.

The specific objectives of this program are as follows:

- To document and analyze successful experiences—the knowledge and practices—of women in income-generating projects.

- To promote the formation of local networks with adequate leadership, representation, and capacity to influence.

- To strengthen the interlocation of women leaders from the popular economics' sectors with the different local agents—local leaders, mass media, credit institutions and the State.

- To encourage the support of local governments to women's income-generating projects, via formulation of appropriate governmental policies.

- To contribute to the formulation of public policies that would recognize, support and strengthen women's economic and productive role.

The conceptualization of work on the local and national budgets in a program, "Lifelong learning for macro- and microeconomics," constituted a good decision that enabled not only the thematic interconnection of macro- and microeconomics, but also the linkage of different publics—women leaders of income-generating projects, the decision-makers at the local level and those from academe—which usually address these issues.

The women engaged in income-generating projects have the necessary experience and training for them to meaningfully intervene in the formulation of economic policies. The training space works as a facilitating element that results in rapid synergy.

The Contest “Successful Income-Generating Projects Led by Women”: Another Learning Space

For the past decade, REPEM has been making a significant educational and political contribution towards greater recognition, visibility and influence in the areas of education, gender and economics. REPEM has been able to meet its objectives together with the Latin America Working Group – GTL, comprised of educators and women leaders of income-generating projects in Latin America.

The educational programs and policy proposals have been incorporated into REPEM’s Program “Lifelong Learning for Micro and Macroeconomics.” The program comprises 8 countries: Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay.

The group, family, and the community have been involved in income-generating projects led by women in the form of microenterprises, cooperatives, associations and networks.

This program includes the following components: study, recognition, visibility and promotion, and proposal for affirmative action in those undertakings that provide income and education to women in Latin America.

The so-called “Latin American Contest of Successful Income-Generating Projects Led by Women” is the strategy used by REPEM/GTL, through which income-generating experiences promoted by women from the popular sectors are convened, issued certificates of qualification, awarded, systematically assessed and disseminated. Most of these projects are based in the rural or marginal urban areas, involving women with poor schooling and had no prior experience of paid work.

The process resulting from three Contests—1998, 2001, and 2002—at national and regional levels has allowed confirmation of the view that REPEM manages a tool which impacts on collective learning, empowerment, visibility and influence in areas of education, gender, and economics.

The first phase of the Contest at national level, which takes seven to eight months, engages the participation of NGOs, micro enterprises, universities, local and national governmental institutions,

media, and leaders who participated in previous contests. The second phase at the regional level entails the involvement of the winners of each national contest, the members of the GTL, international organizations, mass media, and networks.

The contest itself is a tool for broadening knowledge on the strengths and weaknesses of paid work's opportunities, the importance of education, and the empowerment of women from popular sectors. The contest serves to highlight and promote those successful experiences while strengthening the institutional linkages in each country.

In addition to these learning possibilities for the involved actors, is the opportunity to highlight development of women leaders' skills and capabilities to act at different institutional levels by involving themselves in national and international groups, together with NGOs, networks, universities, international cooperation, and so forth.

Since the year 2000, in each inter-institutional group responsible for the national contest, the agenda have been discussed and elaborated jointly with the participants. The agenda include women's main issues of concern around popular economics, which should be incorporated to local and national policies.

Some of the contents of this agenda are:

- To establish training spaces that would allow for the consolidation of income-generating projects in the technical and management phases, while adapting modalities in time and form (Bolivia).
- To implement training and specialization programs generated within the spheres of government and/or public institutions, which would take into consideration the importance of including working agreements with cooperatives, associations and NGOs, while taking into account the prospects and possibilities in each region (Brazil).
- To implement programs aimed at women's training by the technicians of those institutions working with rural population. This training should be undertaken in their workspace, with no age limit, and with no educational requirements in

terms of their schooling level, if the company does not require it (Mexico).

