EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN:

NEW CHALLENGES

BEIJING AT 10 :

PUTTING POLICY INTO PRACTICE

Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Critical Area B. Education and Training of Women[1]

Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. Non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys and thus ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men. Equality of access to and attainment of educational qualifications is necessary if more women are to become agents of change.

- Beijing Platform for Action (paragraph 69)

Education is a highly strategic issue as it is not only an important equality issue is itself, but also a means to empowering women and girls in so many other areas of their lives. Educating women and girls is seen to have multiple impacts at personal, family, community and societal levels. Within a rights-based framework, education is a right in itself, but it is also an 'enabling right' – that is a means towards the fulfillment of other rights. Education is not totally separate from the other critical areas of concern within the Beijing Platform for Action (PfA); it is particularly relevant to the Girl-child, but cuts across others areas too, such as Women and health, Women and the economy, Women and the media, and Women in power and decision-making.

The six strategic objectives of the Platform for Action are ambitious and far-reaching, addressing different forms of education, including formal school systems, higher education, non-formal education and vocational and business training. In the ten years since the Beijing Conference, considerable progress has been made in creating opportunities for girls and women to access education. However, the reality is that there is a long way to go before education can truly be an empowering force for women and girls, especially in the many countries where attention is still focused on issues of access; Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia face the most severe challenges. Before education can act as a force for empowering women, gendered barriers to women and girls' access to education must be addressed. At the same time, research and experience show that if the content and processes of education are seen to be more girl and woman-friendly, demand – and therefore enrollment - will increase. Reform of programme content, of delivery systems and of teaching methodologies is inextricably linked to increasing and sustaining participation. Gender equality will be achieved not just *in*, but *through* education.

The Beijing Platform for Action and the Beijing +5 Outcome Document recognize a number of barriers to girls' access to education in many parts of the world, including lack of political will, of sufficient resourcing, and of childcare facilities, entrenched gender biases, cultural practices and beliefs. Also mentioned is the impact on quality education of an under-

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[1] Prepared for INSTRAW by Jackie Kirk, UNESCO Centre, University of Ulster/ McGill Centre for Research & Teaching on Women

supported teaching profession. In addition, and especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is imperative to understand the gendered nature of HIV/AIDS, its impact on girls' education *and* the ways in which education can help girls to survive. There is also increasing awareness of sexual violence in schools. Conflict, crisis, displacement and post-conflict recovery are all contexts in which girls and women's educational opportunities are often compromised. Refugees are given special attention within the Platform for Action, but internally displaced girls and women, as well as those returning to their places of origin, are also in need of particular support.

In April 2000, the Dakar World Education Forum brought together 1100 representatives from 164 countries in order to reiterate and strengthen the commitments to Education for All (EFA) through the Dakar Framework for Action (DFA).[2] Considerable attention was paid to implementing the Framework, setting up monitoring mechanisms, and most importantly, providing the necessary financing. The main goals of the Dakar Framework for Action subsequently became the EFA targets, the overriding goal being the provision of quality and relevant education for all by 2015. Achieving gender equality in education is inextricably linked to universal education, but was highlighted as a specific target: "eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality" (paragraph 7 (v)).

The importance of education was re-iterated through the Millennium Development Goals in September of 2000, which committed States to achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015 (goal 2). Most significant, however, is the way in which gender equality and women's empowerment (goal 3) are tied to equal opportunities in education: 'Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015'.

The narrow focus of the MDG on gender equality and women's empowerment through education has been critiqued[3] and it is widely acknowledged that although education is critical, on its own it is insufficient to address the complex barriers to women's empowerment. Another challenge for the international community to address is the measurement of gender equality targets in education; gender parity is relatively easy to define and assess with statistical data, but gender equality is a much more complex concept which cannot adequately be measured numerically. Eliminating gender disparities in education is certainly an important step, but one which cannot be disconnected from an analysis of the actual schooling experience for girls and of the longer term impact of a girl's schooling on indicators such as her future earning potential, job opportunities, her political participation, and likelihood of community leadership in relation to that of boys.

A number of institutions and agencies have placed girls' education among their organizational priorities, recognizing that progress in girls' education can promote and consolidate gains in other areas, including fighting HIV/AIDS, protecting children from abuse and exploitation, promoting immunization and ensuring a child's right to survive and thrive in the early years.[4] The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has initiated a specific acceleration programme for girls; education, ''25 by 2005 Girls' Education Campaign[5]' in which efforts are intensified in twenty-five priority countries. UNICEF has also been a key

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[2] Dakar Framework for Action http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/framework.shtml
[3] See for example, *Toward Universal Primary Education: investments, incentives and institutions*. UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, 2005. http://unmp.forumone.com/eng_task_force/EducationEbook.pdf
[4] "Girls' Education" UNICEF: http://www.unicef.org/girlseducation/index_bigpicture.html
[5] 25 by 2005: accelerating progress in girls' education. UNICEF: http://www.unicef.org/girlseducation/campaign_acceleratingprogress.html

partner in the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)[6], along with all other United Nations entities, in addition to interested parties such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank and the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE). The goal of this ten-year initiative is to use this collaborative partnership to mount a sustained campaign to improve the quality and availability of girls' education.

Many other national and regional organizations are playing important roles in the various interventions required to make any progress towards the Beijing goals; advocacy, sensitization, policy development, programme implementation. Governments are especially key actors, and a number of them have made specific commitments to and progress towards gender equality in education, which will be highlighted in subsequent sections focused on the six strategic objectives.

Strategic Objective B.1

"Ensure equal access to education"

> Actions to be taken by governments, international and non-governmental organizations and other actors include to: take measures to reduce discrimination in access to education; create gender sensitive systems with full participation of women in educational administration and decision-making; improve enrollment and retention rates through flexible school options, reduction in costs at the primary level, and especially childcare and facilities to allow young mothers to attend school; achieve universal access to basic education and 80% completion of primary education, closing the gender gap at primary and secondary level by 2005 and achieving universal primary education by 2015.

Over the last decade, there has been significant progress made in addressing gender gaps in access to school. This has been particularly impressive in countries such as Benin, Bangladesh, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Morocco, for example. In Mali, Mauritania and Morocco improved access for girls is connected to significant increases (over thirty percent) in overall gross enrollment and significant country-level efforts towards achieving Universal Primary Education. In Bangladesh, gains in girls' education can be attributed to more gender-focused interventions, such as community schools for girls, and the large-scale training of women teachers. Governments have made significant policy shifts, such as the 1997 overnight abolition of school fees in Uganda, but NGOs and other organizations also play a key role in advocating such policy shifts, and in the implementation processes of specific programmes and activities. There is increasing awareness that governments need to work in partnership with NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), international donors and financial institutions in order to achieve educational goals.

