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United Nations International
Research and Training Institute
for the Advancement of Women
(INSTRAW)



UNITED NATIONS

TRAINING ACTIVITIES
Policy Outline

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UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL
RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN
(INSTRAW)

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

—Policy Outline—

I. INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of the Institute's research, training and information programmes is to ensure that sustained attention is given to the integration of women into development activities at all levels, giving priority to training in view of the pressing needs of developing countries in this domain.

It has been recognized that women constitute a disgnificant creative and productive potential for the development of their countries. This marks an important departure from previous thinking that treats issues of relevance to women as social, demographic and welfare problems only, rather than regarding women as resources to be tapped for economic productivity within a more comprehensive approach to development for the benefit of society as a whole. The critical role of training in the process of integration of women in development was emphasized in 1975 when the World Conference of the International Women's Year in Mexico City recommended the establishment of a United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, proposing that it should develop, adapt and provide training programmes for women.

In accordance with the mandates given by its policy-making bodies, namely the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and Board of Trustees, in its training activities, the Institute makes its priority the creation of opportunities for the equal participation of women with men in all aspects of economic and social development.

It must be recognized that the needs of women have frequently been neglected in the formulation and implementation of development plans. In many instances, women have had unequal access to decision-making bodies, as well as to education and employment thus limiting their participation in development activities; and for this reason, they too often do not receive the benefits that are supposed to flow from development.

It should be noted, though, that in recent years, there has been a substantial increase in research and training activities directed towards such issues as growth with equity and popular participation including women within the policy of individual and collective self-reliance of developing countries. The former lack

of attention to issues of relevance to women has given way to the establishment of the so-called "national machineries". These can take the form of national women's bureaus or posts in governmental and non-governmental agencies and are specifically designed to oversee and monitor women's issues and often the creation of special training programmes for women in the private and public sectors.

As important as these efforts have been, training for women has tended to be concentrated in areas traditionally associated with women's lives, such as family-life and family planning, nutrition, health and income generation in such areas as handicrafts, to the exclusion, for example, of agricultural and industrial training. Even in the service sector and the professions which offer increased training opportunities for women, there has been a tendency to confine them to areas conventionally defined as "women-oriented". As for formal education, in spite of the increase in general education for girls over the past twenty years in many developing countries, few are enrolled in vocational training whether formal or informal¹.

Although the efforts carried out so far have served to focus attention on women and the need to develop special measures to compensate for their historical disadvantaged position, at the same time they have often tended to isolate women from the mainstream of development activities. Awareness has grown that "any measures for women isolated from the major priorities, strategies and sectors of development cannot result in any substantial progress toward the goals of the Decade"².

As the ultimate objective of training is to secure participation in development, the training programme of the Institute seeks to promote sensitivity and responsiveness in those involved in the development process for the concerns of women, and on the other hand, to enhance the productivity and contribution of women to the development of their respective countries. It aims to promote self-reliance with full participation of the entire population not only in the interest of women but of society as a whole.

Recognizing the need for special measures as transitional strategies, INSTRAW seeks at the same time to develop an overall strategy and methodology through training and research to enhance the integration of women at all levels and in all aspects of the development of their countries. This entails broadening of the concepts in planning to ensure not only that attention be paid to women's issues, but also that programmes in general be assessed, planned and evaluated in terms of their impact on women. In order for these programmes to be effective, long term planning must be an integral part of the planning process.

1. See *Training for Women: An Inventory of United Nations Sponsored Activities*, INSTRAW, New York, 1980.
2. Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen, 14-30 July 1980, P. 11, Para. 30.

It must be noted though, that given the current global economic situation, requirements to meet the costs of training cannot always be met. In view of the vital role, however, that training has for the advancement of women, and through them for society as a whole, concentrated and continuing efforts must be made to generate the necessary funds.

The following sections will discuss the conceptual framework of the Institute's objectives in terms of its mandate and policy guidelines; the Institute's training activities, both in terms of their general characteristics and the specific types of training envisaged; and finally the methods to be used in implementing the programme.