- To demand the constitution of a guarantee fund for women entrepreneurs at the national level. This entails allocation of resources to fund the holding of international fairs and the creation of a rotating fund for organized women, as well as information terminals in the local governments for the small and microenterprises (Peru).
- To establish holistic programs of support during the initial period of the undertaking, with advisory, training, technical, and credit support, and to develop a training program for those professionals with responsibilities for planning and operations, while incorporating a perspective of gender equity (Uruguay).

These proposals for the agenda of governments are presented by different individual and institutional actors at the local level, and are disseminated through REPEM's publications.

The training process for leaders, GTL members, and different institutions involved in this process resulting from the contest, has no limits.

One of the benchmarks in the educational and political potential of this Contest was the participation of 10 women leaders, selected among the winners of the three contests, in the Seminar "Democracy is Possible: Old and New Strategies. Questioning Ourselves from the Sphere of Civil Society," organized by REPEM within the framework of the World Social Forum (WSF), Porto Alegre, January 2003.

At the WSF, these women had the opportunity to participate at the global level in the discussion of strategies for social inclusion, together with responsible persons from international networks, and representatives from local governments and NGOs, among others.

Education for Women's Empowerment: The Asia-Pacific Women Experience*



Maria Khan** and Nasreen Mohamed***

Women's education is a critical condition for women's empowerment—enabling women to gain greater access and control over material and knowledge resources to improve their lives, challenge the ideologies of discrimination and subordination, and transform the institutions and structures which perpetuate unequal access and control of such resources.

State support for women's education, however, has been on a decline. Structural adjustments, economic crisis, war and conflict have dramatically decreased allocations to social spending in the Asia-Pacific region. The overall decline in ODA over the last decade has also had negative impact on education, capacity-building and training opportunities for women. Policy advocacy to ensure the resources, infrastructure and institutional mechanisms that guarantee women's access to relevant, quality and empowering education is, therefore, imperative.

The Asia-Pacific Women's Leadership Training Workshop on Advocacy For Women's Education was organized by the Asian South

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Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE), in Ulaan Bator, Mongolia from 5-9 August 2002. The Workshop was hosted by the National Network of the Mongolian Women's NGOs and sponsored by the Institute of International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ-DVV) and UNESCO Institute of Education (UIE).

This training workshop mobilized women from the ASPBAE member organizations and affiliates in the Asia-Pacific region, who are pursuing policy advocacy work on women's education for empowerment within the framework of poverty eradication, gender justice and sustainable development. These organizations work on issues of women's literacy, livelihood, health, migration, political participation, work, identities, violence, to name a few.

A total of sixty two (62) participants representing sixteen (16) countries from the Asia-Pacific Region met to review the policy environment in relation to education for girls and women, and to share information on platforms for policy advocacy at national, regional and international levels. The discussions of the workshop also revolved around five critical aspects of women's education namely: *literacy and post literacy, health and HIV/AIDS, citizenship and political decision making for women, migration and conflict prevention and peace*. International policy commitments on education and the progress in its implementation were critically evaluated. Broad indicators that have been developed internationally to monitor girls and women's education were examined in terms of how these can be applied by countries and what kind of monitoring systems need to be in place to track governments commitments to girls and women's education.

Overview of Women's Education Work, Issues and Challenges in Mongolia

Baljinyam Dorj of the Network of Mongolian Women's NGOs briefed the participants on the state of women's education in Mongolia.

From 1924 to 1990, Mongolia was a socialist country. The socialist era brought about a drastic change in women's lives. From a feudal society, the Constitution guaranteed all citizen's the right to

education regardless of religion, ethnicity and sex. The state made substantial investment into the education sector. The ten-year transitional period since 1990 wrought further changes which can be described in two stages. During the first stage, production, income and employment fell sharply which affected the living standards of men, women and children. In the second stage, starting from the year 1995, macroeconomic indices have slightly improved.

The initial period of transition had a negative impact on women's situation, particularly on their education opportunities. Since 1990, the investment into the education sector declined and in 1990-92 the budget was drastically reduced by 60 percent. Thus, Mongolia has lost some of its past achievements, which has negatively affected access to education and the quality of education. The state has been implementing policies to overcome the difficulties of the initial transition period.

