

EQUALS

Newsletter for **Beyond Access: Gender, Education and Development**

Issue 5, March 2004

SOUTH EAST ASIA IN NUMBERS

48 %

of children enrolled in primary school who are girls, East Asia and Pacific (Unesco EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003-4)

50 %

of women (15 and over) in Lao PDR who are literate (2000, Unicef State of the World's Children 2003)

18 %

of Cambodian girls aged 15-17 are working and not attending school (ILO National Child Labour Surveys 2001. Boys' figure 13.5%)

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Schoolchildren in Hoa Binh province, Vietnam

Sheila Atkman

REPAIR WORK: UNESCO DESIGNS A TOOLKIT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

By Vibeke Jensen and Rajee Rajagopalan

Building capacity to set, monitor and evaluate gender targets in education has been the focus of UNESCO Bangkok and governments in the region. Gender focal points in Education Ministries have been identified and the DfID-funded Gender in Education Network in Asia (GENIA) project has helped to support this process.

Participants from 13 countries in Asia have been trained in gender analysis and gender mainstreaming of education policies. The materials, partly developed by Linda Pennels (gender consultant) and Vibeke Jensen (gender focal point UNESCO-Bangkok) in preparation of the workshop, and partly developed by the participants themselves during the workshop, has been packaged into a Toolkit for promoting Gender Equality in Education.

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UNESCO TOOLKIT (CONTINUED)

The GENIA toolkit contains several types of resources which are clustered under subtitles for easy reference with brief notes providing guidance for using these resources. These include:

- Tools to Open Minds to Gender and Education – Sensitizing and Training
- Tools to Explain Gender Mainstreaming
- Tools to Create Gender-Responsive Education for All Plans
- Gender Tools to Use in Education Ministries for gender mainstreaming of programmes and projects, curricula and child-friendly schools
- Resources on GENIA which include a slide show on the background and objectives of GENIA
- Networking Tools
- Resources focusing on the Role of the Gender Focal Point.

These tools are on coloured, laminated paper, so that they can be easily accessed and used regularly when carrying out gender analysis and mainstreaming.

The toolkit also includes a very useful EFA Gender Mainstreaming checklist for the following five stages:

- Stage 1 Research and Data Collection
- Stage 2 Policy and Planning
- Stage 3 Implementation
- Stage 4 Monitoring and Evaluation
- Stage 5 Sharing and Using Lessons Learned

A separate publication, 'Guidelines for Monitoring, Implementation and Evaluation of Gender Responsive EFA Plans' as a follow-up to the earlier 'Guidelines for Preparing Gender Responsive EFA Plans' has been produced by UNESCO-Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education. This has been included in the Toolkit.

The toolkit has been sent to gender focal points within Asian Ministries of Education, UNESCO and UNICEF offices in the region, UNESCO Headquarters, UNESCO offices in other regions

and it is also available on UNESCO-Bangkok's Gender Equality website (www.unescobkk.org/gender). It has been translated into a number of languages such as Russian, Nepali, Urdu, Vietnamese, Lao, Thai and Bahasa Indonesia. The toolkit has been much in demand and is highly valued by users as it fills a need for concrete practical tools to explain gender concepts and to undertake gender analysis.

UNESCO-Bangkok is also involved in other gender projects to assist countries in developing evidence-based strategies for gender and education. It has supported and continues to support many countries in building qualitative research capacity through a variety of research projects. It has just finalised a major project in Laos on issues related to girls' education in primary and secondary education. The draft report, which is a synthesis of two field-based studies, conducted in 6 provinces of Laos during 2002/2003 by two research teams, is published on the UNESCO gender website. Research projects currently under way are on *sexual harassment in secondary schools in Thailand*, *girls' drop-out of Grade 3 in Punjab in Pakistan*, *excluded minority groups and their access to education in Mongolia* and *how to attract more men to the teaching profession in Kazakhstan*. UNESCO-Bangkok is currently in the process of drafting a practical research manual on gender and education.

For more information, please contact

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

As the UNESCO Monitoring Report indicates, more children than ever before are attending school in the countries of South East Asia. Net primary enrolment ratios for boys and girls in Lao PDR, for example, increased by nearly 20 percentage points between 1990 and 2000. But despite the enrolment of large numbers of children – nearly half of them girls – at intake level, survival rates to secondary level are often low. In most countries in the region, girls are more likely to leave school prematurely, and so a gender gap in education persists – for instance, in Cambodia, only 70% of girls progress to secondary level compared to 81% of boys. Girls from ethnic minorities are least likely to have access to a quality education.

One of the main reasons why girls leave school prematurely is families' need for extra help at home, and often it is girls who are used the most to assist with childcare and cooking. Flexible school schedules such as those described in the Lao government study on pages 5-6 can help girls balance both work and study. However, many other girls and boys in South East Asian countries are involved in dangerous or exploitative labour that effectively prevents them from attending school. For instance, in ethnic minority areas along Burma (Myanmar)'s frontiers, army offensives have disrupted normal life, and children are often forced to serve as labourers or even as military porters in combat areas.

In February, we held our second international seminar in Kenya (see p.3 for full details and photos). One of the key aims of the Beyond Access project is cross-regional learning and the issues raised at the seminar held in Nairobi have strong messages for not only other East African countries but also for many South East Asian contexts. For instance, a key conclusion from the event was the need to work more effectively with differing ethnic groups to achieve gender equality in the classroom. Another important message was that educational quality and access go together; a secondary education, for example, becomes a more viable and attractive option in comparison to work when it is of a high quality and relevant to boys and girls, and majority and minority cultures. The crucial role that networks play in supporting teachers and teacher trainers, and in documenting and circulating good practice, was also emphasised in Kenya. An example of networking in practice in the East Asian region can be seen in Unesco Bangkok's work (see pp. 1-2).