II. INSTRAW'S TRAINING PROGRAMME: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

When considering the basic outline for INSTRAW's training activities the following considerations were taken into account.

First, the historical disadvantaged position of women requires that special efforts be made to develop policies that ensure the training of women at all levels in order to bring about a level of employment capacity that will enhance equity in the development process.

Second, women considered globally are not a homogeneous group; they face a variety of situations and problems governed not only by diversity in geographical region and cultural background, but also within their own societies, depending on the social strata to which they belong. This means that any overall training strategy must be flexible enough to accommodate varying situations out of which and upon which lasting structures for training can be based.

Third, the changes taking place in many societies today are occurring at a more rapid pace than ever before. This requires that: (i) the impact of change on all areas of life be taken into account through an integrated approach to development; (ii) training be designed with reference to national development policies and plans, and linked to development programmes, in order to ensure a return of the benefits of training; (iii) women acquire access to new technology and on the job training in order to be able to update their skills and develop alternative sources of livelihood; (iv) constant communication exists between planners, policy makers, trainers and those for whom the programmes are intended in order to decrease the gap created by the call for increased specialization and differentiation in skills; (v) an orientation to assessment and evaluation methods be provided in order to examine whether or not training methods are appropriate in specific situations, and their advantages and disadvantages.

These factors have been central to the Institute's development and promotion of new approaches to training, approaches that address and accommodate

the range of situations in which women find themselves, and increase communication and exchange of information within and between different sectors of the population.

III. OBJECTIVES OF INSTRAW'S TRAINING PROGRAMME

The Institute was established by a resolution of the Economic and Social Council in conformity with an earlier decision of the United Nations General Assembly which had been based on a recommendation of the World Conference of the International Women's Year held in Mexico City in 1975. The Institute was directed to give special attention to the needs of women in developing countries and their integration into the development process.

An expert group convened in 1976 to establish the organizational structure of the Institute noted the "need for the study of innovative training techniques, and for training activities related, *inter alia*, to enhancing women's prospects of participation in decision making and development formulation planning"¹.

The group recommended that "the Institute assist in identifying particular research and training needs, attempt to meet these by generating and sponsoring research and training programmes in other relevant institutions, particularly those at the national and regional levels, as well as by its own activities"².

The primary objective of the Institute's training programme is, therefore, to promote through training the full integration of women into the formulation, design and implementation of development activities. The programme is action-oriented and flexible, and aims to help women contribute their full creative and productive capacities to the productivity and well-being of their communities and societies.

In order to meet the demands of the present day situation, the design of innovative training strategies and techniques requires a close relationship between research and training and the use and strengthening of existing institutional frameworks in order to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of training efforts.

The research and training programmes of the Institute are closely inter-linked, which means that most research projects have a training component and similarly the programme aims to incorporate a research component into each training project.

1. See Report of the Group of Experts (ESA/SDHA/AC.11/1), 26 April 1976.

2. Ibid.

Research is required at all stages of training for needs assessment, collection of relevant data, and to obtain necessary input from the local population for the design of appropriate training strategies and materials, as well as monitoring and evaluation. And, where new communications technology is used, new training methods must be devised as well as evaluation and monitoring procedures. The results of such research will be added to a growing body of information that can be shared and exchanged on a regional and interregional basis for further training purposes; and be used to develop training guidelines in the form of modules flexible enough to be adaptable to a wide variety of conditions¹.

INSTRAW is also concerned with looking through existing institutional frameworks to carry out its training programme. Its efforts to do so are governed by the following principles:

- a) Operation through networks of local, national and regional institutions, whose work it thereby promotes.

By working through existing institutional frameworks, resources can be most effectively and efficiently utilized, with responsibilities decentralized and shared. Networking enables the Institute, other inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies to develop and implement training programmes. It promotes the strengthening of existing local and regional research and training institutes, and in their absence, the development of new structures for training.

- b) Emphasis on the training of trainers so as to obtain a multiplier effect.

The training of trainers is important in order to ensure that adequate attention is paid to women in ongoing and planned training activities.

- c) Training *in situ* as a priority in order to stimulate grass roots participation.