Women's literacy rate is high in Mongolia at 97.8 percent. However, many difficulties persist. In the remote rural areas, population is very sparse (in the Gobi area, it is one family in a radius of 4 km), so sustained continuous education is difficult. The number of dropouts is high with boys, dropping out of school at higher levels of primary education more than girls; herders prefer to have their sons at home to help in cattle rearing.

The percentage of women graduates from colleges and universities is increasing every year. Although female education is high, women still account for the majority of economically inactive population. Although women are the majority of professional employees at the lower and middle levels of employment, men dominate at higher levels, especially in decision-making and management positions. In all provinces, the unemployment rate of women with higher education is higher than men.

Mongolia, despite its high education levels, faces several problems on account of its remoteness and stiff competition in the regional capital and labor markets.

Women's Education in the Asia-South Pacific: The Context for Action

Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo from the UNESCO Institute for Education gave an overview of women's education issues in the Asia South-Pacific, setting the context for the next five days of deliberations on advocacy agenda and plans for action. While reiterating the fact that access to education for women still remains a major challenge, in Asia, many countries have made significant strides in implementing progressive education policies, making the formal education system more accessible to girls and women. This has been brought about largely by the efforts of women's groups. There is also recognition and promotion of other forms of education—non-formal education, in particular, where we find most women. However, very few countries have a comprehensive policy that integrates both formal and non-formal education. Japan and Korea are among the few that do have such policies. In most countries, formal education is given priority over non-formal education.

However, access to education is not enough. Advocacy for women's education also requires advocacy for education that is of high quality and is relevant to the lives of women. Education of poor quality does not change the status of women. Education must help women to be critical of their situation. Teaching methodologies must be participatory, otherwise it will reinforce hierarchies. Education can be a powerful tool for empowering women. It can reaffirm or reinforce gender relations and maintain the status quo. It can also question and change existing power hierarchies. This must be maintained as the central point for any critical review of policies and advocacy for women's education.

Suggesting a Framework for Policy Analysis in Relation to Gender and Women's Education

Dipta Bhog (Nirantar, India) and Vasanth Kannabiran (ASMITA, India) led a discussion on a gendered approach to policy analysis in women's education.

A gender perspective is critical to challenging policies that lead to social exclusion. "Education for all" cannot be realized unless there is a commitment to gender equality. Biases are so entrenched that unless issues of power and authority are addressed, the goals of gender equality in education are difficult to achieve. There is thus a need to look at the sites of power for better understanding of the barriers to women's education. A feminist analysis would include looking at the following sites of power: the family, the community, institutions (CSOs, elected bodies, schools, NGOs) and the state, and how they retard or advance women's and girls' access to education of good quality. It also necessitates looking at the dynamics of power in education:

Power to – access to education

Power over – control over resources

Power within – the ability to determine processes
and the content of learning

The state also uses the terminology of empowerment. So to do a gender critique of policy it is necessary to read between the lines by:

- Stating the implicit
- Analyzing the implications of what is stated

For instance, it is important to ask: Do programs that talk about empowerment use it in an instrumentalist manner? Does the rights approach give us a window to talk about gender relations in education?

In education policy discourse today, "gender" invariably means "girls education." There is a very limited constituency for women's education. Even NGOs and the women's movement need to be sensitized to the need to advance women's education in the policy discourse.

Literacy and Post-literacy for Women

Shaheen Attiqur Rehman (Bunyd, Pakistan) and Sabita Joshi (Didibahini, Nepal) led the discussions on women's literacy. These

two case presentations from Pakistan and Nepal on literacy and post literacy programs for women highlighted the literacy problems in South Asia. South Asia is home to the largest number of illiterate populations in the world; women comprise the majority of these.

The availability of adequate learning materials of good quality for literacy is a critical issue that needs to be addressed. Learning materials need to be interesting, stimulating and culturally relevant to suit the different contexts that girls and women find themselves in.

