ADULT LITERACY AROUND THE WORLD IN NUMBERS

8.5% of adult women in Niger are literate (male rate 23.5%)

24% of adult women in Nepal are literate (male rate 59%)

1,735,000 people have never been taught literacy skills in Peru. 74.2% are women

79.8% of adult women in Botswana have literacy skills (this is higher than the male rate which stands at 74.5%)


ADULT EDUCATION: NEGLECTED BUT NEVER MORE NECESSARY

BEYOND ACCESS SEMINAR REPORT

Chloe Challender

A broadened conception of adult education is needed, with better resourced and more wide ranging training, decentralised planning involving civil society networks and women’s movements and a focus on men as well as women. This was the conclusion of participants in the fourth Beyond Access seminar, held at the University of East Anglia, Norwich on 29-30 June 2004. Over 60 participants from adult education groups, universities, governments and intergovernmental organisations discussed six new research papers looking at different aspects of developing gender equality in adult education. Interactive sessions gave participants the opportunity to reflect on the constraints affecting progress to gender equitable adult education worldwide, ranging from violence and HIV/AIDS to insufficient financial and human resources. A policy day in workshop format followed the seminar, during which a smaller group considered possible policy responses to the seminar’s main conclusions.

Nelly Stromquist from the University of Southern California presented a paper addressing ‘Women’s rights to adult education as a means to citizenship’. The paper examined how literacy is inextricably linked to women’s capacity for active citizenship. It offered a theoretical exploration of the intersection between citizenship and gender, looking at how time (the limits imposed by household divisions of labour) and space (the distance between public power and gender ideologies) greatly determine women’s availability for education and citizenship. Women in poverty have the most constraints imposed on accessing these and their position is often least likely to change due to their lack of leverage in changing policies. To reverse these situations women need separate and autonomous spaces in which to develop their

continued on page 2
own identities, and access to learning materials that contest current cultural, economic and social contexts. Literacy in itself can then become transformative rather than instrumental and promote citizenship by generating safe spaces for women's development, imparting knowledge of human rights. The paper and the ensuing discussion concluded that women-led NGOs are often the most effective channels for empowering women through education, yet their resources are very limited.

Celia Eccher, Secretary General of the International Council for Adult Education, presented a paper looking at the history of the struggle for gender equitable adult education in Latin America. The importance of networks emerged as the overriding lesson from the Latin American experience. In particular, Celia outlined the contributions made by REPEM (Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres) and the Gender and Education Office of the International Council for Adult Education. Popular movements working on community education have sprung up in most Latin American countries over the last three decades. Feminism began to inform education debates in the region from the mid-1980s and popular movements expanded their focus from education to encompass women's empowerment and citizenship, as well as wider gender relations within society. In 1990 REPEM launched what was to become known as the 'Campaign for Education Without Discrimination'. The campaign, together with large international conferences on adult education such as CONFINTEA V, helped forge strong links between women's movements in the region, with academic feminists, women working for IGOS, education trade unions and governmental actors. Key challenges in Latin America's quest for gender equality in education include: insufficient financial resources; the need to work simultaneously on many fronts (e.g. within women's movements but also in 'male spaces' such as government departments); building the capacity to create alliances and exert influence at global gatherings such as the World Social Forum.

Usa Duongsaa from the University of Chiang Mai, Thailand introduced 'Development, Gender, HIV/AIDS and Adult Education', which emphasised the need for a more integrated approach to adult education going beyond literacy to include social action and structural change, as well as personalised understandings of risk behaviours relating to HIV/AIDS. Such a strategy has been employed by Chiang Mai's AIDS Education Programme and the Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, who have developed a set of participatory tools to promote HIV/AIDS and gender awareness within communities. Under the strategy, men and women carry out practical exercises to analyse the linkages between gender, development and HIV/AIDS, for instance by undertaking a time analysis of men and women's work, or an assessment of risk behaviours and connections amongst different community groups. The tools have been used so far in 15 Asian countries and have yielded markedly similar results in terms of women's burdens and responsibilities, gender values and misconceptions about risks connected to HIV/AIDS. The results confirm that participation in basic literacy classes is not enough. The ability to read information, whilst a crucial first step, is not sufficient to change behaviours. A personalised and localised analysis needs to occur in individuals, and this needs to be facilitated through an education that encompasses life skills, sexuality education and gender training. Discussion drew out examples of other participatory HIV/AIDS education such as Stepping Stones which is now being implemented in over 100 countries.

Following an interactive seminar session in which participants reflected on the implications of the first three papers for their own work, Agneta Lind, Regional Education Adviser for SIDA in Africa, offered reflections on gender equality and national adult basic education programmes. Her starting point was that gender equality in national Adult Basic Learning and Education (ABLE) programmes requires far more than simply increasing the number of girls and women in education. The paper drew out the challenges in mainstreaming gender equality in ABLE by relating the outcomes of a 2002 SIDA evaluation of three national programmes - Bangladesh, South Africa and Nicaragua - which showed that gender analyses carried out in the design phase were often weak, more explicit objectives for gender equality outcomes were needed and that positive results emerged from an incorporation of masculinities and gender relations into the programme. The paper challenged the prevailing view that only women need to be actively targeted by ABLE programmes. It asserted that ABLE programmes in many countries attract mainly female learners, and indeed in a number of countries less men than women aged 15-24 are literate. Discussion drew out that whilst undeniably ABLE programmes must not prioritise women's learning needs at the expense of men's, generally the two outcomes can be sought simultaneously and most important is to respond to the hardest to reach potential learners in local contexts, whether they are women or men, younger or older people or certain ethnicities.

For her paper, Komal Srivastava drew on her involvement with Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samithi (BGVS), an Indian voluntary agency working in literacy which, since 1989, has run a national literacy programme in collaboration with the Indian government, to huge success. BGVS now has a network of more than 400,000 volunteers in 250 districts of 23 states in India. The first 7 years of the programme, in particular, saw the rise of an unprecedented mass movement for literacy with around 100 million adults attending literacy classes. Mobilisation for the programme has been crucial in empowering women, who for the first time were active in securing their own education. SAMATA, a women's platform which organises self-help groups and micro-enterprises for women, has helped build bridges between literacy and empowerment. An anecdote about one particular district illustrates one of the key constraints operating against the programme. The literacy programme was initiated here in 1992, and five years later, following high levels of participation, particularly by women, the programme was closed and the area declared a 'fully literate' zone. However, the government was subsequently inundated with adults saying they were now 'ready to learn'. For so many women, the programme had been their first opportunity for active participation outside the sphere of the home and thus they had spent the time acclimatising to this opportunity for social engagement and empowerment. Discussion focused on the difficulties of keeping this crucial space alive for women, in the face of challenges such as corruption, right wing religious forces and insecure funding.