Training *in situ* ensures that training is appropriate to local condi-

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1. The Institute has already undertaken programmes in this direction, for example:

- i) a joint project carried out with the Statistical Office of the United Nations aimed at training the users and producers of statistics and indicators on women;
- ii) an expert group meeting on methods of collection, compilation and use of statistics held in April 1983;
- iii) an interregional seminar on the incorporation of women into development planning held in December 1983;
- iv) an interregional seminar on women and the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade held in March 1984.

For more information on other INSTRAW programmes see *Programme Activities of INSTRAW 1984-1985*.

tions and utilizes local resources and expertise. This type of training is made possible by working through local organizations, whether formal or informal, development institutes, academic institutions or individuals, whose familiarity with and sensitivity to local conditions can provide the necessary perspective to design appropriate strategies for effective training. *In situ* training also serves to promote the establishment, expansion and strengthening of local training centers and cooperatives and build on local mechanisms to enhance training goals.

- d) Influencing training activities within and outside the United Nations through its role as a catalyst.

The Institute operates catalytically in order to ensure that issues related to women and development are part of ongoing and planned activities both within and outside the United Nations system. This involves an attempt to develop as broad a constituency as possible. By creating greater understanding of the problems concerning women in development, it stimulates others to organize around these issues¹.

IV. TRAINING ACTIVITIES: TYPES AND FUTURE PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Given the wide range of training needs faced by women today, the Institute fosters a variety of approaches to training, ranging from conventional to participatory, providing that they most effectively meet the needs of women in a particular situation.

There has been a general tendency for training to be oriented to short-term and immediate goals. Such training often emphasizes specific skills for income generation, frequently entailing production of goods only marginally important to the local economy in the long term, and dependent upon sporadic and insufficient supplies and markets. Even when emphasis is placed on diversification of skills, training is often for skills that are extensions of domestic or family-life activities. Furthermore, while the need for life-long learning has been recognized as critical in the light of the rapid changes taking place today, attempts to plan in this direction have barely begun.

In an attempt to avoid these problems, and to seek ways to promote and develop existing structures through which the economic, political and social

1. The Institute participates in the activities of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions Sub-Committee on Staff Training in order to orient United Nations staff members to the role of women in development.

potential of women can be linked to long range planning objectives, the Institute will:

1. promote infrastructural support through integration of plans for training programmes and projects with already existing international, regional and national plans;
2. promote and work through local institutions formal, and informal, which must create the basis for and link up with long range planning at other levels;
3. promote the design of research methodologies and training for research that will provide data and understanding to develop realistic and effective training programmes;
4. promote extensive dialogue and exchange of ideas among and between those involved in the development process at all levels, including policy-makers, planners, media specialists, technicians, etc.

Types of Training Activities

The forms of training activities of the Institute will include conventional and non-conventional types of training.

1. Conventional Types of Training

a) *Seminars* will be organized for the exchange of information to keep trainers, planners and others involved in the development process up-to-date as to the latest methodologies, techniques and concepts in their respective fields. These seminars will provide an opportunity for lectures, discussions, working groups, site visits and case studies.

b) *Workshops* at the international, regional, subregional and national levels will be held to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences, to identify and assess problems and to develop guidelines and recommendations for activities and programmes. Recognizing the value of learning through small groups and informal settings, workshops can include such components as discussion groups, participant reports, and site visits.

c) *Expert Group Meetings* will bring together professionals at the highest level for the development of new training methodologies, techniques and strategies.

d) *Study Tours* will be organized for individuals and groups in order to meet their counterparts in other developing countries to exchange views, to obtain information, to broaden competence in a given area and to study solutions.

e) *Fellowships and Internships* will be granted to provide opportunities for women to increase their experience and expertise in specific skills.

f) *Advocacy Activities* will be organized to raise public awareness of issues regarding women and development, utilizing all forms of communication media.

g) *Advisory Services* will be provided to governmental and non-governmental bodies for women and development based on establishment of a data center built on the systematic collection of data and an international network of training and research specialists on women and development. The Institute will then be able to:

- i) assist governments and non-governmental organizations in establishing research and training institutes;
- ii) provide information on regional or sectoral training projects and training centers that will facilitate the design of other projects, based on the establishment of a data bank;
- iii) arrange for experts, or teams of experts, to visit various countries for lectures and training;
- iv) arrange for the exchange of experts of different regions or countries to learn from other experiences;
- v) organize inter-regional, regional or sub-regional workshops or seminars in selected topics;
- vi) facilitate the exchange of ideas between government officials, representatives from business and labour, as well as NGOs from various sectors in order to identify research-related issues and secure motivation for a continuous learning process.

These conventional types of training are being modified to meet present day circumstances. Such modifications include an emphasis on:

a) *In-country training*: the high cost of training abroad, the loss of skilled workers and professionals, and what is frequently the inappropriateness of training to the home country, have made the need for in-country training increasingly apparent. This entails training designed to answer the country's needs, utilizing local resources, including training techniques and materials developed in the language of the country and appropriate to the relevant social and cultural situation.

b) *Training through doing*: training activities are linked to productive work experience and project activities, thereby closing the gap between theory and practice and making training practical and employment-related.

c) *Multi-sectoral training activities*: women from different sectors as well as different strata of society need to be brought together in workshops and seminars in order to provide exposure to each others' ideas and experiences for the development of practical guidelines for development.

2. Non-conventional Types of Training

More than modification of conventional approaches to training is required if women are to deal with the rapid social and technological changes that they are facing. Due to the growing interdependence of various development problems, participants at all levels must develop ways of thinking about planning beyond the objectives of specific training projects. Inquiry, reflection and interpretation are necessary to critically appraise the implications of training on individual lives and the community. This can take place if problem solving, dialogue and analysis are part of the training process. It means that women themselves play an active part in identifying problems, needs and developing strategies and approaches to their solution. Organizational and planning skills are needed and materials and activities for training must be designed so as to accommodate the participant's experience and priorities. Of relevance here are new participatory types of training. They include:

a) learner-centered methods developed in the framework of non-formal education which treat trainers more as facilitators, to elicit critical and productive response and interaction, rather than as didactic lecturers. The new training techniques range from case studies to role playing and socio-drama.

b) local, social and cultural forms that can be built upon for effective training. They include decision-making patterns, social groupings and communications networks. Such oral and/or written cultural forms as drama, puppetry, mime, music, song, poetry, dance and story telling have been effectively used for educational purposes. The performing arts in general can be used to create a forum for the discussion of issues and ideas. Through their use, community problems and needs can be identified and the population mobilized. Where new ideas and skills are linked to the dynamics of local cultural and social patterns, education and training can be achieved most effectively.

Outline for Expanding INSTRAW's Training Programme

With a constant view to changes in technology and their impact on development coupled with the need for complementary training, for the purpose of INSTRAW's training programme, recent advances in communications technology are critical in at least four areas.

1. The ability, through the use of satellite communication, to reach large numbers of people for lower costs than ever before and to reach populations in remote parts of the globe.

Increased access permits provision of training materials considered

desirable and necessary by the population, additional choice of materials, as well as choice concerning when and where to receive the materials. In addition, participatory training can be facilitated by open programming, viewing groups organized for discussion, feedback and action.

2. The multidirectional flow of information permitted by the new technology, which allows for a new level of participation.

Low cost teleconferencing has made distance learning possible; training *in situ* is facilitated and where trainers are separated by large distances, experiences and ideas can be shared and consultations take place with trainers at urban and regional training centers. And, finally, access to and participation in seminars and workshops, conferences and lectures, at administrative, learning and conference centers, otherwise inaccessible for reasons of distance or expense are now possible.

3. The development of low cost and portable production equipment such as video, making feasible the local production of training materials.

Inexpensive and easily handled and serviced production equipment, such as video, facilitates the production of training materials for and by local populations, and the possibility of building up country and regional data banks.

4. The development of microelectronic equipment such as word processors and home computers which permit individualized and package learning.

