Unlimited options: Building shared understandings of gender through training
Janet Raynor

Gender training? Why do we need that? Isn’t that something we’ve all had all our lives? Isn’t it something we should be trying to move away from? In all cultures, girls and women have been trained to be and do ‘X’, while boys and men are trained to be and do ‘Y’. The ‘X’ and the ‘Y’ might be different in different cultures, but a gendered division is common to all.

Perhaps what we’re really talking about is ‘gender UNtraining’. It involves an understanding of gender as something socially constructed, a peeling back of progressively deeper layers of gendered learning—formal and informal—and a consideration of other ways of being and doing, for both men and women.

I have been interested in gender for as long as I can remember, but I didn’t have a word for it until about ten years ago. In 1998, starting a post as a training advisor on a DFID language programme in Bangladesh, I was made responsible for ‘gender’. Pleased but panicking, I went to the library and found the reassuringly thick and accessible ‘OXFAM gender training manual’, which taught me the very useful distinction between gender (socially determined) and sex (biologically determined). Since then I have been deepening my own understanding of gender, and working on ways of helping others to deepen theirs. That is, I became involved in gender training/untraining.

Some of the programmes I have worked with have been essentially gender projects in education, others—education projects with gender incorporated in some way. The Programme to Motivate, Train and Employ Women Teachers in rural Bangladesh (EC/Ministry of Education, 1996-2005) started off as the latter, and ended as the former. By increasing the presence of women in

Gender training is an important component of mainstreaming gender issues into programming. These women and men organize to tackle domestic violence in communities affected by the tsunami in Sri Lanka.
secondary schools the project aimed to attract more girls for enrolment. Financially, the largest part of the programme was in the construction of hostels for the women teachers. It was therefore seen as a construction project, headed by an engineer and staffed mostly by men. There was only a gradual realisation that no matter how many hostels were built, it was hard to find women willing and able to occupy them unless the wider social issues were addressed – issues such as women being ‘allowed’ to live independently, security risks for women living without the male ‘protection’, the willingness of schools to employ women at the secondary level and so on.

This realisation led to the development of various levels of gender training within the project. The early initiatives largely targeted the trainee women teachers and only gradually spread to other groups such as teacher training college managers, college lecturers, headteachers, school management committees, local government officials, the engineers constructing the hostels, and the staff within the programme implementation unit. It became a gender project.

Looking back, there was too little gender training, too late. Though there were large numbers of women trained and employed, the programme would have been much more successful if systematic gender training had been built in from the start. Probably most progress was made within the teacher training colleges, where many of the trainees were living away from home for the first time, and were encouraged to question gender issues through workshops, preparation for teaching practice, case studies, reflective diaries and so on. This, together with sustained support to the staff at the colleges, helped create an environment where most felt able to challenge and develop their understanding of gender – inside and outside the colleges.

Projects that have an overt gender focus are most likely to incorporate the necessary training. In projects that have essentially an education focus, but with a now almost obligatory reference to gender, Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), gender is often seen as ‘a bit on the side’, something that has to be mentioned to keep development partners happy. Words such as ‘mainstreaming’ are incorporated into documents but then attention focuses on the perceived ‘real business’ of education. All too often gender, perceived as women’s business, becomes the responsibility of low-status women within a project. Instead of being mainstreamed, it is sidelined. Instead of being cross-cutting, it is cut off. Gender training, if it takes place at all, is seen as an obligation rather than a necessity. Without high-level recognition of the need to get serious about gender in order to bring about equity, quality and equality in education, gender training might have little impact on all but the personal level. But that alone should be seen as progress.

**Doing Gender Training**

So how do we approach the development of that understanding? There’s no single,
simple solution. But a good place to start is where people are ‘at’. A gender-training programme might follow a very similar course to the path development programmes have taken over the last few decades. Start looking at women in development arguments, with women seen as the instruments of development and mantras like ‘if you educate a woman, you educate a family’. The educational enhancement of women’s traditional roles is not threatening. A logical progression is to explore why fewer girls complete primary school, or why girls get less of classroom interactions. It is a move to gender and development ideas, to an examination of the role of men and boys, and to the realisation that gender is not just about women. This naturally leads to questions of power, empowerment and freedom – ideas addressed in the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen, and amplified in terms of gender by Martha Nussbaum. This leads to the question of ‘How does education enable a person to be and do what they have reason to value?’