In this issue you will also find an analysis of gender and other inequalities in Chinese education, plus regular features such as Talking with Teachers, news, forthcoming events and a letters page (p.12). Do keep the letters and comments coming in, and we very much hope that you enjoy this issue.


Chlöe Challender


Sheila Aikman


Elaine Unterhalter

SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND CHANGING CLASSROOMS: BEYOND ACCESS SEMINAR IN NAIROBI

Chloe Challenger and Elaine Unterhalter

Teachers need more support to deliver gender equality in schools. Their key needs are improved training, support networks and better classroom resources. This was the message emerging from the second international seminar in the *Beyond Access* series, held in Nairobi on 2-3 February 2004. Government, inter-government and NGO policy-makers sat together with practitioners from NGOs, and government departments, academics, union officials, and consultants. The seminar was opened by the Hon. Mrs. Beth Mugo, Assistant Minister for Education, Science and Technology in Kenya. She highlighted the important role of the event in meeting the challenge of the 2005 Millennium Development Goal and reaffirmed the Kenyan government's commitment to this. It is currently giving high priority to ensuring schools can access better resources, especially those which are important for girls' attendance.

The six papers presented drew attention to the key role of teachers and classroom interactions in linking together gender equality and quality education. Madeleine Arnot from the University of Cambridge highlighted how gender equality is a cornerstone of human rights, democracy and citizenship and central to democratic learning. Empowering children as learners and as citizens entails accommodating boys' and girls' different learning approaches. This process needs to take account of race, class and other cultural barriers. Teachers need support to be able to work with these difference so that all pupils can excel. As the use of corporal punishment can reinforce an anti-education form of masculinity, other forms of classroom management need to be considered.

Penina Mlama, Executive Director of FAWE and Mary Muito, Organising Secretary of FAWE Kenya representing the Elimu Yetu coalition, gave some examples of new forms of pedagogy. FAWE's Centres of Excellence are model gender responsive schools. They combine a focus on lifeskills and gender issues with high quality provision. Tuseme clubs bring girls together to identify the educational problems they face (Tuseme' means "Let's speak out in Kiswahili). They work to involve parents, teachers, and community leaders in discussing solutions. Mary Muito described some initiatives that have overcome the education obstacles girls face through the creation of stimulating and gender sensitive learning environments. While these projects were welcomed, participants at the seminar highlighted how much they needed to be extended and how sometimes policies are poorly implemented. Discriminatory teachers, an intolerant school and home culture and inadequate school facilities, e.g. toilets and sanitation, make gender equality elusive.



Eispeeth Page

The Hon Beth Mugo, Assistant Minister for Education, opens the seminar

Fatuma Chege of Kenyatta University examined the complex ways in which teachers and students construct gender and sexuality. Studies in five African countries show a problematic sexual dimension in the relationship between male teachers and girl pupils. Given this HIV/AIDS education has introduced new challenges. Teachers are expected to advise students on sexuality and provide living examples of non-risky behaviour. They need improved and extended training on how to manage this. Participatory learning environments were recommended for HIV/AIDS education to deal with gender equality issues.

Lebo Moletsane, from the University of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa, emphasized the importance of historical and geographical context in developing gender equality through teacher education. During the apartheid era in South Africa the concern with racial inequality meant that gender issues were overshadowed. South Africa still has a considerable way to go to implement gender equality in its schools. The policy frameworks put in place over the last decade have not been fully translated into successful interventions. She suggested teachers and teacher educators need to be more involved in the policy process. They can help identify contributory factors to gender inequalities and are central to the implementation of ameliorative pedagogical and curricular strategies.

Gaby Weiner of Umeå University, Sweden argued that, worldwide, schooling has not fulfilled its potential as a change agent capable of challenging gender inequalities. However, she suggested that the diverse field of education feminism has many useful ideas for addressing this failure. These include classroom methods built around explicit rules rather than a hidden curriculum; working towards a multi-voiced, interactive classroom; re-balancing of power relations toward students and demystifying and encouraging awareness of education feminism, and feminism more widely. Discussions following the presentation drew out the fact that the term feminism still has the capacity to shock. The need to avoid blanket prescriptions for how gender equality works in different settings was stressed.

Some key issues from the seminar included an emphasis on the interconnections between teachers, learners and policy makers. Educational quality and improved access go together. Policy and practice need to work in an integrated way to 'unlock' both of these simultaneously, not in sequence. Working more effectively with differing cultures, histories and contexts is of great importance. Further work is needed on gender equality and early childhood education and the stereotypes with which boys and men contend. The accuracy of indicators needs attention and stronger networks for gender equality in schools need to be built.



Eispeeth Page

Involving teachers in policy: Lebo Moletsane, University of Kwazulu Natal and Eunice Nyamasyo, Director of the Centre for Gender Studies, Kenyatta University

Seminar papers are available to download from www.girlseducation.org (Beyond Access link). A policy paper will shortly be available from the same address.

WHERE INEQUALITIES INTERSECT: THE CHALLENGE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION IN CHINA

Laetitia Antonowicz

Additional material Chloe Challender

Providing education for all in China has been a constant struggle for the government. Despite large-scale expansion and implementation of policies aimed at equality, Chinese education over the last 50 years has maintained inequalities – including gender inequalities. The enormity of the challenge for equality is partly because of the vast social and geographical diversity of the country. China's coastal regions, with their fertile plains and dynamic cities, are very different from the Himalayan region where people live at over 4000 metres. Of 1,300 million inhabitants, approximately one third live in cities. 92% of the population are Han and 8% are minorities (made up of fifty five different groups, comprising 100 million people) with different languages, social values and cultures. The minorities live mostly in border areas, mainly in the North, North West, and South West. Unsurprisingly, China's unequal distribution of income reflects this, the western provinces being the poorest and the eastern ones having the highest income per capita.