Jenny Horsman from the Spiral Community Resource Group, Toronto facilitated an interactive session, ‘Moving beyond “Stupid”: Recognising the Impact of Violence on Adult Education’. The session focused on several points from Jenny's paper before moving to small group work based around individuals' personal reflections on how violence can impede or prevent adult learning, especially amongst women. Jenny's paper highlights that violence can prevent access to education just as much as physical obstacles can; violence literally or figuratively blocks the road to education. The paper sets out the need to reconceptualise the impact of violence from individualised 'medical' approaches - i.e. seeing violence as 'abnormal', something experienced by a minority of specific cases - to a public recognition of all forms of violence and their prevalence in all educational systems.

Literacy is inextricably linked to women's capacity for active citizenship.
The papers and interactive discussion sessions gave rise to a number of key messages, which were further distilled at the policy workshop held the following day. Central themes included redefining and interlinking the Millennium Development Goals, strengthening networks, seeing education as a right and supporting women-led NGOs. Two small groups, one addressing national and the other international level policy responses, were discussed, particularly for 2005 which sees the theme of the EFA Monitoring Report and the Global Campaign Week of Action devoted to adult literacy. The advocacy and policy recommendations emerging from the groups are currently being developed into a policy paper, which will be disseminated widely. The paper will be available on our website over the course of August 2004.

Seminar papers are all available to download from http://www.girlseducation.org (Beyond Access link).

ADULT EDUCATION: A KEY DIMENSION OF THE MDGS

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

This issue of Equals looks at a theme that cross cuts work for gender equality in education worldwide – that of adult education. Access to education enhances women’s capacity for active citizenship and fulfilment of other rights such as health and political participation. This theme emerged strongly from the seminar we organised at the end of June 2004 in conjunction with the University of East Anglia. Yet there is no explicit mention of adult education – whether literacy, numeracy or non-formal learning – in Millennium Development Goal 3 seeking the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In many countries there is no sector or department officially tasked with supporting, promoting or implementing adult education programmes, a role that has generally fallen to civil society networks and, especially, women’s movements.

Whist in many countries, civil society led initiatives are proving hugely successful (see the seminar report on pages 1-3 for details of the work of BGVS in India and REPEM in Latin America) there is a need for governments and IGOs to take a far stronger role in promoting and resourcing adult education programmes. Some recognition of the concerted effort needed in this field is becoming apparent in the run-up to the 2005 MDG, as work under the UN Literacy Decade (2003-2012) and the chosen theme for the forthcoming 2004-5 UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report – adult literacy – testify. However, far more political will is needed and some redefinition of international targets including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) must occur to ensure not only that the importance of adult education is highlighted but that it is interlinked with other goals including health and HIV/AIDS.

We hope you enjoy the range of articles in this issue, which include regular features such as book and conference reviews and two interviews detailing the experiences of adult learners from India and Iraq on pp.6-7. We do welcome your views whether in agreement or disagreement with the articles here.

Chlöe Challender
Elaine Unterhalter
Sheila Aikman

WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE MEET THE MDG?
TOWARDS A SCORECARD ON GIRLS’ EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Elaine Unterhalter and Chlöe Challender

A new report from the Beyond Access project has developed a ‘scorecard’ methodology for assessing progress on gender equitable education. The report, commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat and written by Elaine Unterhalter and researchers for the Beyond Access project, was launched in late June 2004 at a consultative meeting in Nairobi on scaling up initiatives for girls’ education in Africa. Focusing on Commonwealth countries in Africa, the report argues for the need for a publicly accountable criterion of what has been achieved and what needs to be done. The scorecard methodology is put forward as a way NGO coalitions, governments and IGOs could develop a shared understanding of accountability and approach the task of assessing progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal seeking gender equality in education by 2005.

Whilst there are a number of limitations to the scorecard methodology - not least that it over-simplifies complex historical processes and draws on sometimes out-of-date and unrepresentative data - it does provide the opportunity to compare countries’ or districts’ progress on gender equity in education, pinpoint which areas need resources and set out in what areas countries can learn from each other.

The scorecard looks at access and retention in broader ways than previously in that it looks at not only numbers of girls who attend and remain in primary school, but also whether those girls are able to translate that attendance and retention into future schooling at a secondary level and healthy lives where they earn a reasonable income. The four measures which have been used to develop the scorecard are girls’ attendance rate at primary school; girls’ survival rate over 5 years in primary schooling; girls’ secondary Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) and a country’s gender development index (GDI).

On this scorecard, economic might does not guarantee high scores: South Africa, with the largest economy on the continent, is not the country at the top of the league. However,
countries where economies have been squeezed by structural adjustment (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Tanzania) are much lower in the league than they might have been given the resource infrastructure they built up in the 1970s and 1980s. Countries with long and devastating histories of war or repressive government are at or near the bottom of the league. Conversely, countries with long histories of democratic government are at the top (Botswana and Mauritius). Countries which, despite a history of war and undemocratic government, have paid attention to reconstruction also come near the top (Namibia, South Africa, Uganda). Countries with high levels of women’s mobilisation like Uganda, Namibia, and South Africa, score higher than countries where there has been minimal or only ‘top-down’ mobilisation on these issues. Countries with vast regional inequalities (Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria) score considerably lower than countries where regional inequalities are not an issue on this scale (Mauritius, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and Lesotho).