An understanding of key concepts, processes and terms is vital, gender itself being the main one: the beginning and the end. But en route others are needed. One concept that has been particularly useful is ‘gender lens’, which helps focus on ways of examining data, processes, systems from a gender perspective. A process I have found particularly useful and tangible is the systematic ‘disaggregation’ of data. For example, in Somaliland and Puntland in 2006, the national exams system did not classify entrants by sex. A painstaking disaggregation exercise based on identifying male and female candidates by name showed how badly the education system was failing girls. A systematic disaggregation was then introduced, thus enabling effective monitoring and the development of strategies to address the hitherto unseen problem. Another process which has proved to be very useful in showing a need for a focus on gender is a gender audit. It can be as simple as examining the gender composition and status of members of a school management committee, or it can be a lot more complex. At any level, an audit helps identify where inequalities exist – a vital part of gender training – and paves the way to working towards addressing them.

The possibilities are endless – as an Internet search for ‘gender training’ will show. The only real problem I have encountered with gender (un)training is that there is never enough of it.

Janet Raynor works in the field of gender, education and development

Without high-level recognition of the need to get serious about gender in order to bring about equity, quality and equality in education, gender training might have little impact on all but the personal level.

Women in Madhya Pradesh, India are putting pressure on the Fisheries Minister to ease the difficulties caused by 4 years of poor rainfall.

Letter from the Editors

While there are many policy declarations on gender equality and education, reports from practitioners consistently alert us to the difficulties of linking aspirations for quality with equality. This issue of Equals looks at different ways of thinking about gender, equality and education highlighting and reporting on approaches to learning about change that have been used.

The publication of this issue is supported by the Commonwealth Education Fund and builds on some of the themes explored in Equals 20, which highlighted how often the process of gender mainstreaming is not well understood/supported in organisations. This issue documents how training on gender, different forms of learning resources and multi-faceted support for work on gender have been used in community empowerment, education and health projects. The articles reveal the importance of community participation, reaching out to men and sustained commitment to support work on gender in work plans, budgets and evaluation and monitoring frameworks. Experiences from the field also highlight the necessity for seeing gender training and learning strategies as processes rather than one-time interventions.

Our concern with thinking about the sustainability of learning about gender in this issue is particularly poignant because at the time of editing the articles we learned of the death of three aid and education workers. Jackie Kirk, Shirley Case and Nicole Dial killed on August 13, 2008 with their driver, Mohammad Aimal, in the Logar Province of Afghanistan. The issue contains a tribute to Jackie, a supporter of Equals from its inception, in which we honour the memory of all she and her colleagues achieved in developing understandings of gender and education in emergency conditions.

Sharing experiences and methodologies, discussing their usefulness and the challenges with their implementation is essential for and sustaining initiatives for gender equality in education. Thirteen years on from the release of the fundamental resource on gender training – the OXFAM Gender Training Manual – many innovative methods have been developed and used worldwide. But, despite some valuable compilations, some of which are listed in our resources section, much useful practice goes largely undocumented and undiscussed. We hope that this issue of Equals provokes debate and inspires you to share your own experiences.

Anna Azaryeva, Amy North and Elaine Unterhalter
Building staff confidence – the mentoring method

The Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF)

The Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) supports advocacy in 16 low income commonwealth countries in Africa and Asia and for the 2005 MDG target of achieving equality in primary and secondary education. CEF’s Gender Equality in Education Project (GEEP) launched in 2006 in Kenya, Ghana, Malawi and Bangladesh is designed to help local organisations and CEF coordinators to mainstream gender in their work. Mentoring has been the main approach used. This article presents reflections on the mentoring approach by Oley Dibba-Wadda, GEEP Project Coordinator, Nyokabi Kamau, Gender Mentor for CEF in Kenya, and Florence Wanzila Annan from the Girl Child Network, a partner organization in Kenya.

The Big Picture

Oley Dibba-Wadda

When the CEF began its work in 2002 there was an overarching commitment to undertake work on gender, but the organization initially did not prioritize this.

At the mid term review the omission was highlighted and an innovative approach to working on gender mainstreaming was initiated.

This involved gender mentors who worked alongside the CEF organizations in four countries to help them think about what they would do at each phase of their work to give gender an adequate profile. Thus the gender mentors did not see themselves as experts who wrote plans or delivered training sessions, but as resource people for the organizations who would help them decide on how to incorporate gender into all aspects of their work. A team leader could say to a mentor ‘what do I do about a particular activity? How do I introduce gender?’ and would find he or she was asked five or six questions back about what would be appropriate.

Mentoring was designed to provide long-term support and facilitate learning, enthusiasm and confidence.