However, significant gender disparities still exist; sixty-five percent of the 121 million children in the world who are not in school are girls. Eighty-three percent of these girls live in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific. In 2002, in Sub Saharan Africa alone, twenty-four million girls were out of school. Eleven countries (seven of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa) report female intake rates of less than eighty percent that of boys; in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso the Gender Parity Index[7] is less than 0.75. The EFA Monitoring Report of 2003[8] concluded that of the 128 countries with available data, less than half had

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[6] United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI). UNECSO: http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/know_sharing/flagship_initiatives/girls.shtml
[7] The Gender Parity Index is an expression of girls' enrollment/retention/success etc as a percentage of that of boys. For example, if there are 50 boys enrolled in a class and 30 girls, the GPI would be 0.6. See for example United Nations Statistics Division: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/indicatorfoc/indsearchpage.asp?cid=372
[8] Gender and Education for All: The Leap to Equality (EFA Global Monitoring Report). Geneva: UNESCO, 2003. http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=23023&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

either achieved gender parity in primary and secondary enrollments or were likely to do so by 2005. Furthermore, more than forty percent of the countries are at risk of not achieving gender parity even by 2015.

Retention also remains a serious issue and in many countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, completion rates for girls remain well below the Beijing PfA's target of eighty percent. A recent study indicated that in more than half of the African countries studied, the primary completion rate for girls is below forty percent. In South Asia and South America, poor children are far less likely to complete school than their wealthier peers. Poor, rural girls are also less likely to attend school than poor urban girls, which highlights the importance of focusing on other variables besides gender, such as socio-economic status or rural/urban residency, and reaching out to the most marginalized groups of girls and women. It is estimated that of the 113 million children currently not in school, over fifty percent are in countries in the midst of or recovering from conflict (DFID, 2001). Of the fourteen countries with a very low gender parity enrollment index (between 0.6 and 0.84), five have been affected by conflict (Burundi, Liberia, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Cote d'Ivoire).

In Afghanistan, considerable progress has been made in rectifying the Taliban's devastating impact on girls' education. As a result of the collaborative efforts of government, international and non-governmental organizations; over 1.4 million girls were enrolled at the beginning of the school year in 2003. The right to education is enshrined in Afghanistan's new constitution, which mandates compulsory education up to grade nine. However, despite these successes, Ministry of Education figures indicate that overall sixty percent of girls remain out of school. There is considerable regional variation, and in some provinces girls' enrollment is as low as one percent. For the forty percent of girls who are enrolled, the likelihood of them completing a full cycle of even primary school is far from certain.

One of the most significant of the many barriers to girls' education in Afghanistan is the distance from home to school. Whereas boys can walk or use public transport to travel to a distant school, for girls this is rarely possible because of social restrictions. Home-based or community-based schooling is one of the solutions being supported by several NGOs, and operates in slightly different forms in different provinces across the country. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is supporting teachers who teach for three hours a day, six days a week, in their home, compound, or in a community space such as a mosque. The programme operates in four provinces, with single-sex and mixed-sex classes. The priority, however, is girls, and so particular attention is given to training and supporting women teachers.[9]

Girls' scholarship schemes have been effectively used in a number of different countries to reduce the costs of schooling for girls and their families. The Female Secondary School Stipend Programme in Bangladesh is a nation-wide initiative focused on increasing girls' enrollment and retention in secondary schooling. Beyond these primary aims, it also helps girls pass their school leaving exams, assists them into careers as teachers, health and family planning workers and in general, delays marriage. Although the overall impact of the programme is hard to assess and there are still concerns about the quality of education the girls access, reports do point to a substantial impact on secondary school participation levels

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[9] Winthrop, R. "Home-based teachers and schooling for girls in Afghanistan," *Insights Education* #3, 2004.
http://www.id21.org/zinter/id21zinter.exe?a=0&i=InsightsEdu3art4&u=4212017b

for girls, as well as to the broader experience of empowerment, for example through the payment of the stipend into the girls' own bank accounts.[10]

Experience shows that single strategies – such as the provision of scholarships to girls – cannot address all the necessary dimensions of providing quality education, and the most effective approaches combine a number of interventions that improve the supply of quality of education (including teaching methodologies) as well as mobilize communities to create demand for it. The Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has successfully piloted such a multi-pronged approach in their Centres of Excellence for Girls' Education.[11] Other supply-side initiatives that have proved successful are abolishing policies which bar pregnant and nursing girls from school, providing sanitary wear for girls and making facilities improvements such as building separate latrines for girls.

Though increasing the number of female teachers can have very positive effects, there is also some concern about the risks to gender equality of feminizing the teaching profession. In countries where there is high participation of women as teachers, they are usually concentrated at the lower levels of the system. The risk of undervaluing female labour is particularly high in the many alternative and non-formal programs that are ironically often intended to increase girls' enrollment and therefore gender equality. Women's equal participation in educational management and leadership is also far from assured; in Bolivia, for example, only sixteen percent of all head-teachers are female, and in the conflict-affected South Sudan, it is between two and three percent. It is reported that as of January 2004, there were sixty-three Women Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Education around the world.[12] Up-to-date information from the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) indicates that among forty-nine countries, there are twelve Women Ministers of Education and one Deputy in Africa. This is a positive sign that there are women present at the highest levels of education authority, though may also be a result of the tendency to assign women ministers "soft" dossiers such as education or family affairs, excluding them from other issues such as finance or health.

Areas for Future Action:
▪ Increase documentation, rigorous evaluation and sharing of lessons learned on strategies to promote gender equality (by ministries, donors, academics, NGOs and CBOs) in education; ▪ Increase focus on marginalized groups of girls and women, especially the very poor, disabled and girls in conflict-affected countries; ▪ Governments and organizations need to work in close collaboration with parents and community members, especially in remote, rural and indigenous areas, as well as with women's organizations to promote gender equality in education and ensure that promising initiatives can be scaled up; ▪ Increased commitment is required from education authorities to integrating gender issues and concerns throughout the education sector, particularly women's leadership in educational management and administration.

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[10] UNESCO, 2003.
[11] *FAWE Centres of Excellence: Experiences in Creating a Conducive Environment for Girls in School*. Nairobi: Forum of African Women Educationalists, 2005. http://www.fawe.org/content/Centres/contents/centres.html
[12] Shequality http://www.shequality.org/womenleaders.htm

Strategic Objective B.2

"Eradicate illiteracy among women"

> Actions to be taken by governments, international and non-governmental organizations and other actors include to: achieve gender equality in primary education completion by 2000; eliminate the gender gap in functional literacy; narrow disparities between developed and developing countries; encourage adult and family engagement in learning, and work towards expanded definition of literacy, to include life skills, scientific and technological knowledge.

Although the Millennium Development Goals do not mention literacy per se, the Beijing goal of a fifty-percent improvement in female literacy was first established by the Jomtien EFA targets of 1990. The EFA successor, Goal 4, that of "achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015…" is a little more ambiguous and subject to interpretation for countries where literacy rates exceed 66.7 percent, but it is perhaps a more realistic target, especially for countries with very high rates of illiteracy.