**Scorecard on girls’ primary access, retention and gender equity in Commonwealth countries in Africa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Girls’ primary access retention and gender equity score %</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scorecard points to a number of features outside the education system that appear crucial in sustaining initiatives to enhance girls’ access to and retention in schooling. These are peace and democratic governance, a thriving women’s movement or widespread concern with gender equity, a well supported and well resourced public schooling system where regional inequalities are being redressed and an integration of public policy with regard to education, health and economic policy. Four case studies developed for the paper illustrate how these processes work to support or undermine initiatives to improve access and retention in primary and secondary schooling and raise questions about additional measures a better scorecard might need.

**Wajir Girls Primary School, Kenya: Women Teachers Activism**

Wajir Girls’ Primary School was set up in 1988 following local outcry about school access for girls after a road accident. A bus ferrying girls from Wajir to a boarding school in Garissa, 200km away, crashed killing the girls on board. The community developed a self-help programme, raising their own funds, to construct a girls’ only primary school. Enrolment has risen from 40 to 576 girls. The school’s popularity reflects not just community self help, but also activism on behalf of girls’ education in a district where there is very strong opposition to educating girls and many boys.

According to Mrs. Mohammed-Shuria, the school’s headteacher for the last 16 years, poverty means girls’ enrolment is generally very low in the district. In primary schools, there are on average 2 boys for every girl hence the growth of the school is remarkable. Its popularity is linked with the immense commitment, enthusiasm and dedication of the head and the other teachers as well as its status as a single sex school. Female teachers have put in place a different set of relationships with their pupils and the families and have become activists for gender equity. They have been trained to promote gender equality by helping the girls in the school and by engaging with their parents and the community, which they do partly through running workshops exploring issues such as girls’ rights and cultural norms including female genital mutilation.

The school is not without difficulties of retention, inadequate resources and over reliance on mobilising work of teachers. But this case study indicates that women’s activism, even in areas where girls’ education is viewed with considerable hostility, can work successfully with local norms.

**Mukono District, Uganda: Expanding Public Education**

The introduction of free Universal Primary Education in Uganda in 1997 and the National Strategy for Girls in 2000 saw the numbers of boys and girls in schools increase rapidly. A combination of vigorous and supportive government and huge public support for primary education for girls and boys has facilitated this expansion, as has the actions of numerous NGOs and IGOs working to support teachers, improve facilities and review curriculum.

One of the districts with higher levels of girls’ than boys’ enrolment at both primary and secondary levels is Mukono, a relatively affluent district close to Kampala with high human development indicators. The factors underpinning high enrolment in Mukono is part of a national trend, but it has some salient local features. Industrial and employment growth in the district gives a clear indication to parents of opportunities that can flow from schooling (in addition, of course, parents can afford school uniforms and meals). Government policy has actively engaged teachers in gender equity through programmes such as the Teacher Development Management Scheme (TDMS) which has a specialist concern with promoting gender equality in education and conveying information about HIV/AIDS. This integration of gender equality issues into teacher training points to the long term sustainability of initiatives.

**Diphalana Initiative in Botswana: Local Projects for the Integration of Public Policy**

‘Diphalana’ started in 1996 in Botswana as an alternative to legislation requiring pregnant girls to withdraw from school and only re-enter under certain conditions. The project, run at Pekenene Community Junior Secondary School in Mahalapye, began in response to concerns about the linkages between high numbers of school drop outs, pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Through Diphalana, schoolgirl mothers are allowed to continue at school where the curriculum now includes issues on safer sex. During maternity leave, distance learning modules allow girls to continue their study. When they return to school, their babies are cared for at the school. The father, if he is at school, has to share the responsibility of looking after the baby.
Fears that Diphalana would lead to an escalation of schoolgirl pregnancies at Pekenen were unfounded. The Ministry of Education has now reduced the stay away period for pregnant students throughout the country from 12 to 6 months. Diphalana illustrates that adventurous approaches in public policy, whilst often evoking strong feelings, can sometimes shift private perceptions.

**SOUTH AFRICA: BUILDING ON PEACE AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

The South African case study illustrates some of the difficulties entailed in sustaining concern with gender equity in education, despite a climate of national reconstruction and supportive government. While concerns with gender equity in curriculum change and new pedagogies have been developed on paper, inadequate resources have been allocated to put these into practice in teacher education programmes and in new learning materials. The management and administration of gender equity through bureaucratic structures in provincial and national departments of education has been only a partial success. The Gender Equity Unit, the establishment of which was recommended in a governmental report in 1997, was not accorded the status and power recommended in the report and the gender machineries in provincial ministries often lacked expertise and influence. These and other units, without a connection with a women’s movement and locally based gender activists, have not been able to realise their potential.

**TOWARDS A BETTER SCORECARD**

The case studies highlight some key missing features from the scorecard in its current form. The existence of a women’s movement or other forms of mobilisation for gender equity by NGOs or CBOs seems a key component of the success of initiatives like Wajir and Diphalana. The lack of communication between women and gender activists and policy makers appears one of the reasons the gender equity dynamic of the 1990s in South Africa has faltered. All the case studies provided examples of innovative pedagogies associated with the initiatives to enhance access and retention: the emphasis of a girl friendly pedagogy in Wajir, the use of teachers to communicate government policy in dialogue with communities in Mukono, the development of a distance learning module in Pekekane and the extensive curriculum change in South Africa. The current scorecard methodology has no space for mapping this creative drive. The mediation of public policy across private anxieties of families with regard to marriage, puberty and sexuality was a feature of all the case studies. These cultural and social dimensions are very hard to measure. Thus a key other dimension that requires consideration in any scorecard is an analysis of social and cultural relations and the opportunity for dialogue, debate and the exploration of differences, particularly with regard to the public-private interface.

It is important to stress that the scorecard aims to suggest a means of assessing progress toward the Millennium Development Goals in ways that are publicly accountable, take account of local diversity and provide some kind of map of how progress on scaling up can be assessed. The case studies highlighted additional areas that a scorecard might need to incorporate in order to become more sensitive to local contexts, whilst also constituting a useful form of assessing social justice and gender equity in education across countries.

The full report is available as a PDF from www.girlseducation.org (Beyond Access link).