A Gender Mentor’s Perspective

Nyokabi Kamau

Taking up the position of a mentor was a challenge. In the Oxford Dictionary the term mentor is defined as an “experienced and trusted advisor”. I have previously worked as a university lecturer, a gender consultant and a researcher. Being a mentor was what took time to become clear.

For a gender mentor the action required was to encourage CEF partners to come up with their own solutions to the glaring gender inequalities in education and other development sectors that have an impact on education.

As a mentor I also had to be a role model, share expertise on gender issues, provide feedback and advice where possible and relevant.

I worked with three partners: the Kenya National Association of Parents (KNAP), The Girl Child Network (GCN) and the Elimu Yetu Coalition (EYC).

During the mentoring exercise, we have helped our partners develop an understanding of gender, gender reporting, working with the media for gender advocacy, gender based violence, sexual maturation, and school monitoring. We observed a noticeable transformation of colleagues from being gender blind to being aware of gender issues in their work.

Participants are discussing the gender policy in education in Kenya during the Commonwealth Education Fund training.
When I joined CEF, gender was not an issue that KNAP had taken on board. But the organisation made significant progress in mainstreaming gender in their work.

We focused on key gender issues that need to be monitored in Kenyan schools: culture, poverty and lack of leadership on gender issues. These were seen to be the major causes of gender inequalities. I clarified what to monitor and the challenges that might come up.

There were times when I sensed that partners were seeing the focus on gender as an intrusion into their work. But the Gender Project Manager’s country visit strengthened the role of CEF in the project.

Working with KNAP showed that it is important that mentoring work is not too short lived. People being mentored require time to fully understand the new issues they will need to consider in their work. There were times when I sensed that partners were seeing the focus on gender as an intrusion into their work. But the Gender Project Manager’s country visit strengthened the role of CEF in the project.

Meeting all the four mentors, the Africa Coordinator and a mentoring consultant helped build a team and develop a feeling that I was not working alone.

I have learned a new skill of gender mentoring and have started sharing this with other organisations interested in promoting gender equality. Working with Government, facilitated by the Girl Child Network, is an important step. The Gender Unit of the Ministry of Education will certainly help sustain some of the CEF work.

There are still challenges to be addressed by partner organisations. These include the introduction of gender budgeting and improving the working conditions of school monitors. Incorporating gender into partners’ work plans requires close attention and commitment.

A Partner’s perspective

Florence Wanzila Annan

In Kenya, many people still perceive gender as a synonym of feminism (a term which has not been embraced in the Kenyan context). In reality, gender equality is simply about fairness and justice to all regardless of their gender, and an equal opportunity to participate in the social, political and economic development process.

As an education program officer at the Girls Child Network, Kenya, I train and exchange ideas with people from all walks of life and see the importance of mentoring in enhancing their dreams and aspirations. At the onset of the GCN training on gender issues I sensed the challenges that were ahead. As a young single woman, I jolted cultural perceptions on young women’s position in society ingrained in the minds of some of the older trainees. During a workshop on “Gender Responsive Management of the Sexual Maturation Process”, a man in his early 40s said that “if a woman was not married yet, there were issues that she shouldn’t speak about.” I understood his comment and wondered whether to continue at all. Then I remembered how the CEF Gender Mentor had explained to me the need to build a rapport with trainees and ensure that they did not feel that one was trying to uproot them from their culture but enhance it. I decided to continue with the topic and engage in discussion at an individual level.

This seemed to result in the workshop better achieving its objectives. My work with gender has helped me to appreciate not only the challenges that a young woman goes through, but also the importance of being mentored by someone more experienced and with a better understanding of gender issues. I built have a sense of confidence, enhanced my training skills and deal with people much older than me who were resistant to gender issues.

Rethinking mentoring

Working with the mentor, who is also relatively young, revealed that mentoring in our society has been misunderstood. A gender mentor needs to be well versed in gender issues, sensitive to people and willing to share knowledge and skills. These qualities, rather than age, were most useful in my work with the gender mentor.

I see mentoring helping to break stereotypes about men and women. It is useful for guidance and support in ensuring everyone in the community achieves their goals through participation in the development of their society. Mentoring is crucial in dealing with sexual abuse and female circumcision and early marriages. Girls and boys need to be equipped with confidence and a sense of vision to confront these challenges and maximize their potential. They need to be given a chance to positively influence the systems around them and participate in nation building.

Though the CEF project has come to an end, the skills and confidence I gained in the process are well ingrained. It has been like a “relay race” where I can pass over what I have learnt to others. But I feel a need for a continued mentorship to enable me to have a greater influence on the young men and women, girls and boys whom I continue to work with.