Consolidation of literacy through continuing education programs that include life skills education—that spans the areas of population education, health education, rights education and critical awareness-building, to name a few—needs to be lobbied for. Women's literacy should also be linked to early child care education (ECCE). The NFE system should also link with the formal school system for girls who want to pursue further education. To implement all these, a multi-sectoral approach that involves various partners and agencies is required. Appropriate allocation of resources and commitment to mobilize funds should also be ensured.

Education for Women in Relation to Citizenship and Political Decision-Making

Vasanth Kannabiran (ASMITA, India) and Nanjoo Yang (Graduate School of NGO Studies Sung Kongnoe University, Korea) presented case studies in this area.

The goal of civic education is informed, responsible participation in political life by competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of democracy. With the quota system for women (reservations in politics) implemented in many countries in the region, women's participation has increased but it stills stands a long way from the goal of gender equality. Civic education and leadership training for women is an integral component of the empowerment strategy. Women articulate important political questions arising out of their practical needs—food security, water, power, environment, health, violence, and population control. Women need

information on macro political and economic changes: globalization and war, and its implications—its connections with their daily lives. What an empowering education for women can do is link these day-to-day survival issues of women to an understanding of the wider context and larger forces that affect their lives, and discuss ways by which women take control of their own decisions and development so that they can advance politically. Civic education should develop skills and a critical perspective that enables women to negotiate spaces and make a difference. Values must be integrated in all components of civic education. States and international funding agencies must make specific commitments towards this. There is also a need to mobilize public opinion about quality issues in civic education.

Health and HIV/AIDS Education

Elizabeth Cox (HELP Resources, PNG) and Sirinate Piyajitpirat (AIDs Net, Thailand) shared their experiences in HIV/AIDS Education work and highlighted several issues.

Women face higher risks of contracting HIV/AIDS for a varied set of biological, economic and social conditions. The sexual and economic subordination of women increases the risk factor for women in contracting HIV/AIDS. Women are often stigmatized and blamed for “causing” HIV/AIDS and have been identified as vectors for transmission to their male partner and their offsprings. Girls and women lack the power to negotiate and communicate with their partners about sexual relations and condom use in particular. Sex workers face stigmatization which leads to a spectrum of problems that victimizes the sex worker leading to their lack of access to basic services which is critical for those especially afflicted by HIV/AIDS. There is a close link between sexual rights and access to health. Older women are expected to assume major care giving responsibilities. Adolescent women are kept out of school to care for the younger children or family members who are ill. No one cares for the caregivers particularly of those HIV-positive women.

The presentations highlighted the need to: 1) increase the access to sexuality and AIDS education among women, sex workers and

other population groups; 2) address the problem of stigmatization by awareness education about the issues of sex workers; 3) increase the access of women and sex workers to resources and services for basic health care; and 4) develop training programs for a range of sectors who directly and indirectly impact on health care. The presentations called for the need to establish linkages between the local and national level organizations and networks towards building a coherent policy and multi-sectoral response in relation to HIV/AIDS education.

Feminization of Migration and Its Implications for Women's Education

Sajida Ally (Asian Migrants Centre) and Tumiur Harianja (Centre for Indonesian Migrant Workers) led the discussions on migrants education work.

According to the Migrant Forum for Asia and the Asian Migrants in Coalition, in 2000, there are at least 19 million Asian migrant workers in Asia and over 25 million Asian migrants working all over the world (MFA/AMC, 2000). They are extremely vulnerable as there are very few protective legislations in these countries. There is also a lack of support services. Migrant workers, therefore, live in severe working conditions, lack access to basic needs such as education, and health, and are victims of growing violence from employers and state agencies. International legislative instruments for the protection of migrant workers are weak and current policy articulations are lacking in attention to the issues of migrant workers.

Migrant workers are recognized as those who migrate across countries as well as within countries. Attention has been drawn to migrant women workers and the families (especially children) they are compelled to leave behind. Protective legislation and support services are required in the receiving as well as in the home country of the migrant worker.