**VIEWPOINT**

**HALF FULL OR HALF EMPTY? REFLECTIONS ON GENDER, EDUCATION AND POST COMMUNIST STATES**

By Andriy Dubovyk

My first 13 years were spent in a town in the USSR. The following ten years were spent in the same town, but in a new country - the independent Republic of Ukraine. My first language is Russian, my second language is English and occasionally I speak Ukrainian. My father is Ukrainian, my mother is Bulgarian. I got my further education in Britain and now I am trying to finalise this article working in Africa. Some people think there is no consistancy in my autobiography. But I am strongly convinced that I am Ukrainian even though my blood is not blue and yellow (the colours of the modern Ukrainian flag).

My favourite place in Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, is the memorial to those who died in World War II. Some people might say it's very depressing. But only from there, on a hill under the huge statue of a woman holding a sword in one hand and shield in the other, can I see a different country - a complex of churches on the left, modern blocks of expensive apartments across the Dnieper river, the old city at the back, and the peaceful territory around the memorial. The woman statue embodies MOTHERLAND.

It’s been interesting to observe how gender equality started to change in the different countries of the former USSR after they became independent following the collapse of the Soviet state. For instance, in Latvia they chose a woman to be their state leader, electing Vaira Vike-Freiberga in 1999 - a progressive step to democracy and European integration. Meanwhile, in Tajikistan, a renaissance of cultural and religious practices banned by the Communist Party in the past saw traditions such as polygamy in the ascendant.

In the Soviet Union everyone had to work, unless they had a disability, were a pensioner or in prison. So, the women in Ukraine used to work. State benefits were extensive with
excellent childcare provisions. But women carried on working in the household as well, as the social norm demanded, cooking and cleaning for all the family.

At school we used to be taught that we were equal, boys and girls. However, in addition we were taught that if a war was to start we must protect girls because they are future mothers. The respect for girls and women was very high. I think one of the reasons for this is that after World War II, when many men were killed in battle, died in Nazi concentration camps in Poland and Germany or returned home with mental or physical disabilities, it was women who played the most important role in the reconstruction of the country. They also played a leading role in the resistance movement in the occupied territories during the war.

The Communist Party agenda was central in all corners of society and particularly in schools. In primary school we were supposed to become Octoberers and learned everything about the Great October Revolution and Lenin's childhood. In secondary school we became Pioneers and learned how to be responsible citizens of the communist state. In upper secondary school, we had to pass a serious exam on Komsomol (the League of the Young Communists) to become Komsomol, a final stage before joining the Communist Party. School teachers at all levels were mostly female, and they were responsible for bringing this communist agenda to children across the USSR.

By Independence, I was at upper secondary school. In vocational skills training, there was strict gender division: boys attended lorry driving classes and girls learned to be nursery workers. At the level of higher education, gender parity was achieved with a slightly higher enrolment of girls. I think this is because many men hurried to join any sort of paid jobs in factories or plants as workers. These workers were mostly better paid than people with higher education or those working in public services.

From the day the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, everything about the country I used to live in began to change. From being a part of one of the world's powerful states with a strong education system, the country was plunged into transition with the worst economic and political crisis in Eastern Europe. Gender equality has been affected negatively. Even though discriminatory wages are illegal, women's average monthly wages are now 30.7 per cent below male wages, according to statistics from 2002. Women, particularly in the business sector, are often discriminated against due to the risk they will leave to have children. In transitional economies, employers looking to invest in productivity of their staff believe greater value for money will be obtained if employees' work is not interrupted. Lack of equality in the workplace is mirrored in political life. After the first elections in Ukraine in 1990 the share of women in Parliament dropped to three per cent. In 1994 the share grew to 5.7 per cent, in 1998 to 8.1 per cent, only to fall back again in the last elections, in 2002, to 5.1 per cent.

The renaissance of Ukrainian culture is likely to reinforce traditional family values because it stresses man as the breadwinner and the woman as a home-based wife looking after the children, saving and protecting Ukrainian family values. When I was at school in Soviet times, we used to say "Motherland" (in Russian). Now, under the Ukrainian system, children say "Fatherland" (in Ukrainian). This is just an observation and is open to interpretation, however it does seem symbolic. If Ukraine is to strive for democracy and EU membership, these social discourses should be revisited. We need to look back, look into the future and incorporate all the resources of the society, both women and men. It's time we asked ourselves whether the national policies of Ukraine are Half Full or Half Empty.

Andriy Dubovyk is currently working for UNHCR in Nairobi, Kenya.

TALKING WITH ADULT LEARNERS
"NOW WE KNOW HOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS"

India: Akiko Tanaka talks to V.Thayammal

Thayammal is 57 years old and has three sons and two daughters. Her house is located in Killiyoor Block, Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, southeast India. In her village, there are no stable jobs, men work at stone cutting or masonry jobs on a daily basis and they often spend their money on drinking. Most women of Thayammal's age started weaving from the age five or six without going to school to support their family. Having had an unstable salary from her husband and then losing him one year ago because of disease, Thayammal must now weave not only for her independence but for her family.

Thayammal has been poor since she was small. Losing her father at the age of four, she says, "When I was a child I was often hungry, I ate only once a day or not at all. All my relatives and neighbours were poor so they could not help either". However, economic difficulties were not the only reason it was difficult to go to schools: "No girls went to school because in my area women can only do weaving jobs and only boys can get good jobs after completing study. So people thought there is no use educating girls". Despite the fact she makes some income through weaving, she told me she felt shame and a lack of confidence because she could not read or write nor go to distant places as she did not know how to read bus names or shop boards.

However, the chance to learn, for which she has been waiting a long time, came in 1991, at the age of 45. She participated for one year in basic literacy and for three years in continuous educational classes through the Total Literacy Campaign in Kanyakumari District organised by the National Literacy Mission. After the completion of this campaign, she joined MALAR, a network of women's Self Help Groups. MALAR tries to give women a learning space as well as targeting economic improvement through loans and saving schemes. In MALAR women read a weekly resource paper, which contains several stories and world, district or local news and health information.
Women keep the weekly meeting minute book and keep their own account books to maintain their literacy skills. By using these two opportunities, literacy campaign and MALAR, Thayammal has developed her skills and gained more confidence.