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Credit: Girls Child Network, Kenya
Teaching teachers to live positively in Malawi

Dhianaraj Chetty and Lawrence Khonyongwa

Since June 2007, an estimated 2,500 teachers in Malawi, a country in the midst of a mature HIV epidemic have taken the decision to disclose their status, organise themselves and change the education workplace. T‘LIPO, Malawi’s national network of teachers living positively with HIV and AIDS, is a sign of a new wave amongst people living positively with HIV and AIDS in Africa and it is a part of a larger story – TIWOLOKE – which is changing the face of the epidemic amongst Malawi’s teachers.

In 2003/4 UNICEF, ActionAid and the Ministry of Education initiated a pilot project focused on HIV and AIDS behaviour change among teachers. TIWOLOKE was developed in 2005 in an attempt to scale up the pilot project. In the education sector, the challenge was to reach an estimated 35,000 teachers and 22,600 spouses, which was roughly 78% of teachers in service.

TIWOLOKE sets a new benchmark in the African context for being one the largest public sector workplace interventions and by specifically addressing behaviour change amongst teachers and their partners across the education system. The behaviour change model is based primarily on the Stepping Stones methodology with some adaptations for the Malawi context. Overall, the TIWOLOKE model comprises 21 modules over a period of two weeks of contact time during the school holidays. Once the training is completed, Primary Education Advisors are expected to do some follow-up with the trainees. To date, 7,600 teachers have been trained through TIWOLOKE.

Teachers, Gender, HIV and AIDS

It’s no co-incidence that the two most successful networks of teachers living positively with HIV and AIDS in Africa are dominated and led by women. Both T‘LIPO and KENEPOTE (the Kenyan network of teachers living positively with HIV and AIDS), have remarkably similar appeal amongst women and point to a gendered dynamic in these organizations that has important implications for strategies and programmes aimed at reaching teachers in the context of HIV and AIDS. KENEPOTE’s membership too is roughly 75% female. With a few exceptions, T‘LIPO’s branches are predominantly female in membership. This pattern is replicated in the broader movement of people living positively with HIV in Malawi – an estimated 85% of NAPHAM’s (Malawi’s national network of people living positively with HIV and AIDS) members are women.

In Malawi, women teachers living with HIV believe their successes in organizing spring from common ground. Women are more willing and confident to take an HIV test and disclose their status. They rely on, invest in and take leadership of solidarity networks and organizations which sustain and represent people living positively with HIV. Women see themselves as more resilient than men and more capable of responding to stigma and discrimination. Women leaders have also developed a ‘political voice’ which is not represented elsewhere in an education system dominated by men.

Teachers living positively with HIV and AIDS are clearly beginning to challenge rights violations in the workplace and in their communities.

Teachers living positively with HIV and AIDS are clearly beginning to challenge rights violations in the workplace and in their communities. At the same time, they are claiming their rights to treatment and care, support and treatment strategies.

Teachers, Masculinity and HIV

Whilst the gender profile of T‘LIPO is evidence of a very positive trend in terms of reaching women, it also highlights the challenge of reaching men. It’s by no means a problem that is unique to education systems. Masculinities are known to play a major part in determining the efficacy of prevention, care, support and treatment strategies.

Evidence points to common concerns about the risk profile of male teachers, particularly the way in which their behaviour increases the vulnerability of women and girls in their lives. Of these behaviours: multiple sexual partners, sexual relationships with female students, other forms of sexual abuse and heavy use of alcohol during leisure time are all connected to prevailing norms of masculinity in Malawi social life.

Despite their successes to date, organizations such as T‘LIPO need to find ways to reach men more effectively to trigger lasting change in gender relations. This is particularly true in a society, which has yet to challenge its patriarchal institutional arrangements and social norms. Without a strategy for engaging men and challenging gender inequality, the fundamental dynamics of the epidemic will not be addressed.

Next Steps

Though the intervention attempts to address the inequalities between men and women teachers, we need a better understanding of how these are impacting the lives of women teachers and more deliberate actions which address these inequalities in the context of women and AIDS.

ActionAid’s research has shown that sexual harassment, rape and other forms of violence against girls in schools is a persistent problem in education, no less so in Malawi. Any intervention in the context of HIV and AIDS like TIWOLOKE has to show a measurable change in these practices and the impacts on girls and women.

Teachers living positively with HIV and AIDS are clearly beginning to challenge rights violations in the workplace and in their communities. At the same time, they are claiming their rights to treatment and dignity. Interventions like TIWOLOKE need to be re-enforced through policy interventions which redress and secure these rights in the long term.