Studies in a number of different countries indicate that mothers with a basic level of education are substantially more likely to send their children, and especially their daughters, to school. Women's education has a stronger impact on breaking the cycle of under-education than men's, and, as indicated in research in the Terai region of Nepal, women's literacy programmes can also improve their social and economic development. As well as having greater literacy skills, women participants were more aware of health and reproductive issues, political affairs and the importance of children's education, more likely to participate in income generating projects, political elections, their children's education and community activities.[13]

Overall, there has been a slight improvement in literacy rates over the last decade, with a higher rate for women than for men, though illiteracy remains a predominantly female issue. Two-thirds (or about sixty-three percent) of the world's 875 million illiterate adults are women, and this proportion is remarkably similar across the different regions of the world, with the exception of Latin America and the Caribbean, where women represent about fifty-six percent of the illiterate population. Literacy rates in developed and transition countries are generally very high for men and women (over ninety-five percent) and some countries with much lower rates, such as Burundi, Chad, Yemen and Sudan, have made significant progress in increasing female literacy. However, the Beijing and Dakar goals are still a long way off and the situation in many countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia is cause for ongoing concern and attention. West Africa has some of the lowest levels of female literacy in the world; in Niger only around ten percent of women are literate, in Burkina Faso and Mali rates are also below twenty percent. Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal all report figures of less than thirty percent.

Literacy training is now increasingly combined with the acquisition of other skills and linked to social justice and human rights issues as well as to women's empowerment. It has been widely recognized that women are more likely to enroll in and complete programmes that meet learning needs in areas such as family planning, credit or income-generation. UNESCO has initiated a new programme, the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP)[14] designed to develop and pilot alternative approaches for measuring literacy. There

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[13] Burchfiels, S. et al. "Women's literacy programmes improve social and economic development in Nepal." *A Longitudinal Study of the Effect of Integrated Literacy and Basic Education Programs on Women's Participation in Social and Economic Development in Nepal*. Washington DC: USAID: 2002. http://www.id21.org/education/e3sb1g1.html

[14] Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme. UNESCO Institute for Statistics http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=5243_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC

is also increasing recognition that adult education should be thought of as a longer term continuum, rather than through short term programmes, so that women and girls can accrue and sustain the full benefits of education over a period of years.

In many communities, the language in which literacy is to be developed is a complicated issue. It is important to develop skills and confidence in local and especially indigenous languages, but learners are also aware that the national language is the language of power and the key to accessing jobs and other benefits. There are some promising 'bi-literacy' initiatives, working with indigenous communities in Latin America, in which mostly female learners work simultaneously in local and national languages and generate their own, gender-specific materials based on the group's specific needs and interests.[15]

Data on literacy levels and schooling opportunities amongst women with disabilities is scarce, but there are strong indications that these women remain particularly marginalized from education, and that literacy levels are shockingly low (estimated at one percent).[16] The indications are that in many contexts, women and girls with disabilities are considered a burden on their families, and not worth the investments required to be educated.

Literacy rates amongst refugee women can also be very low; in some refugee camps it can be as low as twenty percent. Girls' attendance in schools tends to be low particularly at the secondary level, which has an obvious impact on women's literacy. At the same time, it may also be easier for international agencies to provide education to displaced populations than for devastated governments and local NGOs to provide for those who stay behind. Afghan refugee girls in Pakistan had far more educational opportunities than girls who stayed in Afghanistan.[17] Compared to refugee women, the needs of internally displaced women and girls made be even more acute as they are typically not under the care of refugee organizations such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). It is recognized that one of the obstacles in the joint effort to build the skills and capacities of refugee women is gender-based violence; as stated by UNHCR Commissioner Ruud Lubbers, "Violence undermines women's personal, social and economic advancement and prevents us from supporting their choices and capacities for durable solutions."[18]

UNHCR is aware of the need for intensified efforts to promote female participation in education, and a new campaign will recruit more female teachers and classroom assistants, ensure that girls receive sanitary supplies; that parents are sensitized; and that girls' scholarships are made available. In 2002, for example, 97 students, 48 of them refugee girls in Ghana and Uganda, received the Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize. Peace Prize scholarships that enabled them to attend secondary school. Nearly half of them in their final year of secondary school sat and passed their final exams last year. However, despite these promising initiatives, there is less specific emphasis on programming for older refugee women.

NGOs and other civil society partners play especially strong roles in the adult literacy sector, both in terms of advocacy and mobilization, and programme implementation. One example of the linking of literacy to livelihoods is the Women's Empowerment through Literacy and Livelihood Development (WELLD) Project in India,[19] implemented in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, which integrates literacy with concepts of savings and credit group

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[15] UNESCO, 2003.
[16] Ibid.
[17] *Falling Through the Cracks: Millions Missing Out on Education in Emergencies.* New York: Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children. http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/ed_emer.pdf
[18] "UNHCR pays special tribute to women on World Refugee Day" UNHCR Press Release 19 June 2002 http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/news
[19] Project run by World Education in collaboration with the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and funded by the Ford Foundation http://www.worlded.org/weiinternet/projects/listprojects.cfm?dblProjectID=2097&Select=One

formation and management, and livelihood improvement. Following this programme women become active members of independent, self-sustainable savings and credit groups, and are able to make more informed choices about their livelihood activities.[20]

In Latin America, there are numerous examples of powerful civil society movements and partnerships that address illiteracy, but that also promote a political agenda of more grassroots involvement in educational planning and decision-making. One such example in Brazil is the *Movimento de Alfabetizaçao de Jovens e Adultos da Cidade de São Paulo* (MOVA-SP Young People and Adults' Literacy Movement of the City of Sao Paulo), which is a partnership between the municipal government and several local organizations aimed at eradicating illiteracy, and which was able to make effective changes in the structure and organization of literacy classes to reach out to young people.[21]

Areas for Future Action:
- Inclusive strategies are required to improve women's literacy based on the EFA and MDG frameworks;   - Literacy programmes need to be rooted in the local context, recognize and address existing power and political dynamics, understand women's literacy needs and usage patterns, and be developed in dialogue with the learners;   - Greater priority should be given to programmes that link literacy to income-earning activities;   - Further attention needs to be paid to the plight of internally displaced people, refugee, very poor and other marginalized women, through the careful development of tailored programmes;   - Special attention should be given to women and girls with disabilities and further research conducted into the education needs and provisions being made for them;   - Increase the provision of quality, gender-sensitive training and support for specialized adult literacy teachers.

Strategic Objective B.3

"Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education"

> Actions to be taken by governments, international and non-governmental organizations and other actors include: develop and implement training and retraining policies for women, especially young women and those entering the job market; provide recognition to non-formal educational opportunities for women and girls; provide information to women on the availability of vocational and other training programs; increase access of women and girls to science and technology related courses, as well as management training; develop curricula and teaching materials which open up non-traditional career choices for women and men; provide training for under-educated adult women, women with disabilities, migrants, refugee and displaced women.