Thayammal says that despite her interest in joining the literacy campaign, her husband at first told her that, "You are too old and you should just take care of your children. What is the use of learning now?" He prohibited her from joining. However, she had a strong desire to learn, and she especially wanted to learn how to write her signature. This is because every time she went to the weaving society officials asked her to sign and laughed at her for doing fingerprints. She felt ashamed. Despite her husband's prohibition, she secretly attended classes for two hours every night for 10 months. Fortunately, her husband was working in a distant area so he did not find out about this. But at the same time Thayammal says, "I was not afraid that my husband would find out about me going to classes, because I was determined to learn how to sign my name". She attended every class despite being very busy with housework and her weaving job." She says, "I managed these jobs easily and efficiently because I was so eager to study. I woke up earlier and worked harder but I did not have any difficulty in managing at all". Her determination was so great that eventually her husband changed his mind and joined the Literacy Campaign himself. Both of them studied together.

Thayammal's study taught her how to write her signature, read measurements and bus boards. In the MALAR meetings, she is now a secretary and reads resource papers as well. Although her writing ability is limited to her signature, she reads many items and says she has gained enough skills to makes her happy and useful to herself and her family.

She remembers literacy classes being very enjoyable because she sang, played games and talked through matters with her other 19 classmates. Thayammal says through literacy classes they learned how the government scheme operated and how to complain to authorities; "Before we did not know how to solve problems, but now we know. After the Literacy Campaign, when the local government raised the price of items which the poor can buy with a special ration card, we came together and went to Nagercoil (a capital of Kanyakumari District one and a half hours journey by bus from the village) three times and finally the government accepted our demands. Now when we have any problems with the weaving society about pricing we go together to solve the problem".

Thayammal still meets her classmates but now as a MALAR member. Her volunteer teacher, Susheela, who is also from the local area, still supports the group as a MALAR coordinator. Thayammal says: "We still work together when there is a problem and I keep learning through resource papers – plus I have even developed my own business". Before she was working for other people as a daily wage worker but after receiving a loan from MALAR she has bought three weaving machines and has become the owner of a small weaving factory.

She says, "Now, unlike my generation, girls go to school. Both of my daughters studied up to 12th standard and the local government also encourage us by giving Rp10,000 when girls who have completed 12th standard get married. But there are still no jobs for women except weaving in my village. If we work as a daily wage worker, income is low, so I developed this business for my daughters so they can work here after they have finished studying".

Although Thayammal did not go to school and her daughters are now educated up to 12th standard their opportunity of gaining a job remains as limited as hers was. However she says, "My daughters know how to keep accounts better than me and they also manage the business more efficiently than me by going to school". Adult Education is continuous and long term, offering many different types of opportunities.

Akiko Tanaka currently doing an internship with BGVS (Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti) a social movement in India involved with education and gender issues. She conducted research on women’s capabilities by studying MALAR self help groups, run under BGVS, for nine months as part of her internship. See seminar report (pp.3-5) for further details about BGVS.

---

"WAR AFFECTS POOR PEOPLE AND EQUALITY MORE"

Iraq: Rebecca Heuberger talks to Khalida Majid

Khalida Majid is an adult student at PECAN, London studying an intermediate English language and IT course. Khalida is Kurdish and came to England from Iraq in 1993. She completed both primary and secondary school in Iraq and studied for two years at a teacher's training college in Baghdad.

RH: Did you have access to education as a child; was it the same for girls and boys?  
K.M: Yes it was easy. Primary education is accessible for both girls and boys, although some girls with very religious parents were not permitted to attend school, or if they did only until they could read and write. Girls from poor families had difficulties combining schooling with work at home, sewing, knitting or making bread, especially during the war (the Gulf War), which hit the poor badly. One family I knew had six girls and six boys, but none of the girls finished primary education. The girls did sewing to help their brothers, who later became engineers, through school.

RH: What about access to adult education, here and in Iraq?  
K.M: There were not many opportunities for further education in Iraq and access depends on good grades. Here it’s been fantastic and access has been easy, although now I need to improve my English because I am trying to do an Access to Teaching course.

RH: What do you think about the quality of the education here, how does it compare to Iraq?  
K.M: Compared to the education here, Iraqi education was poor. The Iranian war cost the country greatly so there was no money left for schools and colleges. I studied English in Baghdad but couldn’t speak a word of it when the course had finished. The teaching and learning is very different. In the UK, the classrooms are very respectful, there is justice and no discrimination. You have the right to say whatever you wish and learn about different countries and religions, like Somalia and Eritrea. There is equality in the classrooms - if there was no equality, how else would I be here? Learning in the UK is also very different in that we play games and move around the classroom, and we also go to parks and museums. In Iraq we were very passive learners.
Encouraged to know my rights and shown how to deal with people in relation to their rights.

**RH:** What are your views on gender equality in education and society in Iraq?

**K.M:** It is not equal in society or in education, and war affects poor people and equality more. There are only single sex schools in Iraq but I think mixed schools are better because they prepare you for how will you act in life. When I first came to the Refugee Council I had no confidence to speak. The whole system needs to change.

Rebecca Heuberger teaches in an adult learning centre and is a student on the MA in Education, Gender and International Development at the Institute of Education, University of London.

---

**Can we re-shape the MDGs?**

**Report on the global e-discussion on Education and Gender Equality**

Akanksha Marphatia

An interim report on achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment has been prepared by the ‘Millennium Project Task Force (TF) on Education and Gender Equality’. Within the wider framing on the goal the target has been set as the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015. The TF is gathering input from a variety of perspectives on the reports. The documents will be finalised by December 15, 2004. ActionAid International partnered with One World South Asia, the Commonwealth Education Fund and the Global Campaign for Education to launch an e-discussion on the report in June and July. The first week focused on reactions to the overall framing of the gender equality MDG. Discussions in the second week centred on the six strategic priorities and the third and final week focused on the “making it work” section.

The discussion group attracted over 1,200 participants, although not all contributed to the e-forum. Responses from 25 different countries were received. Sixty-nine messages were exchanged and barring multiple messages sent by any one participant, overall 47 people participated; twenty-eight were female and 19 were male. They represented international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), field-based civil society organizations (CSO), academia and donor agencies from Africa, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Asia, and North America.