Finally, governments must remain accountable for their responsibility in providing access to quality care, support, and services. The experience of teachers in Malawi highlights the power of organized civil society movements as a vehicle for achieving these changes, beyond individual behaviour change interventions.

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STAR circles
Jemal Ahmed

What is STAR?
Societies Tackling Aids through Rights (STAR) is a participatory approach for community mobilization, empowerment and response to the challenges of HIV and AIDS. ActionAid developed STAR in 2005 based on its longstanding experience with collaborative efforts that tackle education and HIV and AIDS. We are convinced that communities hold the power to reverse the negative trends of HIV and AIDS and are best suited to address the impact of HIV and AIDS on human life and development.

Open discussions help address traditions which may entail negative attitudes towards HIV and AIDS and inhibit communities from providing their members with an adequate response to the epidemic.

Implemented in over 19 countries with the support of Comic Relief and European Commission, STAR is reaching over 300 communities and covering 125,575 direct and over 1.2 million indirect beneficiaries.

How does it work?
Women, girls, the poor and the excluded members of a community as well as people living with HIV and AIDS organize at a village level forming a circle of 25-30 persons. There may be various circles in each community. These circles conduct regular meetings once or twice a week with the support of a facilitator trained on issues related to HIV and AIDS, gender and rights. The facilitator is supported by a supervisor or a local organization for information that is beyond his or her capacity. Meetings between circles are organized to deal with issues that go beyond one circle and that require joint action.

In a circle, topics are analysed in a broader context. For instance, discussion on livelihood can be linked to the discussion on HIV and AIDS and vice versa. The participants work together to identify different levels of tackling an issue and map out possible solutions. They determine whether an issue can be addressed within a circle or if it requires mobilization of other circles or community based organizations. The exercise of problem solving/solution analysis enables action on individual, group and community levels and can inform policy for change.

Personal development
The STAR approach includes literacy and numeracy sessions as well as development of life skills and knowledge that would enable circle participants and the community to understand, analyse and address issues that affect them in the context of HIV and AIDS.

Community action
STAR circles are a starting point for reflection and dialogue within communities. Each circle mobilizes individuals and community based organizations to promote solidarity and collaboration for action. The facilitator ensures that the STAR process is followed, the problem analysis is rigorous, and actions are well targeted. Local organizations are supported to demand services from duty bearers and influence local cultural norms and policy.

Positive results
The trifocal aspect of STAR on HIV and AIDS, Rights and Gender has allowed participants to address broader issues of poverty, vulnerability and injustice. In India, STAR proved to be successful in empowering communities to hold their governments accountable as duty bearers.

There, the circles of women mobilized community members to improve food rations distribution scheme.

STAR circles have become information centres on HIV and AIDS for other community members and have successfully lobbied for improvement of health services for people living with HIV and AIDS. As a result of STAR circles’ actions, local health offices sent technical personnel for training in family planning, voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) and home based care. Upon the demand of STAR circles thousands of individuals including inmates in Nigerian prisons accessed counselling and testing services. Circles of people living with HIV and AIDS in Uganda lobbied for and accessed CD4 count services that help individuals diagnosed with HIV monitor the status of their immune systems. In Northern Nigeria, they lobbied for antiretroviral therapy supply centres to be closer to the villages. Circles that gained literacy skills exposed the local health facility on the provision of expired drugs.

Improving the lives of communities
In many implementing countries, STAR circles address issues beyond HIV and AIDS. In Uganda, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe they identify orphans and vulnerable children and link them back to schools for enrolment. In Tanzania circles have lobbied for an increase in the cashew nut price. Groups in Uganda, Malawi and Mozambique run circle sessions on nutrition. Using locally available food ingredients, they seek to improve their dietary intake. In Mozambique, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, action points, developed in STAR circles, help women establish income generating activities. In Bangladesh STAR circles resist child marriage. In Zimbabwe cases of child sexual abuse are reported to circles and perpetrators are arrested.

Remaining challenges
Despite many successful stories with the STAR approach, challenges still remain. One of our main challenges is to ensure that while the empowerment and mobilization process are on the way, economic support programmes or entrepreneurship provide immediate benefits to circle members. Secondly, overtime, retaining facilitators and ensuring their continuous role in the circles becomes challenging. Additional efforts are necessary to nurture the level organizations on the issues of policy, gender and rights as to enable them to enhance the capacity of circle facilitators.