Education policies since 1949 have been closely related to the ideological, political and economic development strategies of China. In 1949, 80% of the population was illiterate, and in the early 1950s the government launched massive literacy campaigns for peasants, alongside literacy, primary and secondary classes in factories for workers. For the new communist government, educating the masses was a way to ensure that the new literate population would be able to read and write and would embrace the communist ideology partly spread by political propaganda. Literacy was also a path to ensure economic growth through the development of industry and production. In fifty years, China has experienced different educational orientations. Private education has developed increasingly since 1992. Expert education which stresses the development of skilled workers has co-existed with 'red' education with a focus on political propaganda. The education system has oscillated between concern for quantity and quality. A tension has existed between policies aiming at reducing inequalities and the maintenance of these inequalities in terms of classes, regional disparities, ethnicity and gender.

The 1954 Constitution states that "Women enjoy the same rights as men". This commitment has been reinforced more recently, through the "National Guidelines for the Development of Women (2000-2010)" and "National Guidelines for the Development of Children (2000-2010)", which promote women's participation in all aspects of socio-economic development, political, economic, cultural and social life – including a specific guarantee of equal opportunities in education. Communism has had a profound effect on women's lives. But gender inequality in access to education is still a reality, and the gender gap includes both access and achievement, according to the UNESCO EFA Report 2003/4. Girls are under-represented at all educational levels. In 2000, 71% of illiterate Chinese youth (aged 15-24) were female. 78% of these illiterate youth come from rural areas. Girls comprise 40% of enrolment at secondary level. This has not significantly improved since 1952.

The reasons for girls not being enrolled in schools are numerous and include high opportunity costs when girls are needed to work at home and early marriage. Despite communist ideology's egalitarian principles between the sexes, girls have been treated



Laetitia Antonowicz

Caught between egalitarian principals and prejudiced practice. Girl in classroom, Leshan, Sichuan

poorly in comparison to boys. If the binding of feet is often used to symbolise the unfairness between sexes in the pre-communist Empire of the Middle, the series of laws on the single child and their dramatic consequences on baby girls' survival in rural China could be seen to symbolise gender inequalities in modern

China. According to demographic estimates, there are 29 million 'missing women' in China. The term 'missing women' was coined in 1990 by Amartya Sen to

represent those female children who have either not been born or not survived beyond infancy because they have suffered anti-female bias in nutrition and health care or who have been victims of sex-selective abortion or infanticide of female babies.

"Gender inequalities in China intersect with general educational inequalities"

Gender inequalities in China reveal how educational inequalities (geographical, socio-economic, and ethnic) intersect with one another and are reinforced by factors such as fathers' education, residence status, ethnicity, poverty, and disability. The following data comes from a nationally representative survey of children between 7 and 14 years (156,63 boys and 142,415 girls), conducted as part of the last survey carried out by the Chinese State Statistical Bureau in 1992. It is updated with information from the 2003-4 Unesco EFA Global Monitoring Report to show that, whilst some gender inequalities have reduced, a regionally influenced gender gap still exists.

The residential status of girls influences their enrolment in school. Slightly more girls enrol in urban areas than boys. In rural areas, girls are disadvantaged, with only 86% enrolled, against boys' 93%. The more difficult the geographical situation is, the lower the children's enrolment. 94% of boys living in flat rural areas are enrolled, versus 90% in mountainous areas. But this geographical situation has greater repercussions on girls' enrolment, with only 80% of girls enrolled in mountainous areas. More girls in rural areas, look after other family members, work the fields or earn money. Ten years on from the census, in 2002, this inequality remained. Overall slightly more boys than girls enrolled in school (net enrolment rate for boys was 98.62% compared to 98.53% for girls). In terms of years spent in school, however, a far more marked gender disparity is in evidence, with rural areas such as Guizhou, Ginhai, Gansu and AnHui displaying the largest disparities between girls' and boys' total years of schooling (girls in these areas have around two years' less schooling than boys). In addition, the educational status of rural-urban women migrants is hugely disparate to the education of male peers. 9% of female

youths and adults in this group have completed lower secondary and 1% upper secondary schooling, while the data for their male peers are 52% and 17% respectively.

Ethnicity affects girls' schooling. Gender disparities in enrolment are more pronounced among ethnic minorities than ethnic Chinese. There are also substantial differences between ethnic minorities. For example, girls belonging to the Korean or the Manchu groups are more likely to go to school than Hui or Tibetan girls. The explanation may be cultural and religious. Korean and Manchu are well integrated in China and their customs and values are similar to the Han ones. In contrast, Hui people are Muslims. Tibetan people have a strong ethnic identity and a stormy history with the communist government. Traditionally, education in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries has been exclusively for boys. This practice continues, although the incidence of boys receiving a monastic education is decreasing.

In the 1992 census, it was found that parents' level of education and poverty has a stronger effect on girls' education than that of boys. Children who have a father with a low level of education are more likely to drop out for economic reasons than those with more educated fathers. Unsurprisingly, with the same level of fathers' education, girls are more likely to drop out for economic reasons than boys. With a father having a primary level of education, 30% of boys and 45% of girls had dropped out due to economic reasons. Only 19% of boys and 33% of girls with a father with a General Secondary level of education dropped out of school for economic reasons.

Whilst there are no updated figures to assess the influence of parental education on girls' access to schooling post-2000, it

seems likely that along with other inequalities it will persist. However, over the last decade a number of government policies have been introduced to address urban-rural and wealth divisions. For example, a large-scale education project was launched for children living poor areas of rural Western China during 1995 and 2000 with a total investment equivalent to 1.2 billion US dollars, the biggest single allocation in the last 50 years. In another attempt to close the urban-rural gender gap, the Ministry of Education announced a ten-step initiative for girls' education in 1996. Measures included awareness-raising within society concerning girls' legal right to a nine-year compulsory education; flexible school arrangements to include boarding facilities and adaptable timetables; literacy programmes for girls who have left school prematurely and better evaluation frameworks for monitoring interventions in girls' education.