These aims are reiterated in the EFA Goal 4, with its emphasis on "equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults", yet the actions to be taken in the PfA are much more specific and far-reaching. They are also harder to measure. The recommendations of this strategic objective are as relevant to developed countries as developing ones, and it is

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[20] Women's Empowerment through Literacy and Livelihood Development (WELLD)
http://www.worlded.org/WEIInternet/projects/ListProjects.cfm?Select=Topic&ID=19&ShowProjects=Yes
[21] UNESCO, 2003.

interesting to note that one of the targets set for the European Union is to raise the number of women graduates in science, math and technology by 2015. Vocational and other training aimed at increasing women's participation in the work-force is of particular strategic importance, not only for the socio-economic empowerment of women, but also because it is shown to increase the likelihood that their children will be enrolled in school.

Over the last decade, there has been a significant increase in enrolment in tertiary education (see Figure 1[22]) and some progress toward gender parity. The largest overall enrollment increases took place in developing countries, with much slower increases in developed countries. In terms of gender parity, across almost all of North America and Europe, more women than men are enrolled. However, developing countries have the lowest levels of gender parity, with many lower than thirty percent. The under-representation of women is

Figure 1 – Gender disparity in enrollment in tertiary education (number of girls per 100 boys)

particularly striking in Sub-Saharan Africa, where countries such as Congo, Eritrea and Chad have less than two women enrolled for every ten men.[23] Other countries in the region do much better (Kenya, Botswana, and Mozambique, for example) and in South Africa, Namibia, Mauritius and Lesotho, female participation is actually higher than men's. However, it is important to remember that apart from South Africa, overall participation in tertiary education in these countries is still less than fifteen percent.[24]
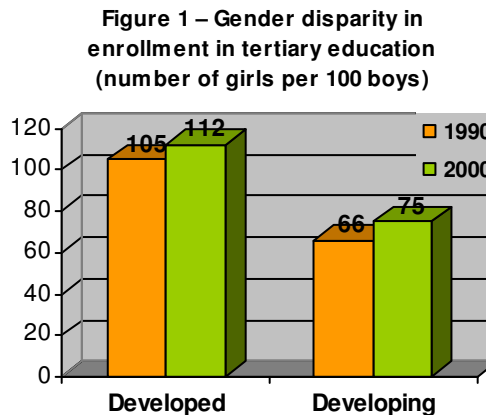
Globally, women's participation is highest in education, health and welfare, arts and humanities programmes. Despite inroads that have been made into male-dominated fields of study, women remain seriously under-represented in engineering, manufacturing, construction, science and agriculture. It would appear that in Africa (although not elsewhere) women's participation in agricultural studies has actually decreased over the last twenty years. In Australia, for example, although girls are more likely to complete school, and now constitute a slightly larger number of undergraduate tertiary enrolments, they tend to study in the humanities disciplines or in the biological sciences at both secondary and tertiary levels. There are no policy restrictions on girls' access to 'non-traditional' areas, but pressure to conform to gender stereotypes is more subtle. A similar pattern exists in Latin America, where although overall women's participation in higher education has increased, this participation is also concentrated in certain subjects. Even within science, mathematics and technology (SMT) there have been significant increases in women's participation, but primarily in health sciences and biology, and there remain very few women in math, physical sciences and engineering.[25]

Data on vocational and technical training is less comprehensive, but the figures available indicate that overall women remain under-represented (less than half in most regions apart from Latin America and the Caribbean) and concentrated in a small number of typically female fields, such as secretarial and commercial studies, health and home economics.[26] There are very few women in agricultural and engineering programmes. There have been

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[22] *How are we doing? Implementing the Millennium Declaration*. Geneva: United Nations, 2005. http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/MDG-Page3.pdf
[23] UNESCO, 2003.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Participant contribution from the Beijing +10: Women and Education Online Discussion, cited from http://www.ricyt.org and http://www.centroredes.org.ar
[26] UNESCO, 2003.

some improvements, yet a similar gender pattern across fields pervades, and in countries of Western Europe as well as in the developing world.

Data is patchy and difficult to compare across different contexts, but there is evidence to suggest that women are consistently under-employed and under-paid relative to men, even when they have vocational training and high levels of education. Gains in education for girls and women do not necessarily translate into gains in terms of satisfactory and stable employment, and there is still a clear need to work towards increasing the participation of women in the workforce, and ensuring that they have opportunities to further their careers in stimulating, safe working environments.[27]

A number of web-based initiatives seek to interest and engage girls in SMT, including the 'Girls Go Tech' initiative of the US Girl Scouts[28] and the Lia project,[29] which aim to encourage interest in SMT among young girls. Having organized the 'Take Our Daughters to Work' Day for over 10 years, the Ms. Foundation for Women revised the programme and in 2003 launched 'Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work' in April 2003 to broaden the discussion about the competing challenges of work and family.[30] For girls to achieve their full potential, whether it is in the home, school, workplace, or community, boys must also be encouraged to participate fully in family and community as well as in work. In 2004, four out of ten U.S. companies and more than ten million girls and boys participated in this initiative.

There is evidence to suggest that in Western contexts at least, girls in single-sex schools do enter and excel in non-traditional subjects. Contributing factors include a non-threatening learning environment and access to computers, laboratory equipment etc. which otherwise tends to be dominated by boys. However, such single-sex programmes tend to be in private and therefore inaccessible to the majority of girls.

There are also some interesting and successful initiatives to highlight in developing countries, and particularly in Africa. The challenge globally, however, seems to be translating the success of individual initiatives, campaigns and activities into a longer term vision, strategy and policy development process to effect real change. University Women's Associations have conducted small-scale initiatives that aim to increase girls' participation.[31] For example, the Fiji Association of Women Graduates (FAWG) has run science workshops for rural secondary school girls and their teachers with the aim of making science more attractive to rural girls so that they will continue in science to the tertiary level.[32] The Sierra Leone Association of University Women (SLAUW) has provided science equipment and materials to an all girls' school.

The Female Education in Mathematics and Science in Africa (FEMSA)[33] was a project of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Working Group on Female Participation, hosted by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). It began in 1995 with the aim of improving the participation and performance of girls in SMT subjects at the primary and secondary school levels, and implemented a number of different workshops and other interventions to sensitize students, teachers and parents to the difficulties and

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[27] For more information on women and work, download *INSTRAW's Progress Report on Critical Area F. Women and the Economy* http://www.un-instraw.org
[28] Girls Go Tech http://www.girlsgotech.org/girls_go_tech.html
[29] Lia http://www.liaonline.com
[30] Take our Daughters and Sons to Work http://www.daughtersandsonstowork.org/
[31] http://www.ifuw.org/programme/education-science.htm
[32] "Women-Agents for Change: Education in Science and Technology." International Federation of University Women http://www.ifuw.org/programme/education-science.htm
[33] FEMSA: http://www.fawe.org/femsa/Defaultold.htm

constraints faced by girls in SMT subjects. FEMSA also worked with ministries of education and policy makers to make the necessary adjustments in curriculum, teacher training and examinations and to influence national policy development and decisions regarding girls' education.