Jemal Ahmed is the STAR Project Manager at ActionAid International

Women sign in at the weekly women's group meeting to discuss health & hygiene in Bangladesh.
Gender training is not always a popular term. Interviews with NGO staff working with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon revealed questions related to gender training sometimes led to uneasy responses. Several NGO workers commented on inappropriateness of the preconceived notion of 'gender' promoted by international partners. They were reluctant to comment on activities to tackle gender. Their understanding of the concept was sketchy. This was partly because of a lack of such activities on gender and a frustration with the reporting mechanisms required by the development partners and the ways funding is distributed to projects. With disappointment, social workers commented that gender training was no different from other trainings organized by international partners. It entailed attending workshops in fancy locations and spending scarce funding on venues/luncheons instead of channelling this money to programming.

More discussion is necessary on how gender training and mainstreaming can be integrated into the work of local NGOs without compromising the validity of the concept by operational inefficiencies. As in other crisis situations, in Palestinian refugee camps where children suffer from poverty, lack of healthcare, poor housing, inadequacy of educational opportunities and chronic violence, the first priority is given to a holistic, integrated programming aimed at tackling multiple problems that children and their families face. For gender issues to be adequately addressed, they need to be situated within all other issues and tackled accordingly.

Despite the challenges, some organizations do attempt to provide gender training to their members and promote gender equality relying on methodologies used to address other issues such as child rights, health and safety and remedial education. Children and Youth Centre (CYC) in Shatila and Nahr El Bared provides one example of this process. Working in the heart of interlinked shantytown streets of Shatila and Nahr El Bared camps, CYC services some of the most disadvantaged children from the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon. The social, political and economic marginalization of these children cannot be overestimated. Girls and boys face a complex set of challenges including access to and quality of education, healthcare, housing. They struggle to overcome the psychosocial trauma of growing up in a violent environment. They are in constant search for identity. Many children grow up in traditional religious communities. They are subject to gender roles defined and reinforced by their society.

As they discover individual rights they learn what their rights are and how to claim them. As they discover individual rights they learn to appreciate the importance of respecting the rights of others. Putting child and human rights in practice in all activities organized by CYC allows boys and girls to experience gender roles differently from their family environment. This challenge prompts to the acceptance of traditional gender dynamics.

It is a combination of a child rights based approach to programming with intrinsically participatory methods of teaching that allows CYC to tackle some of sensitive issues with children and youth of all ages in a holistic fashion. But organizations like CYC would benefit from gender training methodologies designed specifically for working with youth and that can be easily integrated with training on other topics, including psycho-social work, remedial education and child rights. For more information on CYC go to http://www.cycshatila.org/

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An inspiring advocate for gender and education – Tribute to Jackie Kirk

Elaine Unterhalter

For a number of years Jackie specialised in gender, girls’ education and societies in conflict. This was a field she had helped build up, writing some key articles, developing a range of participatory training materials and advocating for the gender dimensions of education in emergencies and fragile states to be given recognition.

The immediate response the deaths of Jackie and her colleagues provoked worldwide indicated how crucial the work they did was. Around the world e-mail networks were activated and people exchanged messages of shock and deep appreciation. The people Jackie had brought together because of shared concerns could not believe that her dynamism in connecting their work could be so suddenly extinguished.

Jackie, born in 1968, grew up in the UK and trained as a teacher. She worked in a number of countries in Asia, where she developed her particular concerns with girls’ education, women teachers, emergencies, conflict and fragile states. She went on to work with UNICEF, UNESCO, IRC and the International Network for Education in Emergencies in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

A keen reader of Equals, Jackie co-ordinated the interviews with teachers in the Sudan reported in Issue 9 (November/December 2004). She profiled Helen Maya, Lona Venson and Mary Jane James describing their work in the Southern Sudan and concluded ‘Helen, Mary, Jane and Lona activated and people exchanged messages of shock and deep appreciation. The people Jackie had brought together because of shared concerns could not believe that her dynamism in connecting their work could be so suddenly extinguished.

New Reports

Gender Training and Fragile States: What Works?

Cindy Hanson and Kate McInturf

This report summarises results of a two day workshop held by The Gender and Peacebuilding Working Group of PEACEBUILD and Oxfam Canada in January 2008. The workshop participants from national and international organisations examined the state of gender training in the context of fragile states and focused on the gender training needs and experiences of those working in insecure environments with the aim of strengthening Canadian capacity in this area, as a contribution to global standards.

The report provides background and reflections on gender training, highlights key lessons from experience of the participants, and offers recommendations and follow up priorities for funders, organizers, trainers and participants of gender training in fragile states. The critical points of intervention identified in the report are clarifying the objectives of gender training, understanding and addressing the context in which it is taking place, designing and delivering it in a manner attentive to those contexts, and providing comprehensive evaluations and systems of accountability.