These measures will undoubtedly help China to lessen its inequalities. But serious challenges remain if the gender gap in education, and the inequalities with which it intersects, based on region, ethnicity, poverty and parental background, is to be closed. As the 2003-4 Unesco EFA Global Monitoring Report itself points out, China needs "policy consistence, at community, national and international levels", as well as a "proper match between the densely populated and sparsely distributed communities, between short-term intervention and long-term continuity." Only then will the world's most populous country have the equitable education system for which it strives.

Laetitia Antonowicz lived in Asia for 6 years, including 2 years in Beijing. She currently works for Education for Change, a London-based company working on education and development. She can be contacted at l.antonowicz@efc.co.uk.

DEVELOPING GENDER POLICY FROM RESEARCH IN LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Yangxia Lee

With a very diverse population - 47 ethnic minorities and 6 main language families - the Lao People's Democratic Republic is attempting to implement policy changes to create a more inclusive education system. As in many other countries, it is rural and ethnic minority girls who face most difficulties when seeking to complete a basic education. Lao PDR's gender inequitable adult literacy rates (male 77%, female 54%) reflect the significant gender gap which exists throughout the state education system. Girls represent 43% of primary school enrolment and 37% of secondary level enrolment. This drops to just 17% at university level.

Whilst the Lao government is attempting to address the poverty levels which underlie these figures (Lao is ranked 135 out of 175 countries in the UNDP Human Development Index), it is simultaneously exploring the wider reasons behind the gender gap in education. *Gender And Ethnicity in the Context of Equality and Access in Lao Education* reports on a large-scale research exercise was carried out in conjunction with UNESCO in 2003. Researchers were drawn from the Ministry of Education and a variety of other government departments, Provincial and District Education Services. They carried out over 800 interviews across 6 provinces. Participants were girls and boys from primary and secondary schools, girls and boys who had dropped out of schools and their parents, provincial and local education officials, school principals and teachers and village leaders and elders. 45 per cent of participants were female and 55 percent male. Classroom observations were carried out in six primary and two lower secondary schools (over a duration of 40 lessons in total) and in two dormitories.



Yangxia Lee

Phackhea Lower Secondary School students after school outside their dormitories, Xienkhouang province.

Research findings and policy recommendations

The main finding was that little consultation was taking place between schools and communities concerning education. This was despite communities generally placing strong emphasis on education as the 'way ahead' for their children. The number of schools available and their location were pivotal issues for those consulted, especially at secondary level. Greater adaptation to local contexts was needed, for example the school calendar could be more flexible to allow for girls' responsibilities outside school. Teacher absenteeism was a matter of concern for schools and communities. Teachers stressed how strong a role they play in mobilizing pupils and parents to retain students.

Policy recommendations concerning these issues included capacity building at community level for collection and analyses of school-based data. Communities need help to separate the issues of "poverty" and "housework" as factors leading to girls' exclusion from education, and need to find practical solutions to both problems. They also need support implementing mechanisms to address the problem of absentee teachers and unpaid teachers.

There were divergent views regarding the cleanliness of schools. Inspections found schools to be "relatively clean" – and yet girls themselves often perceived them to be "dirty". The study noted that whilst toilet facilities were generally available, there was often no water supply. Other classroom resources were also found to be deficient; there were few locally or school-generated materials, for example, and few displays of pupils' work. A number of children brought young siblings to classes with them due to a lack of alternative care facilities, and teachers' very own young children were also present in some classes. Policy recommendations developed in response included the provision of support for married girls to return to school by changing regulations, providing childcare facilities and allowing flexible hours. Greater flexibility in school schedules and locations was also recommended to enable girls to attend school despite their changing life situations as wives/mothers and workers with non-regular hours.

Boys, girls and primary teachers believed that boys and girls can achieve equally well. However, at secondary school level there were some instances of gender bias amongst teachers, who perceived boys to be better at mathematics and sciences and girls to be better at social sciences. These perceptions did tend to be borne out by grade scores: at both primary and secondary levels, girls ranked first in handicraft and art while boys ranked first in mathematics and physical studies. Language of instruction is an issue, particularly for girls; teachers acknowledged difficulties in learning for some ethnic minority students. Students generally perceived the teaching and learning they received to be "gender-fair". However, teachers were seen to interact with the "class" as opposed to the individuals in it and in practice, more boys than girls participated in classroom activities. Stereotypes were in operation concerning the responsibilities of boys and girls: class presidents tended to be boys, whilst girls headed cleaning groups. Some students pointed out the lack of life skills or the lack of HIV/AIDS education, and others emphasized the need for more practical skills to be developed in school. Some ethnic minority girls commented on the lack of relevance of the curriculum.

In response the government is looking at the development of policy, programmes, teacher training and materials in local languages to ensure those affected most by the language barrier



Yangxia Lee

In need of some flexibility: students in their classroom at Houaphaix Primary school, Oudoumsay Province.

– girls and ethnic minority students – are not held back because of it. Continued professional education for teachers, school managers and education officials is being developed to ensure these key groups can act to ensure a learner-centered, gender responsive, child-friendly school. Extra-curricular and tutorial programmes for girls are to be introduced in subjects such as mathematics and sciences so that girls are not in competition with boys. Local adaptation of the curriculum originating in schools is being looked into. The collaboration of the community and special discussions with women have been suggested to ensure gender issues are addressed. Both upper primary and lower secondary education are to provide a life-skills focused programme (including HIV/AIDS).

"School facilities and systems need to be more gender responsive"

The over-riding gender issues to emerge from the study were the need to make school facilities and systems more gender responsive, with flexible timetabling and facilities, and the need to reduce gender bias amongst teachers, so that girls can participate fully in all classes, even traditionally 'masculine' subjects such as mathematics and science. Whilst the interventions described above will go some way to redressing these inequalities, advocacy and capacity-building at national, provincial and district levels will also be essential. Only then will legislative change – such as the right of married and pregnant girls/women to attend school – be introduced.