Participants emphasized that NGOs, CSOs and citizens are essential to achieving the MDGs. They called for a global mobilization of civil society - poor people, women and girls, men and boys - to stand for the actions they think are necessary, positive and feasible, and call on governments, NGOs and donor agencies to reject the strategies that do not serve the people. Worldwide mobilization for influencing policy and funding priorities at the 2005 G8 meeting (where girls’ education is on the agenda) and UN Heads of State Meeting should be undertaken immediately.

Overall, there was consensus on the need to expand the gender equality goal from education to other areas (reproductive health, society free of violence) because together these wider strategies empower women. The debate ignited around the particular framing of the strategies, and shifting the MDG from primary to secondary level. While there was strong support around a wider framing the argument was also made that shifting the agenda upward to secondary schooling and outwards to other gender equality issues would risk losing or over-stretching the powerful consensus that underpins the MDGs.

The TF was urged to take a gendered approach (and not just focus on women and girls), and analyse how together, men and women successfully negotiate better living situations for all. For example, more research needs to be undertaken on why boys fall behind girls in education in some regions (Latin America). Participants asked that recommendations be grounded at a practical and realistic level and challenged the report’s interpretation of the value of education being reduced to simple economic outcomes. For children and parents, the intrinsic value of education is equally (if not more) important. Also discussed was the notion that quotas and infrastructure do not guarantee decision-making power, control or access to strategic and basic resources for women.

The question as to why MDG 3 has not been met demands reflection in order to galvanize action in order to achieve EFA by 2015. Radical action like a global movement for the abolition of all user fees in primary and secondary education could make a real difference.

There is a great deal of debate on which level of education (primary or secondary) is most beneficial to girls and women. The TF was reminded “if many girls and boys are unable to make the transition from primary to secondary who are we going to empower?” The suggestion to expand the goal to secondary education also questions the credibility of all UN and international policy setting processes and targets. Participants called on the TF to not abandon the goal simply because it has not been met.

The need to transform schools and other institutions to be more gender-sensitive was stressed. More analysis is needed on how schools can be transformational rather than reproducing prejudice and discrimination. Access without quality is meaningless because quality is the essence of equity.

The impact of HIV/AIDS, conflict, and globalization on women’s empowerment emerged as a key recommendation. Strategies such as adult literacy (with an emphasis on women) and non-formal education should not be ignored. How the MDGs support other UN led policy initiatives was also a key theme.
There is a need to better define, and link the Millennium Project and corresponding development goals to other UN led initiatives such as EFA and FTI.

The task force’s desire to collect civil society feedback on the report was encouraging. However the circulation of key documents only in English was problematic. The potential of CSO influence on this report would have been more likely if consultations had taken place earlier, when the report’s main tenets were being formulated and throughout the process of revisions. This is concerning not only because it questions the genuine space created for participation but also because participants challenged and disagreed with two of the report’s key strategic objectives. Albeit with these limitations, there is space for the TF to integrate the main recommendations of this consultation as they undertake final revisions in August 2004.

Akanksha Marphatia works for ActionAid International and moderated the gender equality MDG e-discussion.

The full executive summary and complete report can be downloaded at: http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/html/tf3docs.shtm or by going to the discussion groups homepage: http://www.dgroups.org/groups/right2education/index.cfm?op=main&cat_id=3692

EQUALS INDEX

An index of articles, interviews, reports and reviews which have appeared in Equals during its first year of publication (June 2003-July 2004).

**Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIV</th>
<th>HIV/AIDS</th>
<th>POL</th>
<th>Policy making</th>
<th>PRAC</th>
<th>Learning from practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>CON</td>
<td>Conflict and reconstruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Feature articles**

- Africa: Is there a road map?
- Camfed and the Learning Circle Project, Ghana – ‘Pictures can make great changes’
- DFID’s Community Education Programme in Nigeria - ‘All together now’
- Developing gender policy from research in Lao People’s Democratic Republic
- Free and compulsory education in Kenya – ‘The best gift the government gave Kenya’
- Gender and Education in Palestine
- Gender equality in education in China – ‘Where inequalities intersect’
- Gender Equality in India, Sri Lanka & The Maldives - ‘From principle to practice’
- Gender equity in schooling in Tajikistan – ‘Where have all the school girls gone?’
- Gender Equality MDG e-discussion summary
- Gender Equitable Education in Burkina Faso
- Genderspeak glossary
- Girls running the gauntlet – Bangladesh
- Global Campaign for Education: Week of Action 2003
- Global Campaign for Education: Week of Action 2004
- Health and education in Pakistan – ‘Curing inequality’
- Millennium Development Goals: What remains to be done
- Natural Resources: from curse to blessing – Botswana and Angola
- Oxfam GB’s animatrace programme in Mali: Linking schools and families
- Towards a Scorecard on Girls’ Education - Commonwealth countries in Africa
- UNESCO Designs a Toolkit for Gender Equality (S.E.Asia) - “Repair Work”
- UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003-4: Comment and Analysis
- UNEG in Action: Egypt’s Girls’ Education initiative
- UNICEF new strategy in Burkino Faso, launch of
- UNICEF State of the World’s Children 2004: Girls’ Education critical to other MDGs
- VSO launches ‘AIDS Agenda’

**Beyond Access Project**

- Preview of the 1st seminar
- Seminar 1: Beyond Access: Curriculum for Gender Equality
- And Quality Basic Education in Schools Report
- Seminar 2: Supporting Teachers and Changing Classrooms
- Teacher’ Workshop
- Seminar 3: Reprioritise resources for 2005
- Seminar 4: Adult education

**Book Reviews**

- Camfed International, I Have a Story to Tell, Camfed 2004

---

**EQUALS INDEX**

An index of articles, interviews, reports and reviews which have appeared in Equals during its first year of publication (June 2003-July 2004).

**Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIV</th>
<th>HIV/AIDS</th>
<th>POL</th>
<th>Policy making</th>
<th>PRAC</th>
<th>Learning from practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>CON</td>
<td>Conflict and reconstruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Feature articles**

- Africa: Is there a road map?
- Camfed and the Learning Circle Project, Ghana – ‘Pictures can make great changes’
- DFID’s Community Education Programme in Nigeria - ‘All together now’
- Developing gender policy from research in Lao People’s Democratic Republic
- Free and compulsory education in Kenya – ‘The best gift the government gave Kenya’
- Gender and Education in Palestine
- Gender equality in education in China – ‘Where inequalities intersect’
- Gender Equality in India, Sri Lanka & The Maldives - ‘From principle to practice’
- Gender equity in schooling in Tajikistan – ‘Where have all the school girls gone?’
- Gender Equality MDG e-discussion summary
- Gender Equitable Education in Burkina Faso
- Genderspeak glossary
- Girls running the gauntlet – Bangladesh
- Global Campaign for Education: Week of Action 2003
- Global Campaign for Education: Week of Action 2004
- Health and education in Pakistan – ‘Curing inequality’
- Millennium Development Goals: What remains to be done
- Natural Resources: from curse to blessing – Botswana and Angola
- Oxfam GB’s animatrace programme in Mali: Linking schools and families
- Towards a Scorecard on Girls’ Education - Commonwealth countries in Africa
- UNESCO Designs a Toolkit for Gender Equality (S.E.Asia) - “Repair Work”
- UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003-4: Comment and Analysis
- UNEG in Action: Egypt’s Girls’ Education initiative
- UNICEF new strategy in Burkino Faso, launch of
- UNICEF State of the World’s Children 2004: Girls’ Education critical to other MDGs
- VSO launches ‘AIDS Agenda’

**Beyond Access Project**

- Preview of the 1st seminar
- Seminar 1: Beyond Access: Curriculum for Gender Equality
- And Quality Basic Education in Schools Report
- Seminar 2: Supporting Teachers and Changing Classrooms
- Teacher’ Workshop
- Seminar 3: Reprioritise resources for 2005
- Seminar 4: Adult education

**Book Reviews**

- Camfed International, I Have a Story to Tell, Camfed 2004
Interviews with teachers/learners

Bangladesh: Nashida Ahmed, BRAC
Palestine: Muna Almasri
India: Shobha Bajpai
Uganda: Harriet Namiburu
Teachers from China
India: V. Thayammal
Iraq: Khalida Ahmed

Meetings and Conference reports

UNICEF/Unesco meeting with South Asian Gender Focal Points, May 2003
Roundtable on Financing of Education in East Africa, Hanoi, July 2003
Fourth meeting of the Working Group of EFA, Paris, July 2003
Symposium on the future of Nigerian Education, July 2003
CONFINTEA Mid-term Review, Sep. 2003
Oxford Conference, Sept 2003
15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, Edinburgh, Sept 2003
Gender and Education at the World Social Forum, Mumbai, Jan. 2004
Gender Equity in Education Conference, Cape Town, South Africa, May 2004
Scaling Up Girls Education meeting, Nairobi, June 2004

Viewpoint

Parul Bakhshi, India - Life skills and gender equality in practice
Saratu Yunusa, Nigeria - Quality Education for girls benefits boys too
Nguyen Thi Mai Ha, Vietnam - Gender Equitable Curricula in Vietnam
Levis Mugumya, Uganda - How gender segregation at school undermines equal opportunities: a male viewpoint
Andry Dubovyk, Ukraine - Half Full or Half Empty? Reflections on gender education and post communist states

CONFERENCE COMMENTS

SCALING UP


A partnership of agencies, including the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the African Development Bank and FAWE, came together on 23 – 25 June 2004 to discuss the scaling up of good practices in national education systems. Over 25 countries were represented and the 170 delegates included senior ministry of education officials, development agencies, NGOs and civil society members. Professor George Saitoti opened the conference, stating, “There is an urgent need to scale up good practices that enhance the education of girls in Africa if the continent is to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All by 2015”.

The Minister of Education for The Gambia, Hon. Anne Therese N’dong-Jatta, chaired the conference’s first session and said, “(The meeting) is not about saying what is not happening, but an opportunity to share the good practices. A good opportunity to learn and design plans to achieve Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals.” A range of inputs describing national and local level experiences and good practice were delivered. Emily Kioko, from Oxfam GB Kenya, presented a paper on behalf of the Beyond Access project, entitled Scaling Up Girls’ Education: Towards a Scorecard on Girls’ Education in the Commonwealth (see pp.3-5 for a summary of the paper).

BOOK REVIEW

WITH STUBBORN DETERMINATION AND LUCK


Reviewed by Ogochukwu C. Ekwenchi

I Have A Story To Tell is a series of autobiographical accounts by Zimbabwean young women who have been supported through their education by CAMFED. The photographs capturing their lives by Mark Read give powerful images of their world. The book is a story of the triumph of human spirit and the determination of one British woman to make a difference in the lives of young women denied education and a means of livelihood.
The experiences of the young women described in this book are true of many village societies in Africa wracked by poverty where families are confronted with hard choices concerning their children’s future. A girl is usually the most affected when difficult decisions are made. From the time she develops an awareness of the world, a girl comes to realise that brothers are preferred. From food – of which the male child receives more if there isn’t enough for everyone - to education which is often denied to girls because thin resources do not usually stretch to accommodate them – a girl is made to understand that she does not rank equally with her brothers.

As she is never the first consideration, in many cases a girl is made to help provide her brother with a start in life. She is expected to help out with whatever business the family engages in to finance the boy’s education. For her there is no carefree childhood; her path in life has already been mapped out. She only awaits marriage which she hopes will liberate her from a life of drudgery. Marriage in most cases does not bring this respite. It is trading one prison house of poverty for another and this time, it may be even worse. A girl often loses the psychological cushioning that parental care provides as marriage makes demands of adult life on very young women who are just out of childhood. The misadventure of early marriage is often compounded by a lack of skills, except perhaps those of farm work. Farming, especially at subsistence level, barely supplies enough for the immediate needs of the family, leaving little to sell. This is the cycle of poverty which is the lot of millions of young, black women and the same life which their children are sure to inherit.