The presentations and discussions called for the following: 1) the need for ongoing pre-departure and on-arrival education programs that cover basic information on laws and policies and available

services; 2) education for employers and recruitment agencies; 3) public education to promote a positive image of the migrant worker; and 4) the need to highlight violations. There is also the need for the state to support associations of migrant workers in conducting educational programs for capacity-building; migrant workers organizations must lobby for this. Groups must also lobby for the recognition of migrant workers in other relevant international education related instruments; ratification of UN Migrant Workers Convention; and protective legislation at all levels to uphold: 1) the personal dignity and wellbeing of migrant workers and their families; 2) provide for basic needs; and 3) protective legislation against malpractices of corrupt agents who deal in trafficking and exploitative employers.

Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention in Relation to Girls and Women's Education

Lalita Ramdas (India) and Nani Zulminarni (PPSW, Indonesia) gave an overview of the issues related to education for peace and conflict prevention in the current context.

We are living in a world increasingly based on violence. Democracy is under threat and there is a shrinking of democratic space. Intolerance for the other and the quest for identity is at the center of growing fundamentalism carried out through acts of militancy and terrorism. There is a need to develop ways to counter these. There is a need to mobilize citizen's action in local and national situations. Education and awareness-building are critical to such mobilization. Media and popular education methods are effective channels for developing educational programs for promoting an environment of peace and harmony.

Women are the victims of rioting and war. They also are party to acts of violence. Women have a potential role in peace building and conflict management. The discussions called for developing a blueprint for a women's agenda on peace education and to identify spaces for lobbying for its inclusion in policy commitments. For example, the Beijing Platform for Action states: "During times of armed conflict and the collapse of communities, the role of women is cru-

cial. They often work to preserve social order in the midst of armed confrontation and other conflicts. Yet women have also acted in ways which have challenged accepted stereotypes. The role of social and religious conditioning on women needs seriously to be studied and analyzed.”

To develop this, preliminary work is required to deepen the understanding of conflict (the nature of conflict, identity politics, the role of external forces etc.) and unpack peace education and women’s agenda for peace. Curriculum analysis and alternative curriculum development that include critical analysis of the construction of history, wars and their roots, conflicts and global politics. Case studies that document peace initiatives could assist in this understanding. In-country and sub-regional dialogues that include sharing of innovations in peace education (people-to-people exchange, cross cultural exchange of teachers) are activities that need to be pursued. The discussions also called for lobbying to ensure cross-sectional representational policies and support for peace education activities, specifically educational programs for schools and teacher training institutions.

Planning the Next Steps

The program was concluded with a synthesis and planning session on strategies, plans, immediate activities and coordinating mechanisms. At this final session, participants of the Workshop agreed on specific follow-up work and volunteered participation in thematic and national working groups: 1) *Thematic working groups*: to develop the policy analysis and further define the advocacy strategies to be pursued by the ASPBAE Women’s Program in these areas; and 2) *Country focal points*: to consult with other women’s groups in their respective countries and identify possible areas for policy advocacy on women’s education, and areas for networking and capacity-building.

The Workshop was successful in providing a platform for joint analysis on the core policy issues and concerns of girls and women’s education peculiar to the region. The discussions advanced lobbying points on different policy areas and likewise identified the scope for

further policy analysis, networking and policy tracking.

While reinforcing the need to focus work in such areas as women's literacy, HIV/AIDS education, and migration (ASPBAE's traditional areas of priority), attention to new issues such as conflict prevention and peace education, and trafficking of women in the context of migration, called for an expansion of the ASPBAE's women's education programs thrust areas. The participants likewise underscored the need to do further work in translating international policy advocacies to concrete demands that can be addressed to policymakers at different levels and policy processes at country levels.

Participants at the workshop agreed to be part of thematic working groups and country focal points to pursue follow-up work along identified areas.

(Detailed proceedings of the Workshop are available at the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education aspbae@vsnl.com.)