The book Jackie edited Women Teaching in South Asia will be published by Sage in India later this year. It contains articles on India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. A volume on the worldwide shortage of teachers, co-edited with Sandra Baxter, will be published by ID21 in September 2008. Funds in memory of Jackie have been organised by IRC and McGill University, where a collection of her writings on violence, emergencies and fragile states is being assembled by her close friend and colleague, Claudia Mitchell.

Jackie’s writing and ideas will continue to inspire the work she helped to initiate, but it is tragic that she can no longer give her particular astute and enthusiastic perspective on the global struggle for gender equality in education. The concluding words of her article in Equals in 2004 are still an aspiration we are striving to make happen: ‘It is imperative for international organizations, agencies and donors to support them in their initiatives, especially through training and capacity building. Advocacy work at the highest policy levels is also important to ensure that the voice of such women [teacher activists] are heard and that they can become equal partners in participatory policy and programme development.’ In mourning with Jackie’s husband, family, friends and colleagues we will try not to forget her words.
Oxfam’s Program Insights series on women’s leadership sets out approaches and lessons learned by examining women’s initiatives in different parts of the world. These range from preparing women to participate in politics, incorporating a gender analysis into community-based livelihood and economic programs, training women to advocate and lobby for their rights with representatives, and providing women the support they need when they enter into the political arena.

Eight well-conceptualized case studies describe what has been achieved. Four focus on the actions of women in Haiti, Sierra Leone, Britain and Honduras in preparing for elections, and providing training to the women elected. The other four focus on building women’s voice and decision-making in economics in the Philippines, Chile, and the Occupied Palestinian territories and Israel. An overview paper provides the backdrop laying out reasons why women’s leadership in decision-making is crucial to the sustainability of economic and social systems. The final paper gives resources. These include lists of toolkits and training manuals on gender and references to participation and strategies to strengthen activism. Reports and research papers on women’s leadership and political participation are provided. Key international women’s rights organizations are identified.

The ten papers in the series offer insights into best practices but also highlight the constraints that must be overcome in enabling women to participate fully in the decisions related to their economic and political empowerment. The case studies show women as agents of change and the necessity of promoting transformative and progressive leadership. The papers make the point that it is not enough to just elect women as leaders. Elected women are to be held accountable to ensure women’s needs are met. In the economic sphere, women’s input must be assured at all levels for sustainable results. A weakness of the analysis is that women’s inclusion in decision-making in all aspects of public and private life is not emphasized enough as crucial to society as a whole, not just to reflect needs of women. Women make up more than half of the world’s population, but are still seen to be relevant to decisions related to ‘issues affecting women’ such as equal pay, childcare, violence against women and unpaid labor.

While there is a mention of women’s leadership and participation being a basic human right enshrined in international treaties, the fact that women’s decision-making is crucial to ALL decisions related to civil society and government does not receive sufficient attention in the overview or the case studies.

On the whole, the series serve as a useful resource in the field of women’s rights and development. The information and analysis provided help make the case for attention to be paid to strengthening women’s leadership as well as to ably answer the question, ‘Why focus on women?’

Shalini Nataraj is Vice-President of Programs with the Global Fund for Women, the largest grantmaking foundation that exclusively supports women’s rights around the world.

Conference Comments

‘Equality is not a Utopia’: Women’s Worlds 2008

By Amy North

Between the 3rd and the 9th of July more than 3000 delegates gathered in Madrid for the 10th international interdisciplinary conference of women, Women’s Worlds. Held every three years, Women’s Worlds brings together women (and some men) working on gender and women’s rights from around the globe. Participants included academics and activists.

Drawing on the slogan ‘Equality is not a Utopia’, this year’s theme was ‘New Frontiers: Dares and Changes’. Migration, the trafficking of women and violence were given particular attention. In addition 13 thematic streams enabled discussion of issues ranging from economics to human rights. Education had its own stream with presentations focusing on gender equity in higher education or diversity education.

A panel presentation by members of the Gender, education and global poverty reduction initiatives project provided an opportunity to discuss findings from research looking at how global frameworks are being understood and acted upon in Kenya and South Africa and in global institutions.

The division of sessions into distinct thematic areas was useful in bringing together researchers with similar interests, although to some extent it limited the scope for wider exchange between thematic groups. Despite this, the conference provided an invaluable space for women around the world to make connections, initiate conversations and unite efforts in order to work collectively towards the achievement of gender equality.