One such woman described in the book is Sipheleli Chomuzinda, who lost her husband at 18. She understood only too well what kind of a future awaited her and her young child. With both parents unemployed and with no education to fall back on only a major miracle would save her and her child from a certain fate. With financial assistance from CAMFED, however, Sipheleli started a poultry business. Today, she is financially independent and is helping other women with advice on how to start their own businesses. Angeline Mugwendenre is also no stranger to poverty. Born to peasant parents scraping a living at subsistence level, she learnt first hand that being the brightest pupil in her province and one of the best in the country was no protection against the barrier of poverty. Her brilliance would have been extinguished at primary school level if not for CAMFED, who stepped in with financial support for her education. As she looks back and remembers the less fortunate women who poverty forced to take other routes such as early marriage, many of whom are now trapped in abusive relationships or have succumbed to financial lures from sugar daddies and have died of AIDS, she considers herself lucky. Education saved her from the same fate. Mark Read’s photos really help illuminate such stories for the reader. Images such as that of Judith Kumire with arms outstretched, perhaps proclaiming her liberation from poverty through education, make these real life stories unforgettable.

The experiences of these brave young women, propelled by a stubborn determination to succeed and a little luck in form of practical support from CAMFED are stories of countless black African women who grow up knowing poverty and privation. They are stories of hope and of dreams that do not die. Education holds the key to the fulfilment of this dream. CAMFED has thrown a lifeline to numerous young black women living in desperate situations. They grabbed the line, and not only did they swim to safety, they also shared their inspirational experiences with us in this book. Their determination to help others who are trapped in the same life they once endured holds a promise of hope for not only the young women in Zimbabwe but for millions of others elsewhere. Women wherever they may come from who are denied education and the opportunities it brings will no doubt be galvanized into action and some day have their own stories to tell.

Ogochukwu Ekwenchi grew up in Nigeria. She is a Commonwealth Scholar studying for a PhD at the School of Culture, Language and Communication at the Institute of Education, London.

“I Have A Story To Tell” can be ordered from Camford’s website, www.camford.org

NEWS

EDUCATION AND THE FEMINISATION OF AIDS

11th-16th July 2004 - XV International AIDS Conference, Bangkok, Thailand

By Rajee Rajagopalen

Organised by the International AIDS Society in collaboration with the Thai Ministry of Public Health, UNAIDS, and local and international community organisations, the XV International AIDS Conference was opened by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. In his opening address, Mr. Annan said that although progress had been made since the Declaration of Commitment was issued at the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in 2001, and that comprehensive national strategies to combat HIV/AIDS had been adopted by the vast majority of member states, much remains to be done. He was concerned that several of the Declaration’s objectives had not yet been reached, that the target of reducing the scale and impact of the epidemic by 2005 was not yet on track and that women were increasingly bearing the brunt of the epidemic.

The Secretary-General emphasised the feminisation of HIV/AIDS, stating, “Over the past few years, we have seen a terrifying pattern emerge, all over the world. Women now account for nearly half of all adult infections, among people younger than 24, girls and young women make up nearly two-thirds of those living with HIV. Yet, one third of all countries still have no policies to ensure that women have access to prevention and care, knowing what we do today about the path of the epidemic. Poverty, abuse and violence, lack of information, coercion by older men, men having several concurrent sexual relationships entrap young women in a giant network of infection”. He emphasised the importance of education as a preventative measure, urging the global community to give women “full access to the practical options that can protect them from HIV and AIDS”. This message was reinforced by Praful Patel, vice-president of the World Bank in South Asia, who said that girls’ education was a powerful weapon to check the spread of HIV and AIDS in countries such as Bangladesh, where 54 percent students in primary schools are female: “Educated girls are aware of what happens to their bodies, they are capable of negotiations with their partners, and they know how to protect themselves,” Patel stated.

After six days of work, the 15th International AIDS Conference concluded with the issuing of the Bangkok Statement, recognizing weaknesses in the fight against HIV/AIDS in many countries, calling on the international community to pay due attention to sufferers and provide information, education and prevention tools to help control the epidemic.
FORTHCOMING EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Further Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-29 July</td>
<td>Fifth Meeting of the Working Group on Education for All, Paris</td>
<td><a href="http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/global_co/working_group/index.shtml">http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/global_co/working_group/index.shtml</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>4th Anniversary of Millennium Development Goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 Sept</td>
<td>BAICE Conference 2004 Centre for International Education, Sussex School of Education, University of Sussex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 Sept</td>
<td>UNESCO High Level Intergovernmental Meeting to review Beijing Platform for Action +10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Sept</td>
<td>International Literacy Day</td>
<td>Events around the world will be co-ordinated by Unicef.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-11 Sept</td>
<td>International Conference on Education (UNESCO) Geneva</td>
<td>Theme: &quot;Quality Education for all Young People: Challenges, Trends and Priorities&quot; Further details available from <a href="mailto:conference@ibe.unesco.org">conference@ibe.unesco.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LETTERS PAGE

It has been useful linking up with the Beyond Access project to make contact with other teachers working on gender and education issues. I hope we will be able to succeed in cooperating on the Socrates Comenius project dedicated to gender equality. I have also found the ‘Equals’ newsletter very interesting and helpful.

Marta Lipińska
Wojciech Bogusawski Primary School
Cracow, POLAND

I attended the Cape Town Colloquium on "Gender Equity in Education", and happily landed myself on your mailing list. Thank you very much for sending me a copy of the "Beyond Access" newsletter. I found it to be highly informative. It is interesting and motivating to read what other people involved in the struggle for gender equality and equity are doing in other parts of the world. I also found the website to be a very rich resource that will help me in my work on girls’ education in South Africa.

I am looking forward to receiving other copies of your newsletter.

Thank you again
Nonhlanhla Mthiyane
University of KwaZulu Natal

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to participate in Beyond Access Seminar. I found it very enriching.

I would like to stay in touch with the project. Let me know if I could do anything at my end. We have to somehow bring Gender Equality and Literacy in as an important agenda of global policies.

We shall remain in touch.

With warm regards.

Ila Patel
Institute of Rural Management
India

WRITE NOW!

DO you have a particular view that you want to raise in Equals or a comment to make about the newsletter in general? Contact the Editor:

Tel: 0044 207 612 6394  
Fax: 0044 207 612 6366  
Email: c.challender@ioe.ac.uk  
Website: www.ioe.ac.uk/efps/beyondaccess

The views expressed in this newsletter are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the project, their partners or sponsors.

Equals would like to thank Rosa Crawford, Rajee Rajagopalan and Elspeth Page for their help with this issue.