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To order a copy of the report, contact the Director of the Department of General Education, Mr. Khamhoung Sacklokham P.O. Box 67, Ministry of Education, Vientiane, Lao PDR

VIEWPOINT: WORKING FOR GENDER EQUITABLE CURRICULUM IN VIETNAM

Nguyen Thi Mai Ha

In Vietnam, the Government has long prioritized advancing the role of women, and since the Beijing Conference in 1995 these efforts have been stepped up. Two national strategies have been put into action, one to the year 2000 and one to 2010. However, a gender gap has and still does exist in society, particularly in education. Gender issues in curricula, for example, are only now beginning to be addressed.

The government's first National Plan of Action for the Enhancement of Women and Gender Equality – effected between

1997 and 2000 – began the process of instituting changes in curricula. The Plan of Action outlined a large number of concrete actions and linked areas of responsibility for ministries, branches, provinces and cities in implementing the plan. The Plan covers education and training plus a whole range of issues with implications for gender equality, including income; health care; women in leadership and decision-making; the role of the family and women's and girl's rights. Then in 2003, the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) built on the initial blueprint by asking ministries and government branches in

provinces and cities to develop individual Plans of Action for implementation within their areas of jurisdiction. These local-level Plans ensured the overall national strategy was adapted to regional needs. According to its own circumstances, each provincial committee was constituted of members from trade unions, the People's Council, the People's Committee, the Women's Union and the Youth Union. However, one common feature of the committees is that they must be headed by a representative of the national steering board. In total, all of Vietnam's 64 provinces, its 26 ministries and branches, 14 of its government agencies, 14 non-government agencies, and 6 socio-political organizations have now completed the development of their own Plan of Action.

So what changes are being introduced in the education system, particularly in curricula? Curriculum designers and textbook authors have participated in training courses on gender equality, including women's role in society and reproductive health education, ensuring that in the future textbooks will promote gender equality. The government has also designed gender training modules for teachers. In addition, courses on gender and the rights of the child have been provided for educational managers and members of parents' associations.

Gender is covered in reproductive health education for students in colleges and professional schools. In continuing education, gender training has also been integrated into courses such as agricultural production and health care.

International organizations have contributed to the running of projects addressing gender equality for teachers and educational managers, for instance a multi-grade teaching project funded by UNICEF for remote and ethnically mixed schools. This project uses a child-centred approach and focuses on gender and the rights of the child, looking at female pupils' needs, the fair treatment of boys and girls, how to avoid compromising traditional roles and how to create quality learning environments for pupils.

So, in Vietnam gender issues are beginning to be addressed in the curriculum. The methods outlined above can be regarded as positive first steps. Other techniques in progress include enhancing training on gender for primary and pre-school teachers, developing enhanced gender training courses for higher education and developing an Institute of Women in which gender training can be centered in the curriculum. We very much hope that all these interventions will help close our gender gap in education.

Nguyen Thi Mai Ha works at the National Institute for Educational Strategy and Curriculum, Hanoi, Vietnam

TALKING WITH TEACHERS

Shobha Bajpai, a teacher at Uda Government Middle School, Uda village in Harda block in Madhya Pradesh, India talks to **Manoj Singh** about the Millennium Development Goals and the issues surrounding gender equitable education.

Some people think the problem of getting girls to enrol and stay in school is very complicated. They think the big problem of educational discrimination against girls will only be solved after a lot of research and experimentation.

These things may increase the speed of change. But things are already happening on a small scale. Many of us already know what contributes to girls' failure and success. Some rural girls are already persisting and succeeding in government schools, even where teachers appear to have no gender-awareness. Many of the interventions do not have to be specifically focussed at girls or at boys: but they must be focussed on quality. As the quality of government schools (and obviously teachers) improves, all children benefit - and girls may even benefit more - as government schools are often their only option.

If we want all children to have a fair chance, and a useful education, schooling should be compulsory for 12 years. As it will be compulsory, there must be enough places in functioning schools for everyone. More girls than boys drop out the further they progress up the school system, as the number of schools reduces and travelling distance to them increases. Many pupils, usually more girls than boys, are also discouraged by the cost of book, uniforms and tuitions that increase with each year in school. The government must supply free textbooks, and increase the number of scholarships and places in safe and comfortable residential hostels. These incentives should be available to any child, girl or boy, from any social group, depending on need.

School and classroom environments affect pupils' enthusiasm and learning. While schools must be physically safe, the attitude and behaviour of the teachers with the pupils, their parents and each another is very important. Teachers' attitudes can encourage attendance and success - or they can discourage it. The number of pupils in each class is also important - today's growing class sizes make effective teaching and learning very demanding for everyone.



Shobha Bajpai (rear of group, centre) with students in Uda village.

If we want to encourage pupils to stay at school, they have to be interested and motivated. Many of the girls and boys who drop out say that they do so because they just aren't interested - that school is boring. The syllabus must be matched with students' interests (those of girls as well as boys) and abilities and there must be room for their experiences. Textbooks shouldn't just present facts and pupils be forced to cram them. There must be discussion and debate, helping pupils to think for themselves, and activities to help students work together and understand each another. Exams (or assessment) should test these types of skills, not just rote-learned facts.

Schools shouldn't only be places where pupils are taught academic skills: they must be places where pupils learn social and life skills, especially co-operation and empathy. As co-educational schools are one of the few environments where adolescent girls and boys from different families regularly mix, teachers have a duty to help them interact well. Teachers must ensure that no-one is threatened or undermined in or near to school, and to help girls and boys relate in ways that will contribute to a better, more equal future.

GLASS CEILINGS AND STICKY FLOORS

Naomi Bartholemew worked in a teacher training college in China. She interviews some of her former students about the gender dimensions of their work as teachers.