Individualized learning has been enhanced through the use of packaged programmes for microcomputers which permit increasing flexibility in the place, timing and pace of training, all of which give greater control to the learner over the learning process. The development of appropriate software for training modules that can be used cross-culturally, using the expertise of developing countries themselves, has, however, yet to be carried out.

In each respect, the advances in technology enhance the potential for popular participation, efficiency in the training of trainers, and the possibility of training *in situ*.

It must be emphasized, however, that training in the planning, design and use of communications technology and programming requires not only technical skills, but also creativity and sensitivity if the media is to be successfully integrated into existing social and cultural forms. Software must be developed that is at once adaptable and responsive to local conditions. Required are new forms

of curriculum, the design of new training materials and methods, and new research and evaluation tools, making issues of relevance to women and training of women an integral part of media agendas. The design of this material will require close cooperation and exchange of ideas between media specialists, technicians, those who prepare educational materials, social scientists, and the local users.

V. METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

In order to ensure that INSTRAW's activities are closely linked with national and regional planning objectives, it is envisaged that the training programme of the Institute will be implemented through close cooperation with regional commissions, national machineries and local networks of institutions and professionals. This will also help to promote maximum suitability to local conditions. Moreover, as INSTRAW's training activities are multi-dimensional and deal with people of diverse backgrounds and situations, the method of implementation will take a variety of forms. Each form by itself, or in combination with other forms will produce a training package. The training packages will be prepared in cooperation with relevant organizations and institutions within and outside the United Nations system.

The forms which the Institute's training activities will take in implementation are the following.

1. Assessment of already existing training activities.

As a first step, a review of existing United Nations training activities was undertaken in order to avoid duplication, to build upon existing work, and to develop complementary and co-operative arrangements. The second step is to update this review.

2. Expert group meetings, workshops and seminars to assess the state-of-the-art regarding particular aspects of training.

These could include, for example, expert group meetings on research and training, programming and software for training. The results of these meetings will be made available for use in the formulation of regional and national plans and policies with regard to training.

3. The publication of a series of critical background papers reviewing the state-of-the-art in areas relating to training.

This series may be the result of expert group meetings, seminars, or the work of individual consultants.

4. The planning and implementation of several pilot projects aimed at

developing training materials and packages, beginning from the most basic level.

Concrete training situations will provide the necessary input as to problems encountered and the design of innovative approaches and techniques required to cope with them. The projects are envisaged as being implemented in several stages and will serve as the basis for research on which to produce training materials. To promote maximum suitability to specific conditions, research methodologies will be developed for needs assessment, programme and project planning, training techniques, monitoring and evaluation. All will involve participatory research and the involvement of the local population to the maximum extent possible. Ultimately, through workshops that will bring together participants from different projects, modules will be produced for use in different parts of the world.

5. Training materials extracted from meetings, workshops and seminars.

Based on the outcome of expert group meetings, workshops, inter-regional seminars, etc. that the Institute has organized, training materials are being extracted and published. These include areas such as statistics and indicators, development planning, water supply and sanitation, industrial development, and new and renewable energy sources. In the future, these will encompass the new emerging or "frontier" technologies on women such as microelectronics, genetic engineering and biotechnology.

6. Collection, analysis and dissemination of information on training programmes related to the situation of women.

It is intended that this information will be disseminated to the widest audience possible so that information regarding training for women and development can be shared and exchanged among developing countries.

7. A fellowship and internship programme.

Given the expense of educating people abroad and, what is often the lack of relevance of foreign training to conditions in the home country, fellowships will be granted to students for study in local development or other institutes within their own countries to upgrade their training. A number of fellowships will also be provided for scholars and other professionals to be at the Institute for a period of time so as to benefit from as well as enhance the work of the Institute in specific areas of training. Finally, students will be eligible for internships to work on specific training related projects at the Institute.

8. Establishment of an international network of specialists on women in development.

It is envisaged that an international network of specialists will be established to assess training needs, help design projects and packages, and advise in project implementation and evaluation for women in development. The expertise of this network will be available to international, governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations active in training for women in development.

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