The Ministry of Education in Ghana also implemented its own innovative programme of 'Science, technology and mathematics education clinics' for secondary school girls. The project aimed to challenge girls' misconceptions about the study of SMT subjects in school and their representation in related careers. The clinics gave girls the opportunity to see the application of science and mathematics skills in various occupations and in the production of goods and services, and to explore science and mathematics-based careers through first-hand experiences and interaction with female scientist role models. The programme began in 1987 and has since been strengthened through the establishment of the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) in the ministry. It has extended to include basic and secondary schools in all regions of the country. The quality of teaching of SMT subjects is being addressed through training workshops for teachers of SMT subjects. The Ghanaian initiative has since been taken up by other countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) adopted a gender mainstreaming strategy in 2001 and is committed to creating food security for women through capacity-building and training programmes. Agricultural extension programmes ensure that information on new technologies, plant varieties and cultural practices reaches farmers, many of whom are women. However, most extension and training services are targeted primarily toward men. A recent FAO survey showed that female farmers receive only five percent of all agricultural extension services worldwide and that only fifteen percent of the world's extension agents are women. In Egypt, for example, women account for fifty-three percent of agricultural labour but only one percent of Egyptian extension officers are women. The resulting lack of information undermines women's productivity as well as their ability to safeguard the environment by using natural resources in a sustainable way. FAO is engaged with a number of different agricultural training projects for women, such as the 'woman to woman' project in Honduras which improves the ability of the extension system to reach rural women by educating women from rural communities to work with grassroots women's groups.[34]

The Farmer Field Schools programme in Nepal responds to the call for increased involvement of women in agriculture activities and research. Over eighty-two percent of Nepal's population is supported by agriculture, and for young women and out-of-school youth agriculture is a major focus of their lives. Rapid population growth has meant that although agricultural production is increasing, levels of malnutrition are still rising. World Education works with nine NGO partners to identify girls and out-of-school youth who have never entered school or who have dropped out. If a community is interested, they form groups of parents and daughters or youth interested in attending a Farmer Field School that lasts for approximately 18 weeks, or a full cropping season. The primary learning curriculum is the paddy field itself, where most learning activities take place. At the end of the season, girls, out-of-school youth, and their parents share what they have learned with the community through a Farmer Field Day.[35]

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[34] "Gender and Food Security: Education, Extension and Communication." Food and Agriculture Organization. http://www.fao.org/Gender/en/educ-e.htm
[35] Farmer Field Schools in Nepal. World Education:
http://www.worlded.org/WEIInternet/projects/ListProjects.cfm?Select=Topic&ID=16&ShowProjects=Yes#1951

In terms of arts and crafts training for women, many small projects link training in activities such as textile crafts, soap-making, basket-making and other activities which use local materials with the strengthening of income-generating capacity. Women for Women International[36] supports 1000 women in the Democratic Republic of Congo to carry out such projects. The Self-Employed Women's Association[37] (SEWA) in India has grown to be a large and well-known trade union that represents over a thousand craftswomen in the Banskantha district of western Gujarat. Women member are further sub-divided into village cooperatives with locally elected craftswomen acting as the group leaders. These leaders distribute the work, make samples, control the quality, supervise production and monitor the payments. The organization particularly supports indigenous tribal women whose livelihoods are particularly vulnerable to the periodic droughts that devastate their harvests, fodder livestock and livelihoods. SEWA helps to develop and market traditional crafts skills to create alternative sources of income for the women.

Areas for Future Action:
- Develop systematic mechanisms and forums for sharing lessons learned and best practices in SMT initiatives for women and girls;   - Implement rigorous evaluation of projects in order to assess impacts for possible replication and scaling up;   - Strengthen partnerships between governments and unions or labour organizations in order to advocate for the necessary political, economic and legislative changes to promote women's full and equal participation in the workforce;   - Complementary initiatives and advocacy in particular are also required to change the attitudes of parents, husbands and communities in general to women's participation in the workforce;   - Governments should instigate comprehensive, participatory national planning for vocational training for women in order to coordinate activities, identify gaps and reach out to as many women as possible.

Strategic Objective B.4

"Develop non-discriminatory education and training"

Actions to be taken by governments, international and non-governmental organizations and other actors include to: elaborate recommendations and develop curricula, textbooks and teaching aids free of gender-based stereotypes for all levels of education, including teacher training, in association with all concerned; develop training programmes and materials for teachers and educators that raise awareness about the status, role and contribution of women and men in the family; take actions to ensure that female teachers and professors have the same opportunities as and equal status with male teachers and professors; introduce and promote training in peaceful conflict resolution; support and develop gender studies and research at all levels of education; remove legal, regulatory and social barriers, where appropriate, to sexual and reproductive health education within formal education programmes regarding women's health issues.

The overall aim of this objective is largely reiterated in the EFA Goal 3 of "Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes." At the same time, the imperative to

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[36] Women for Women International http://www.womenforwomen.org/
[37] Self-Employed Women's Association http://www.sewa.org

develop non-discriminatory education and training links back to Strategic Objective B.1 as evidence shows that creating girl-friendly environments, with girl and women-centred content, free of gender bias, has positive effects on enrollment and retention. There have been some commendable efforts undertaken by Ministries of Education to mainstream gender issues and to address the different dimensions of gender discrimination in their systems. Girls' education or gender equality strategies and mechanisms have been implemented in different countries, including Malawi, Ghana, Uganda and Rwanda.

However, gender stereo-typing also continues to pervade the textbooks and learning materials of education systems in both the developing and the developed worlds. Especially in resource-poor contexts where textbooks are a rare and precious commodity, and cannot be discarded because of their gender bias, teachers need to be trained to work critically with them, and to engage their students in questioning and challenging the stereotypes they convey. However, promoting gender equality and empowerment for women and girls in curricula is a far more complex process than just changing textbook pictures to include more women and girls. It requires a fundamental review of what is included and what is excluded, of how subjects are approached and whose perspectives dominate.

A recent study indicates that teacher training on gender issues is the exception rather than the rule; none of the teachers in Ethiopia and less than twenty percent of teachers in Guinea had attended any gender training, and of twenty-five countries-in-transition in Central and Eastern Europe, only eleven had pre-service and two had in-service training on gender awareness. There is consistent evidence that teachers have lower expectations of girls than boys, and expect them to perform cleaning tasks in the classroom and sometimes even in their homes. A revealing study in Bangladesh showed that most (male and female) teachers in Bangladesh did not expect their own daughters to complete their education.[38] Where gender training is given to teachers it tends to be of a superficial nature, and does not fundamentally challenge the gendered power dynamics of the structures and processes of schooling.

Explicit and implicit discrimination against women and girls in education requires continued attention. Chilisa reports that national education policies in seven sub-Saharan African countries force pregnant girls to leave school; though six countries have re-entry policies.[39] However, re-entry policies often ignore the gender dynamics that make it very difficult for a girl to re-enter school after motherhood, and fail to address the psychological, health, academic and security needs of girl mothers who re-enroll. Teachers' colleges may also exclude pregnant women, or in some cases even bar entry to married and therefore potentially pregnant women. In many cases, however, an explicit ban is not required as prevailing gender relations and the facilities provided make it impossible for mothers, or even married women, to attend school.