Lin Xingjian

Lin Xingjian is from a remote village. It takes twelve hours by bus to get to the city on treacherous mountain roads. She has a passion for English Literature and loves her teaching job. For Lin, study was an escape from the village and an early marriage and teaching continues to keep her in a world where further study is possible and 'brighter lights shine.' She has married and has a son but is determined to continue her study and her professional development. She is currently working towards her Masters. She feels that jealousy from a female colleague meant that she was assigned a teaching position in a remote village for a term 'to keep in touch with current practices and trends.' The posting coincided with the application for further study so Lin Xingjian missed the chance of a place at Beijing Teachers' University but has continued to pursue her studies now back at the college.

She must juggle roles of mother, wife and teacher as well as student but finds fulfillment in her study, since it is there where she can "grow knowledge and understanding and fight my own wars of thought and win".

She always sounds relieved and excited by study prospects:

Teachers from Beijing have come to teach us during the holiday. I am so excited that I have now completed two courses. I don't think we can learn enough. I try to digest it quickly to not forget and to put into practice some of the new ideas. An academic thesis is required for my course, it is truly a challenge for me.

Xiao Lu

Xiao Lu is the only child of a middle class family from the city and was disappointed at not having secured a place at a university. However, she graduated top of the class and secured a job in a medical college teaching English, where she was also in charge of the foreign teachers employed at the college.

Xiao Lu felt satisfied at having become a teacher in an environment where the working conditions are far more favourable than in schools. She enjoys her work and says: 'I feel satisfied when I teach.' Yet Xiao Lu is unsure if she deserves such fulfillment and she often comments, 'I am not a real teacher.' As teaching accounts for only half of her job and does not involve struggle she seems unsure of her right to claim her title as teacher.

Xiao Lu suffered greatly from role conflict with parental pressure for her to get married, to which she succumbed. She has recently had a son, which again she felt she must do in order to fulfil expectations of her. Now her teaching is another burden. She has married a teacher. He spends time at work and then at home doing professional work. She must combine the multiple roles of wife, daughter-in-law (since she lives in her husband's parents' home), teacher and mother. Xiao Lu feels that as a woman she should put her family duties first. Like other women in China Xiao Lu is concerned not to sacrifice family to achieve success in work for fear she would then be perceived as lacking a certain *nuren wei*, or "womanliness." Her day is a long and arduous one involving cooking, cleaning, teaching and mothering. Perhaps she cannot feel like a real teacher because she has neither the time nor the support to be one.

Qian Zhao

Qian Zhao comes from a remote village where her parents grow rice with their four other children. She is the only one to have gained a place at college and felt privileged to train as a teacher in the city, although she also felt some conflict over remaining in the

city with a teaching job or returning to the village to teach. When I asked Qian Zhao, "Why do you want to be a teacher?" she replied:

Teaching is a divine and venerable profession. A teacher must have great responsibility to her work. Her words and deeds must be correct and exact so that she can set a good example to her students. If she is an excellent teacher, she will be esteemed everywhere.

Her knowledge and dedication was full of the rhetoric delivered by Communist party members of the teacher education department. They seemed likely to serve her well in interviews where she would be expected to show deference and respect as well as a sense of duty.

However, one evening after a round of interviews Qian Zhao returned to me very upset. The Chinese system of using relationships, 'guanxi', to secure jobs was prevalent in the city, and she tearfully told me how a group of male officials had bullied and intimidated her. She asked how I thought she could pay the 5000 RMB that had been asked to 'pass under the table' in order for her to secure a position in a suburban Primary school. 'How will I eat, that is over double my first year's salary?'

I helped her to secure other interviews, but she was met with similar scenarios. But at last I saw a smiling face when she came to see me very excited at the prospect of having a wonderful job offer from a 'businessman' who had come to the college to employ graduates for translation jobs in Shenzhen, the prosperous city on the border with Hong Kong. I was confused and worried by the offer that seemed just too good to be true. I rushed to the girls' dormitory to find out more about the offer and Qian Zhao described how excited she was at the chance to translate for businessmen in a job that was also to include 'entertainment' of wealthy Hong Kong gentlemen or even foreigners for social functions and may even lead to marriage opportunities.

The College Dean arrived hurriedly at the dormitory and it came to light that the girls were effectively being stolen and sold into prostitution as wives to Korean men. I am not sure whether Qian Zhao knew that reality and had decided to risk the consequences. She had been so distraught by the lack of chance to work as a teacher, a profession she had been taught was a 'selfless act of love for the future generation of China.' I do know that Qian Zhao saw little chance of escaping the poverty in which she would have been trapped, repaying loans she would have had to have taken to secure the teaching jobs offered.

With several colleagues and three hours of persuasion we managed to keep five girls in their beds that night; Qian Zhao was one of them.

After several more months of applying for jobs and working as a home tutor for richer families in the city where she experienced sexual harassment and sexual threats from her students' fathers and older brothers, Qian Zhao finally found a job as a secretary with 'a kind and loving family'. When I asked her recently of her views of women teachers she still spoke of her respect for them. Her language is the language of sacrifice:

Chinese people like to compare teachers to both silkworms and candles. They think the silkworm will die only when it spits out its last silk and the candle will burn until its last drop of ash falls.

When I ask if she would like to teach in the future she says that

she is glad to be using her skills as a secretary and admits:

Naomi, as you have seen some teachers in faraway countryside areas have very hard working conditions. They have low wages and inconvenient traffic and even no TV. However, they have strong wills. They help poor students to return to school for further study, they even draw out money to finance the building of schools. I have been affected by many stories from teachers, they have no complaints and they don't care for any reward, their greatest support is the success of their students. Yet for young graduates teaching is not always a steady job any more, in fact if one cannot 'secure' the job one may face unemployment.

Qian Zhao has turned her back on a profession in which she would have been trapped into a life of servitude not so dissimilar to that of the life she may have been taken to in Shenzhen. As she puts it, she has had 'a double lucky escape'.

Naomi Bartholemew is currently Head of Year 4 at a school in Hampshire, UK. She welcomes emails and discussion concerning gender and education within global contexts, and can be contacted at naomibartholemew@yahoo.co.uk.