More information about the Women’s Worlds conference is available at www.mmww08.org. The next conference will take place in Ottawa in 2011. More information about the Gender, education and global poverty reduction initiatives research projects is available at www.ioe.ac.uk/efps/egpapi
Gender-Responsive Methodologies and Guidelines for Planning, Teaching and Training
UNESCO
This resource bank compiles a range of UNESCO documents on gender-responsive methodologies, training manuals and guidelines for monitoring and evaluation. Available at: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=11362&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Training Guide: Continuum of Approaches for Achieving Gender Integration in Programming: A Decision-Making Tool for Education Officers
USAID
This guide, developed by the EQUATE project, can be used by trainers to conduct a session on Approaches for Achieving Gender Integration in Programming with their own partners and staff as well as other education practitioners who want to address gender inequalities in their programs. Available at: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/ed/index

Revisiting Gender Training: The Making and Remaking of Gender Knowledge: A Global Sourcebook
Oxfam – Franz Wong, Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay
Bringing together case studies and analyses of gender training from different country and regional contexts as well as an extensive bibliography of international resources, this book is a truly global resource on gender training. Available at: http://publications.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam/add_info_043.asp

Working with the Media on Gender and Education: A guide for training and planning
Institute of Education, University of London and Oxfam
This Beyond Access resource is designed to help education practitioners and activists explore gender issues and work with the media to promote gender equality in education. Available at: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/learning/education/index.html

Directory of UN Resources on Gender and Women's Issues: Gender Training
WomenWatch
This web portal provides a wealth of information on external and internal training materials used by UN entities, as well as on gender training programmes and methodologies. Available at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/gender_training_90.htm

Gender Training Wiki
UN-INSTRAW
This interactive online resource provides access to and possibility to share training courses, publications, toolkits, guides, and other information relevant to gender training. Available at: http://un-instraw.org/wiki/training/index.php/Main_Page

Weblinks

New Resource

Gender Mainstreaming: Does it Happen in Education in South Asia?
Chandra Gunawardena and Swarna Jayaweera

This series of papers aimed at promoting better education in South Asia grew out of collaboration between the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and the newly formed UN Girls' Education Initiative, and was originated at a Regional Meeting on Accelerating Girls' Education in South Asia in February 2005.

This report places the concept of gender mainstreaming in its international context, provides an overview of policies and examines the effectiveness of these policies and processes from a gender perspective. It presents a list of barriers to girls education in South Asia and lays out good practices and lessons learned in gender mainstreaming.

The initial focus is on girls’ education. The series is expected to broaden into a platform for discussion on more general education issues, with an emphasis on social inclusion and quality education for all in South Asia.

The report is available at http://www.ungei.org/resources/1612_1833.html

Letters

I am happy that Equals is back for its dedicated subscribers, congratulations! I still remember our 2005 Beyond Access workshop which by any standards was very successful. Be assured of our continued support and contributions. Currently I am the Executive Director of IFEPAC, an NGO committed to promoting access to education to pastoralist communities through open and flexible systems. We hope to share a lot as Equals can provide an effective forum for this kind of work.

Truly,
Kepkers Otieno, Kenya

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 Editors: a.north@ioe.ac.uk or by post: Amy North, EPFS, Institute of Education, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H OAL
The Commonwealth Education Fund

In 2001, British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown announced the creation of a Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) with a £10 million initial grant. CEF’s main focus is on strengthening civil society’s input into the Education for All (EFA) process to achieve international goals in low income Commonwealth countries. In an unprecedented collaboration, ActionAid, Oxfam GB and Save the Children UK agreed to act as co-managing agencies of the CEF.

Contact Details
Managing Editors: Elaine Unterhalter  
Sheila Aikman

Beyond Access was set up in January 2003. Its main aims are:
• To contribute to achieving MDG 3 – promoting gender equality and empowering women – by generating and critically examining knowledge and practice regarding gender equality and education
• To provide appropriate resources to share and disseminate for the purpose of influencing the policies of government departments, national and international NGOs and international institutions including UN agencies

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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

The CEF promotes the right to education by ensuring that governments fulfil their commitments through sound education policies, transparent and accountable financial procedures, and quality education provision that reaches the most marginalised girls and boys.

A special CEF project, the Gender Equity in Education Project (GEEP) is working with partners to help build their capacity to carry out gender analysis and advocate for gender equitable polices, budgets, and practices.

This issue of Equals has been supported by the GEEP project.

The CEF program itself will end in 2008, but it is hoped that recent research into sustaining funding for civil society advocacy in education will further this way of working at a national level beyond 2008.

For more information visit: http://www.commonwealtheducationfund.org/