A vocational programme run by the Women's Centre of Jamaica and funded by the United Nations Population Fund provided vocational training to more than 10,300 pregnant teens, as well as counseling and referrals to institutions such as the Family Court, training institutes, or medical practitioners, primarily to help them continue their education or find gainful employment. More than 6,500 returned to school, and over 2,500 acquired technical skills. In addition, more than 3,000 were referred to training institutes and the majority of the young women are presently working.[40]

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[38] UNESCO, 2003.
[39] Chilisa, B. "National policies on pregnancy in education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa: The case of Botswana." *Gender and Education* 14 (1) 2002.
[40] *Working to Empower Women: UNFPA's Experience in Implementing the Beijing Platform for Action*. New York: United Nations Population Fund, 2004.
http://www.unfpa.org/intercenter/beijing/girl.htm

In many countries, school remains a place for traditional subjects and not for issues such as reproductive health or sex education to be discussed. There may be cursory references to human reproduction in biology curricula, but the focus is on the biological and technical aspects of reproduction, rather than the social and emotional issues which adolescents in particular need to explore. In some countries of southern Africa it has been acknowledged that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has to be addressed in schools, which requires frank discussion of sexual behaviour and gendered power relations – especially within couples – so that boys and girls have the opportunity to develop the necessary communication and negotiation skills to protect themselves. Good HIV/AIDS curriculum materials have been developed, but dissemination of good practices still needs to be improved.

There are a number of promising initiatives in South Africa particularly, which focus on challenging teachers' own beliefs and pre-conceptions, and the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) has been a key partner in raising awareness and intervening in issues relating to HIV/AIDS and gender equality across the sector, including working with the Ministry of Education on pre-service teacher training curricula. Also of interest is the way in which, though youth programmes such as "Love Life,"[41] "Soul City"[42] and "Yizo Yizo,"[43] television media have formed dynamic partnerships with education authorities and educators.

South Africa also suffers from one the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world, and there is an increasing awareness among educators of the need to address this issue with teachers and students. As in other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, new research is highlighting the prevalence of gender-based violence in schools and even perpetrated by teachers. Different strategies are being used to address this issue, and to ensure that schools are safe places for all learners, including teacher training and awareness-raising, whole-school approaches to creating safe schools, and in the International Rescue Committee refugee classes in West Africa, a programme of female classroom assistants to act as agents of protection in male-dominated schools. USAID's Women in Development Unit is also implementing a Safe Schools Program[44] with pilot activities starting in Ghana, Malawi and Ethiopia. The purpose of the activity is to develop an approach or package of interventions that transforms a hostile, violent school environment into a gender-safe one, thereby increasing a girl's ability to successfully complete her education.

There has been significant growth in gender studies programmes and centres over the last decade in universities and institutes around the world, including in many developing countries.[45] Institutions in Egypt, Brazil, India, and Lebanon for example, offer postgraduate programmes in gender studies, including some PhDs. South Africa boasts gender/ women's studies programmes in at least five Universities across the country. Also of particular note is the Department of Women and Gender Studies at Makerere University in Uganda, which was established in 1991 as a result of the advocacy work of women's organizations, but has, in recent years, become a key actor in scholarship and in women's affairs and gender mainstreaming in Uganda as a whole.[46] The Worldwide Association of Women's Studies Organizations (WOWS), formed during the 1995 Beijing Conference, has grown and now provides support to new and growing gender units and departments. However, while the

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[41] Love Life: http://www.lovelife.org.za/kids/index.html
[42] Soul City. Institute for Health and Development Communication, South Africa. http://www.soulcity.org.za/
[43] Yizo Yizo: http://www.sabceducation.co.za/yizoyizo3/
[44] "Safe Schools." USAID: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/activities/education_girlswomen_rc.htm
[45] Women's Studies Programmes, Departments and Research Centres http://www-unix.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/programs.html
[46] Department of Women and Gender Studies at Makerere University http://www.makerere.ac.ug/womenstudies/

field in general may be expanding, especially in developing countries, there is nonetheless concern about the status of gender units and their staff within universities and other institutions. Especially in North America, there are few tenured positions or chairs in women's studies, and much of the teaching and research is done by dedicated staff with minimal resources and no job security.

Two initiatives worthy of particular attention include the Gender Appropriate Curriculum Unit (GAC), established in 1992 by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Malawi. This unit is responsible not only for the content of all school materials and curricula, but also the training of teachers and education managers. The unit has had a significant impact on the portrayal of women and girls in primary level textbooks, and there are now pictures of female engineers, judges and scientists. However, there remains work to be done at the secondary level to ensure that illustrations in science and technology materials also include girls and women.[47]

In 1997, the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) was established within the Ministry of Education of Ghana to promote the education of girls in order to bring parity of access to education. However, the vision for the GEU goes beyond parity and also seeks to develop the social capital of women, thereby addressing education, status, self confidence, bargaining power, influence, decision-making power, access to resources, and experience of the political and economic world. At the national level, the GEU has held workshops, conducted research and developed outreach materials, but it has also decentralized its programme by requesting each District Education Office to nominate a District Girls' Education Officer (DGEO), and each Regional Education Office to nominate a Regional Girls' Education Officer (RGEO). The task of the DGEOs is to promote and foster an awareness of girls' education in communities through advocacy, networking, community participation, basic participatory learning and action (PLA) methodologies, and the collection of gender-segregated data.[48]

Areas for Future Action:
▪ The process of curriculum reform to include critical but sensitive subjects such as sexual and reproductive health should be as participatory and inclusive as possible in order to promote ownership by all stakeholders, especially students and parents;
▪ Gender units within Ministries need to be integrated into the overall structure of the institution, and provided with adequate human and financial resources to fulfill their aims;
▪ Ministries of Education should include basic gender training for all teachers and donor countries and agencies should ensure that funds and technical support are made available to support this;
▪ Increased support is required from governments as well as senior management for Gender/women's Studies departments and units in universities and tertiary institutions.

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[47] UNESCO, 2003.
[48] Ghana Ministry of Education http://www.ghana.edu.gh/home.html

Strategic Objective B.5

"Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms"

> Actions to be taken by governments, international and non-governmental organizations and other actors include to: provide the required budgetary resources to the educational sector; mobilize additional funds to enable girls and women, as well as boys and men on an equal basis; provide funding for special programmes to advance opportunities for all girls and women; contribute to the evaluation of progress achieved; conduct an international campaign promoting the right of women and girls to education.

Countries that have achieved significant improvements in girls' education have made substantial spending commitments to primary education – as much as seventy percent of the education budget. Since 1995 at least four African countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia) have made primary education free, and have also made specific policy and resource commitments to girls such as, in the case of Uganda, insisting that girls benefit from free schooling.[49] Research indicates that African countries do have some practical options for achieving gender equality goals but that the success of these depends on sector-wide nationally-owned reform processes, increased national resource allocation and a genuine commitment to gender equality. Concerns exist about the impacts of rapid expansion and the inevitably reduced per student spending on the quality of education. Furthermore, shifting financing towards primary education may have negative effects on the secondary system.