FROM DRAWING BOARD TO BLACKBOARDS: TEACHERS WORKSHOP IN NAIROBI

Chloe Challenger

Kenyan teachers and teacher educators had an opportunity to reflect on gender issues and discuss how to put gender equality into practice in the classroom at a workshop in Nairobi organised by the Beyond Access project, with the support of the Kenyan Ministry of Science, Education & Technology, on 3 February.

"Gender issues were clearly understood by our participants because of the use of relevant resources and examples drawn from the Kenyan Education System", said Juliet Njeri, a teacher trainer from Nairobi University who co-facilitated the workshop with Nyokabi Kamau and Elspeth Page from the Institute of Education, University of London. Workshop participants also included teacher trainers, inspectors, Ministry of Education officials, NGO representatives and curriculum specialists.

The workshop consisted of interactive sessions looking at implementing gender equality at classroom level. Participants divided into small groups and undertook practical activities such



Discussing the solutions to gender problems.

as analysing textbooks for gender biases and developing plans for lesson presentation. Many stressed the importance of building networks to take the work forward.

Participants responded enthusiastically to the chance to openly discuss their own experiences of gender equality in the classroom and there was barely a quiet moment in either the small group or plenary sessions. Participants' evaluations of the day offered many positive comments. "Forums like this with more activity will help create an awareness which will improve the lives of many girls", said one participant. "Bringing teachers, policy makers and the NGOs together adds great value to the gender agenda", said another. Concerns with the need for follow-up training activities in this area, and the need to hold such events in rural areas, were voiced by many participants. The Beyond Access project is exploring follow up work with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kenya.



Analysing textbooks for gender bias.



Facilitating the day: Juliet Njeri (left) and Elspeth Page (right).



Barely a quiet moment discussing strategies.

Patricia Ames

Patricia Ames

Patricia Ames

Patricia Ames

BOOK REVIEWS

J. Ann Tickner 2001, *Gendering World Politics* New York: Columbia University Press, (200 pages) ISBN 0-231-11367-6

Reviewed by Chloe Challender

"The valorization of war through its identification with a heroic kind of masculinity depends on a feminized, devalued notion of peace." This quote summarises several of the crucial threads running through this book, which aims to explain how feminist thought has informed the field of International Relations (IR). Tickner's approach is highly logical and accordingly very persuasive. She takes us straight to the core of the matter - how feminists perceive gender divisions to pervade not only state machinery but the very concepts underpinning IR. 'Security' and 'sovereignty' evoke ideas of boundary, division and other dichotomies such as 'inside and outside' or, indeed, 'war and peace'.

As well as exploring theoretical arguments, Tickner explains feminism's specific contributions to IR scholarship. For instance, a number of scholars have highlighted the ever-increasing number of civilian casualties in war (now often around 90% of all casualties), challenging the myth that wars are fought by males to protect 'vulnerable' people, generally seen as women and children.

The second half of the book focuses on two of IR's major preoccupations, globalisation and democratization. Tickner explains how feminists have informed these debates, and where feminist and traditional IR thought diverge. A key feminist argument is the gendered nature of structural adjustment programmes, i.e. that as government is cut back, an increased burden of education and health provision falls on women's shoulders. In Chapter 4, which looks at democratization, Tickner

explores the feminist notion that new democracies are often unfriendly places for women. With so many energies and resources focused on building male-dominated state institutions there is little emphasis on 'luxuries' like grassroots movements (where women's political input is likely to be concentrated), and the cycle of male dominance is perpetuated even in new states in which much hope for change has been invested. Girls' rights to education and health are also likely to be constrained in a nascent, resource-poor state - they are left for a time when the nation begins to flourish, and when masculine dominance has once more taken root. Whilst Tickner admits that a number of African and Latin American countries defy this trend, new democracies in East Europe and Russia appear to confirm it. Women's political participation and gender equality in education have actually declined since the transitions of the 1990s.

Tickner notes that, due to their need to work with marginalized voices and local knowledge, feminists often use the term "conversation" to describe how they generate research. The term could also usefully be applied to *Gendering World Politics*, which seeks to strengthen the emerging points of contact between feminism and IR. It would have been easy for Tickner to simply use this book as an opportunity for a polemical critique, given the gender biases within the IR field. But she limits herself to a carefully thought-out, logically organized "conversation" instead - a far more clever and effective method of bringing two very disparate worlds together.

Kate Dyer 2003, *A Simple Guide to Working with Finances and Education* Oxford: (OxfamGB and TEN/MET)

Reviewed by Sheila Aikman

This is a short visually attractive booklet designed to provide tools for understanding how budgets work - the systems, the processes and the outcomes. It is written for NGOs and CBOs who want to get involved in monitoring and tracking budgets at national and sub-national level. It outlines how civil society organisations can engage with and influence expenditures.

The booklet was developed from workshops with NGOs and CBOs in East Africa. It was designed to help them think about where the money for EFA is going to come from, how to get more money for EFA, how to redistribute the money that does exist and how to understand spending outlined in education plans.

To engage with these questions and begin to challenge ministries and institutions on budget issues the booklet provides a guide to what budgets and budget systems are, how they work and how to understand budget outcomes. The Guide is divided into 5 chapters addressing these questions in clear language with helpful graphics. It concludes with a practical chapter on how to get started in budget work. There is a guide on where to find useful resources.

The Guide is intended for people who might normally shy away from engaging with budgets, thinking this is the work of others and of finance departments. This booklet makes budget work accessible and understandable. It also shows clearly how we cannot afford NOT to engage with budgets if we are committed to holding governments and donors accountable for their commitments to EFA and gender equity.

While the Guide was written first and foremost for and with education practitioners and NGOs it has already showed its value in a much wider arena. The Guide was recently welcomed by participants at a workshop on Civil Society Monitoring for National Accountability held in Lilongwe, Malawi, who are engaging with budget tracking of PRSPs, agriculture and health as well as education.

