



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY: TWENTY YEARS ON

A review of how training for gender equality has evolved from Beijing Platform for Action in 1995

PRESENTATION

This paper provides a preliminary review of how training for gender equality has evolved from the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 to the present day. It can be considered a first step in surveying training for gender equality in the Beijing review process and broader literature. The overall aim of the paper is to advance knowledge and understanding on training for gender equality in order to develop strategies for moving forward in this field. This is done by reflecting on what has worked well to date, and what challenges still remain, based on substantive empirical evidence and rigorous analysis.

Training for gender equality in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

A range of types of training are envisaged in the PFA across the twelve critical areas of concern. In some areas, the focus is predominantly on skills training for women – namely poverty, the economy and the environment – without an explicit discussion of the role of training in gender mainstreaming within these fields. Other areas – notably education and the girl child – are concerned with non-discriminatory training. In the remaining critical areas, greater attention is given to ‘gender sensitive training’, more closely in line with the

Training Centre’s focus on training for gender equality. Health, violence and human rights particularly highlight the need for gender sensitive training for personnel. In institutional mechanisms, proposed measures include staff training in designing and analysing data from a gender perspective, alongside training and advisory assistance to government agencies to help integrate a gender perspective in their policies and programmes.

Training for gender equality in Beijing +5 (2000)

Training features frequently in the Beijing +5 Secretary-General’s report. In terms of achievements in implementation, it notes that a number of countries introduced awareness-raising and gender awareness training in an effort to

change institutional culture in agencies and departments. The report’s section on conclusions and further actions calls for the expansion of gender training.

Training for gender equality in Beijing +10 (2005)

The Secretary-General's report on Beijing +10 underscores progress made in resource allocations for training, as well as a wide variety of training activities for government institutions, civil society, women's organisations and individual women. Its section on institutional arrangements and mechanisms for the advancement of women, notes that governments were urged to promote gender training for both women and men

in government ministries. Several states instigated training on gender-sensitive budgeting and responses from countries in all regions included information on capacity-building workshops and training programmes. These developments demonstrate the widespread use of training as a tool for gender mainstreaming by 2005, with training in several critical areas seeming to peak during this period.

Training for gender equality in Beijing +15 (2010)

Training features strongly in the reports and analysis of Beijing +15. The Secretary-General's report concludes that many national machineries expanded their capacity-development and training functions for all members of government; that the availability of gender mainstreaming tools – including

guidelines, checklists, manuals, and guidance for conducting gender impact assessments – increased; and that specialised training, workshops and seminars were provided for staff in different ministries and government agencies, including for senior managers.

Training for gender equality in Beijing +20 (2015)

Training in the (draft) Secretary-General's report is not discussed beyond its analysis of the critical areas of concern, with the most detailed reflection relating to institutional mechanisms. While some countries developed training to strengthen staff skills in gender analysis, the +20 report – as in previous years – underlines remaining challenges, in particular staff capacity in national gender equality machineries

due to a lack of training and investment. Emphasising that much more needs to be done in this area, it highlights the particular need for greater knowledge and capacity in gender responsive budgeting, especially in the context of shrinking budgets. It is important to reflect on these on-going challenges for training as an institutional mechanism at this critical juncture.

Analysis and Implications for Practice

The evolution of training for gender equality has been accompanied by a proliferation of critical reflection on its theory and practice. Much feminist research since 1995 has been sceptical of the relationship between feminist movements and emerging training activities, drawing special attention to structures and power dynamics; the world views embedded in training methodologies; the lack of critical reflection

on pedagogical themes; and the dilemmas and challenges involved in feminist knowledge transfer. Discussion and debate on such topics has flourished through conferences and virtual dialogues, while understanding of training for gender equality has been furthered via key research projects, in particular in the European Union.

Key Findings

1. Training has been an important tool for increasing gender equality, and has flourished substantively, beyond the original expectations set out in the Platform for Action.
2. Despite the proliferation and institutionalisation of training for gender equality in many areas, there is a concerning lack of information on the impact and evaluation of such training.
3. The development and institutionalisation of training for gender equality has been uneven across different critical areas of concern.
4. Training for gender equality since Beijing has not always addressed the structural aspects and power relations which perpetuate inequality.
5. The provision of training for gender equality has often involved collaboration between different actors, expanding beyond a focus on the public sector to encompass the private sector, civil society and numerous other key-players.
6. While training for gender equality has developed, evolved and expanded consistently since Beijing, there appears to have been a decline in focus on training and a reversal in its scope in recent years.

Recommendations

1. Raise awareness of the important role played by training for gender equality in increasing equality between women and men since the Beijing Conference.
2. Continue to develop adequate systems for the monitoring and evaluation of training for gender equality in order to measure outcomes and impact more systematically.
3. Explore the possibilities for expanding training for gender equality in critical areas of concern which have received less attention to date.
4. Promote the value and role of training for gender equality as a tool for transformation in gendered power relations.
5. Encourage collaboration between a range of actors to expand and enhance the provision of training for gender equality while supporting the UN to be a world leader in this field.
6. Work to reverse the trend of a declining focus on training.

The UN Women Training Centre is dedicated to supporting the UN and other stakeholders to realize commitments to gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights through transformative training and learning.

It aims to become the leading UN centre that contributes, through training for gender equality, to building a society that respects and promotes human rights for all women and men.

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