Although most Sub-Saharan governments substantially increased allocations of Gross National Product to primary schooling during the 1990s, research indicates that Africa's economic decline has been so severe that their absolute value has fallen sharply. Although more could be done to restructure financing for education and reorient spending towards basic education, it is clear that domestic resources in these and other low-income countries are not enough. It is becoming clear that even in countries where significant political and financial commitments have been made, extensive external resourcing will be required over a long-term period to maintain progress and to fully achieve the EFA targets. Estimates for the cost of achieving universal primary education, encompassing gender equality, vary from about nine billion to twenty-eight billion dollars per year.[50] Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia's low-income countries have the highest need, estimated to be about 1.9 billion dollars, and yet these countries are some of the least able to finance the necessary large scale reforms.[51] The Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (FTI), led by the World Bank but supported by an international partnership of bilateral and multilateral donors and UN agencies, is committed to providing financing for developing countries with good EFA plans and evidence of good governance to implement EFA programmes. However, there are still many questions regarding the long-term commitments of these donors and a large funding gap between countries' needs and the disbursements made. There are currently only five high income countries which have met or surpassed the target for 0.7 percent of national income as official development assistance (ODA), Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, but there are at least six countries on track for meeting this goal by 2015.[52]

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[49] UNESCO, 2003.
[50] UN Millennium Project, 2005.
[51] Ibid.
[52] *Investing in Development: A practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*. UN Millennium Project, 2005 http://unmp.forumone.com/

Although the situation is beginning to change, overall ODA dropped during the 1990s and flows to education reflected a similar pattern. During 1998-2001, bilateral aid to education actually fell as a percentage of total aid from ten to eight percent. In 2002 however, bilateral ODA assistance to education exceeded four billion dollars and it is expected that further increases will be made. During 2001-2002, Japan, France, Germany, the US, the Netherlands, Canada and the UK made the largest commitments (in that order), with an average budget of 455 million dollars. By contrast, a number of donor countries have made cuts in their allocations for education.[53]

Despite significant resourcing challenges, there are some promising signs, such as the commitments from the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair to increase UK aid substantially, as well as his plan to use Britain's 2005 presidency of the G8 group of industrialized nations to encourage other countries to do likewise, with a particular focus on Africa. Of special interest is Gordon Brown's announcement of the UK government commitment of over 1.4 billion pounds for education by 2008, with a particular focus on girls' education. It will be imperative to ensure that verbal commitments made at high-profile events such as summits are followed up, and that within these allocations, sufficient resources are committed to gender analysis and planning at the country level and to girls' and women's education programmes, including monitoring and evaluation.

Within the overall EFA and MDG frameworks, donor agencies have also made considerable policy commitments to gender equality and girls' education. Canada, the Netherlands, the US and the UK, for example, have all made explicit commitments to gender equality in education since 2000. However, reporting procedures and data collation methods make it very difficult to assess how far these statements translate into actual resources. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) defined education as one of four social development priorities, launched a new Basic Education Action Plan in April 2002, and committed 555 million dollars to basic education for the period 2000 –2005. Within this Action Plan, girls' education is one of the highlighted priorities, though no specific budget is attached to it.[54] A recent study by of USAID's EQUATE programme is a rare example of an in depth assessment of approaches to achieving gender equitable education, including budget allocations within the agency.[55]

In theory, EFA and MDG goals and appropriate gender equality objectives and strategies, especially for women's and girls' education, should be integrated into country level Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and these should be in harmony with EFA National Plans and MDG plans. A number of different guidelines have been produced and technical assistance has been provided to help countries produce gender-responsive EFA plans. UNESCO Bangkok, for example, has been working with 11 selected countries in the Asia and Pacific region to strengthen national capacities in implementing gender responsive EFA plans.[56] The programme includes networking, training, resource development, research, institutional analysis and advocacy.[57] The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has also provided technical support and advice for addressing gender issues within EFA planning in Africa.[58] Despite such support however, at the global level research indicates that in many countries gender equality has not been sufficiently integrated into PRSP analysis and subsequent drafting. Gender analysis of EFA and Sector-Wide Approaches (SWA) planning is equally weak.

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[53] UNESCO, 2003.
[54] *CIDA's Action Plan on Basic Education*. Ottawa: Canadian International Development Agency, 2002.
http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf/vLUallDocByIDEn/3F648C430C5537E385256975004CF35A?OpenDocument
[55] Ibid.
[56] Gender in Education Website. UNESCO Bangkok: http://www.unescobkk.org/gender/gender/index.htm
[57] Ibid.
[58] Forum for African Women Educationalists http://www.fawe.org

The post-Dakar period has seen increased commitment to the monitoring and evaluation of progress in education, and especially progress towards EFA targets. UNESCO coordinates the EFA process, and provides regular updates on progress as well as support to the advocacy, data collection and research necessary to guide educational development. Annual "EFA Global Monitoring Reports" are produced around specific themes, such as gender equality[59] (2003/4). UNICEF's annual *State of the World's Children* report also reports progress on girls' education, but does not look more broadly at gender issues within the education sector. There are no mechanisms for monitoring gender equality in education at the global level, which is highlighted in the report of the Millennium Project's Task Force on Gender Equality.[60]

In the countries with gender or women's machinery, and even in countries where gender analysis is integrated into PRSP, EFA, and MDG planning; monitoring and evaluation processes tend to be weak. Women's machineries are usually highly constrained in terms of their budgets and occupy a marginalized position within the government hierarchy, so monitoring and evaluation are unlikely to be a priority and may even be beyond the capacity of the Ministry/Office/Unit.

Areas for Future Action:
▪ Governments and aid agencies should work together to ensure that PRSP, EFA, SWA and MDG plans reflect solid gender analysis and a shared understanding of gender objectives in education policy, as well as strong monitoring and evaluation components;   ▪ Resources should be focused towards very poor countries with low levels of gender equality in education who have demonstrated a strong commitment to gender equality and educational reform;   ▪ International agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors as well as national governments should specifically report allocations to girls and women's education, as well as to gender equality in education as part of the monitoring and evaluation of policy commitments and actions;   ▪ The experience of various gender-budgeting initiatives should be applied to the budgeting the education sector, in order to assess the actual disbursements made by governments, donors and local organizations to promote gender equality;   ▪ A global monitoring body or observatory should be mandated to assess and provide timely reports on the state of gender equality in education.

Strategic Objective B.6

"Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women"

Actions to be taken by governments, international and non-governmental organizations and other actors include to: ensuring access to women to a broad range of educational and training programs oriented to active participation in communities and societies. The provision of child-care and other services should enable mothers to participate but there should also be attention given to ensuring that flexible education and training programs should also facilitate lifecycle transitions.