A PDF version of the Guide will shortly be available on the Beyond Access website.

CONFERENCE COMMENTS

Gender and Education at the World Social Forum, Mumbai 16-21 January 2004

Rajee Rajagopalan

A workshop held during the World Social Forum (WSF), in Mumbai in January 2004, had particular implications for gender and education. The Gender Education Office (GEO) - a network focusing on education and gender issues worldwide - organised a workshop on 18 January looking at "Education for Inclusion: a Gender Perspective". Participants, including representatives from Austria, Brazil, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Spain, Uganda, UK and USA, shared their experiences and the difficulties with attaining inclusive education, particularly for women, were highlighted. The main objectives of the workshop were to deepen an awareness of the links between education and inclusion, and to more clearly understand how people experiencing similar problems with

education and inclusion, but in different contexts, could better work together.

The International Council for Adult Education organised a dinner for its members attending the WSF on 17 January. Speeches and discussions reflected the disappointment felt by many that education issues did not appear on the main WSF agenda (despite the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education's campaigning efforts). But there was excitement around the move of the WSF to India and Mumbai in particular, where many education initiatives flourish.

CAMPAIGN

VSO Launches 'AIDS Agenda'

A new campaign launched by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) in February 2004 highlights the importance of gender equality in mounting an effective response to HIV and AIDS. The AIDS Agenda campaign is based around the inequalities between women and men and how these directly contribute to the spread of HIV. The number of women contracting HIV is surpassing that of men in some areas, and the impact that HIV and AIDS is having

on women and girls is equal to or greater than that of men. A new position paper, 'Gendering AIDS: Women, Men, Mobilisation, Empowerment' marks the beginning of the new campaign, and draws on new research from Namibia, South Africa, Cambodia and India.

http://www.vso.org.uk/advocacy/hivaids_gender.htm

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

19-25 April 2004

Global Campaign for Education Week of Action 2004: The Biggest Ever Lobby

National lobbies, 'Politicians Back to School' events and coordinated messages to presidents and prime ministers. More details and downloadable planning packs available from www.campaignforeducation.org.

28-29 April 2004

Beyond Access Seminar/Workshop 3: Resources for Gender Equality and Quality Basic Education (Oxford, UK)

This event will examine issues relating to the resources required for gender equality in education - particularly finance, time, training and infrastructure. Confirmed speakers include Sabina Alkire, Harvard University, Jill Blackmore, Deakin University and Ramya Subrahmanian, University of Sussex. More details available at www.girlseducation.org (Beyond Access link).

29 June 2004

Beyond Access Seminar/Workshop 4: Developing Gender Equality in Adult Education (Norwich, UK)

The seminar will bring together policy makers, practitioners, academics and campaigners to examine issues relating to gender equality and adult education. Confirmed speakers include Nelly Stromquist, University of Southern California. More details available shortly at www.girlseducation.org (Beyond Access link).

25-29 July 2004

Fifth Meeting of the Working Group on Education for All, Paris

Further details http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/global_co_working_group/index.shtml

LETTERS PAGE

A few days ago, as part of my work for BRAC in Bangladesh, I was writing a proposal to design interventions for adolescent girls over the next five years. To assist my work I was using information from different sources. 'Equals' was one of them. The articles on violence in schools and on life-skills in Issue 3 were particularly useful in this regard. This kind of newsletter is very much needed for all of us who are involved in development work.

I hope the project will long continue to contribute to development work worldwide.

With best wishes,

Nashida Ahmed,
Kishori Abhijan Project (supported by UNICEF), BRAC Education Program, Bangladesh

Many thanks for sending me details of the Beyond Access website – the material there is very relevant to my PhD research. It is like someone knew the things I'm struggling with in thinking about my topic! It will really help in developing my research.

Thanks indeed,

Euzobia Mugisha Baine,
PhD student, School of Education, University of Birmingham, UK

I was very pleased to receive your January Newsletter. It is most encouraging to read the accounts of girls benefiting from better education in so many countries. I would like to attend the next Workshop and will keep an eye on the website.

Congratulations!

Elizabeth Sidney, UNIFEM UK

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:

c.challender@ioe.ac.uk or by post: School of Educational Foundations & Policy Studies, Institute of Education, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1 0AL

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.

GUEST EDITOR REQUIRED for upcoming issue of 'Insights Education', the print review of education development research published by id21 (www.id21.org).

Due to published in August 2004, the issue will focus on Millennium Development Target 4 (eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015).

Applications by a guest editor should be related to education research in developing countries, have a strong policy focus and can be offered jointly. Applications should consist of the following (maximum 1000 words):

- * A brief outline of the proposed theme, with an explanation of its relevance to id21's target readership of southern policy-makers and development practitioners
- * A list of between six and ten additional contributors and a brief explanation of the subject matter, research and policy recommendations their contributions would cover.

The successful applicant will collaborate on the production of the issue with the Academic Advisor, Elaine Unterhalter of the Institute of Education, University of London and id21's editorial team. The Guest Editor will also provide the issue's editorial of approximately 1200 words for which remuneration will be made. CLOSING DATE: April 30th, 2004

Applications to: Sandra Baxter, id21 Education Editor
Institute of Development Studies
University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE UK
Fax: +44 (0) 1273 877 335
Email: s.baxter@ids.ac.uk

Before submitting a proposal, applicants are urged to familiarise themselves with the required format and editorial style by viewing previous issues of 'Insights' at <http://www.id21.org/insights/index.html> or by requesting print copies from id21.

Contact Details

Beyond Access: Gender, Education and Development was set up in January 2003. It seeks to spread knowledge regarding gender equality and basic education so that policy-makers, teachers, academics and other parties involved in this area share, develop and improve their understanding of how to achieve gender equitable education and meet the 2005 goal.

Please contact us with any comments or enquiries:

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