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[59] UNESCO, 2003.
[60] UN Millennium Project, 2005.

The overall aim of this Strategic objective is so inextricably linked to the others that it is hard to look at in isolation. Furthermore, the actions to be taken are less well-defined and it is hard to identify exactly what progress might have been made. Two key areas under this objective are voter education and human rights training for women. Since 1995, newly democratizing countries have become more aware of the need to reach out to women to encourage broad political participation. Programmes to educate Afghan women on voting processes have received a good deal of media attention, but a number of international agencies have supported similar programmes in several countries. The National Democratic Institute (NDI), for example, has supported programmes for women in Jordan, Yemen, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan and elsewhere. Focused around national elections, the programmes aimed to increase numbers of female voters and parliamentary candidates. NDI also trains election monitors to ensure that women are free to vote as they wish. However, the concern is that such programmes have only a short life-span, organized as they are around one event, and that they do not seek to further develop women's political literacy and engagement beyond the actual voting day.

The Asia Foundation has supported broader, civic education programmes that encompass human rights and gender equality, and a number of other dynamic human rights and social justice education projects for women exist. Human Strategies for Human Rights (HSHR) ran a human rights education project in Peru with the *Movimiento Amplio para Mujeres Linea Fundacional* (MAM Linea Fundacional) which focused on women's rights, indigenous rights and the right to health in a low-income neighborhood of Lima and rural provinces throughout the country. There were three target groups for the workshops: obstetric students, NGO workers and rural indigenous women, and the workshop goals were to empower women and provide them with human rights language and tools to be able to advocate for themselves, particularly in the area of reproductive rights.[61]

MADRE is an international women's human rights organization that works in partnership with women's community-based groups in conflict areas worldwide. Its programmes address many different women's rights issues, providing resources and training to enable women to meet immediate needs in their communities and develop long-term solutions to the crises they face. MADRE recently provided support for the construction of a new human rights training center for indigenous women in Chiapas, Mexico. Through the center, MADRE offers trainings on women's human rights, the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples, women's sexual and reproductive health, women's political participation, and food security. In Guatemala, MADRE also provided computers, printers, and other technical equipment to create a new computer literacy and human rights training center in Barcenas.[62]

There is limited attention given to education for older women, especially outside the developed Western world. In the developed world, the 'baby-boom' generation of women does have access to a variety of continuing education programmes and resources, though they tend to favour wealthier, urban women and thus exclude many thousands of poorer women, especially in rural areas. In some countries, older women who are no longer productive members of the family may remain very much hidden, with little or no participation in community activities. On the other hand, in conservative communities in India for example, it is possible that older women, for whom *purdah* restrictions are no longer enforced, possess more freedom to leave the home and participate in community

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[61] "Human Strategies for Human Rights Completes Human Rights Education Project in Peru with Women's Rights Movement" HSHR Press Release August 2003 http://www.hshr.org/pressperu.htm
[62] MADRE: http://www.madre.org

activities.[63] In many different contexts, young mothers and pregnant women may also remain invisible in their homes, but there has been more targeting of this group because of their influence over future generations. For women of all ages, domestic violence and sexual violence both inside and outside their homes are significant barriers to their access to educational opportunities.

Many grandmothers, great aunts and other older women who, because of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, are outliving their own children have to take on the care for their orphaned grandchildren or other children. In such cases, the traditional lifecycle has been radically altered and these women, who often have very low levels of education and literacy, are in need of new information and skills to be able to raise healthy children and to support their successful schooling. A small number of projects attempt to address these women's new needs for education and skills. The 'Go-Go Grannies', for example, are a group of grandmothers in South Africa's Alexandra Township who help and encourage each other as they raise their orphaned grandchildren. The project currently provides psychosocial, financial and material support to 30 grandmothers, including building grants to ensure adequate shelter for their growing families, as well as seeds and fertilizers so the women can start their own gardens to bring in food and income for their families.[64] A Thai NGO, Sanpatong, has also launched a special project for grandmothers who have assumed the role of primary caregiver for their adult children with HIV/AIDS and for grandchildren orphaned by AIDS. A key component of the project is a one-day training session on home-care skills, but groups of 30 grandparents also meet monthly to discuss their needs and concerns and to receive additional information on caring for themselves and their grandchildren as well as HIV-infected family members.[65]

Areas for Future Action:
▪ Further discussion and clarification of 'lifelong learning for women' and sharing of successful strategies and projects would help governments and their partners better understand how it fits into overall national development, PRSP, EFA and MDG planning; ▪ Efforts should be intensified to reach out to the most marginalized women, in developed and developing countries, to better understand their different educational needs and aspirations and to support them in achieving these; ▪ Measures must be taken at every level to address violence and the risks of violence against women as a means of increasing access to lifelong education opportunities; ▪ More attention needs to be given to the new educational needs of older women who are caring for HIV/AIDS orphans.

Conclusion

This report highlights some of the progress that has been made with regards to women and education and training at an international level, as well as some of the successful, local level projects which clearly have a significant impact for the individual women involved. At the international policy level there is increasing commitment and momentum to ensure that the educational rights of women and girls are met, and yet there is clearly much to do to ensure that these commitments are operationalized into quality programmes and backed by adequate financing.

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[63] Personal communication from an Indian feminist activist
[64] *2004 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*. Geneva: UNAIDS, 2004(b). http://www.unaids.org/bangkok2004/GAR2004_html/GAR2004_05_en.htm
[65] "Older Women: Program Examples" Reproductive Health Outlook: http://www.rho.org/html/older_progexamples.htm#thailand

The international MDG and EFA initiatives have placed the spotlight on government policies, programmes and budgets; yet we should not forget or underestimate the critical role that NGOs and civil society organizations play in the provision of education and training for women and girls. Many States such as Niger and Guinea have acknowledged that they cannot meet EFA targets without the support of civil society organizations, especially in the case of adult literacy. Resources must be made available to build the capacity of these organizations not only to provide quality education and training services for women and girls, but also to partner with governments in sector-wide planning, monitoring and evaluation efforts. Literacy and lifelong education for adult women and vocational training for women and girls may often be at the margins of national education planning, and efforts should be made to ensure that they are brought into the mainstream.

At the international level, civil society must insist that women's and girls' rights to education be taken seriously and given the necessary long-term funding. Civil society must be engaged at the national, regional and local levels in policy dialogue to advocate for local resource allocation for the education and training of women and girls and to develop the appropriate approaches and programmes. Although they are not specifically mentioned in the PfA, women's organizations and movements also have particularly important roles to play in moving ahead on the Beijing Agenda, as leaders in gender analysis of the education sector, and community mobilization and sensitization to gender and to women's rights issues. Feminist academics also have significant roles to play in partnering with like-minded practitioners to conduct policy-relevant research that aims to further understanding of successful strategies, identify previously unknown gaps and problems and provide direction and recommendations. With the right level of commitment and collaboration, educational opportunities can be expanded and enhanced to make a significant contribution to the empowerment of women and girls.