

WORKING PAPER

EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY



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INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the differences between training and education, specifically in relation to training for gender equality. The objective is to further clarify the UN Women Training Centre's definition of training for gender equality, and in particular how it differs from and overlaps with the field of feminist adult education. This paper can be read in tandem with the other working papers in the Training Centre's series – on Theory of Change, Pedagogies, Quality and Evaluation – for a more substantive discussion of the issues raised.

In the Oxford English Dictionary, **education** is defined as “the process of educating or being educated, the theory and practice of teaching” while **training** is “teaching a particular skill or type of behaviour through regular practice and instruction.”¹ For UNESCO, a number of terms make up the definition of **education**. ‘Basic education’ is defined as “action designed to meet ‘basic learning needs’”², as well as “the foundation of lifelong learning.”³ For our purposes, the terms **lifelong learning** and **adult education** are particularly relevant. The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, for example, defines this as:

The entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise, whereby people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society. Adult learning encompasses both formal and continuing education, non-formal learning and the

spectrum of informal and incidental learning available in a multicultural learning society, where theory- and practice-based approaches are recognized.⁴

In terms of **training**, UNESCO uses the term **Technical Vocational Education and Training** (TVET) to denote “those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic life”. Such training thus equips people not only with vocational skills, but with a broad range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are now recognised as indispensable for meaningful participation in work and life. Examples of the benefits include self-awareness and self-esteem, and strengthened interpersonal, citizenship, communication and entrepreneurial skills. As such, training in UNESCO is understood as *part of the educational process*, and involves not only vocational skills but also *knowledge, skills and attitudes*.

In the general literature on training and education, there is a strong focus on training as “skill-oriented”, while education is “concept-based”.⁵ Scholars in the field of education have noted that “there is a great deal of confusion between these words [education and training], with researchers and human resource specialists alike often at a loss to differentiate between them effectively, resulting in their being used basically as synonyms”. Education, it is argued is “the foundation upon which to build, training involves

1 Pearsall, J. (1999) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. New York: Oxford University Press.

2 UNESCO (2007) Operational Definition of Basic Education: Thematic Framework. Paris: UNESCO. Available: <http://www.unesco.org/education/framework.pdf>

3 UNESCO (2007) Operational Definition of Basic Education: Thematic Framework. Paris: UNESCO. Available: <http://www.unesco.org/education/framework.pdf>

4 UNESCO (2007) Operational Definition of Basic Education: Thematic Framework. Paris: UNESCO. Available: <http://www.unesco.org/education/framework.pdf>

5 Burrus, D. (2015) "Teach a Man to Fish: Training vs. Education", Huffington Post, 6 October 2015. Available: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-burrus/teach-a-man-to-fish-training-vs-education_b_7553264.html

the skills you want to develop.”⁶ For Lippert et al, education is “concerned with diagnosing problems”, while “training seeks ways to resolve them”.⁷ However, such a narrow definition of training does not fit the goals, methodologies and pedagogical approaches of training for gender equality. The UN Women Training Centre definition, for example, goes far beyond a technical framing:

Training for Gender Equality is a transformative process that aims to provide knowledge, techniques and tools to develop skills and changes in attitudes and behaviours. It is a continuous and long-term process that requires political will and commitment of all parties in order to create an inclusive, aware and competent society to promote gender equality.⁸

Thus, training is envisioned as a situation in which learners and facilitators meet in a face-to-face, virtual or blended environment to discuss and share training content which encompasses knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. As outlined at length in the Training Centre’s *Typology of Training for Gender Equality*⁹, training goes well beyond a mere focus on skills building and in fact overlaps substantially with the understandings of education outlined above. As such, in the paper we focus explicitly on the field of *feminist adult education*, to distinguish from education and training more broadly conceived. Feminist adult education specifically entails the infusion of “feminist analyses into the content, process and methods of teaching, learning and educative-activism”, revealing the “fundamental patriarchal nature and bias in the practices and theory of adult education and learning.”¹⁰ This paper explores some of

the key distinguishing features of adult education and training for gender equality, while acknowledging the complex interrelatedness of both processes and the significant similarities between the two.

The paper is structured around three key questions:

- How do we define training for gender equality?
- What are the key differences and overlaps between feminist adult education and training for gender equality?
- How can feminist adult education and training for gender equality be understood as a continuum of mutual learning?

These questions are addressed in turn, finishing with a **Statement on Education and Training for Gender Equality**, setting out the UN Women Training Centre’s position for further discussion among key stakeholders.

6 Barnes, C. (2014) “Education and Training - What’s the difference?”, eLearning Industry, 13 June 2014. Available: <https://elearningindustry.com/education-and-training-what-is-the-difference>

7 Lippert, S. K., Granger, M. J., and Case, T. (2007) *Contextual Differences between Education and training in MIS Curriculum Development*. Quoted in Masadeh, M. (2012) “Training, Education, Development and Learning: What is the Difference?”, *European Scientific Journal*, 8(10).

8 UN Women Training Centre (2015) *About Us: UN Women Training Centre*. Available: <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/page/view.php?id=45>

9 Leghari, R. and Wretblad, E. (2016) *Typology on Training for Gender Equality*. Santo Domingo: UN Women Training Centre.

10 Clover, D. (2015) “Feminist and gender theories in adult education”, *ELM European Lifelong Learning Magazine*, 24 June 2015. Available: <http://www.elmmagazine.eu/articles/feminist-and-gender-theories-in-adult-education>

DEFINING TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

FIGURE 1: TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE THE PROCESS OF TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY



As argued in the Introduction, purely technical definitions of training do not match the ambitions of training for gender equality – a process embedded in feminist principles and feminist practice, which seeks to contribute to gender-transformative change. **As such, there is a pressing need to further articulate the definition of training for gender equality, and to situate it more explicitly in relation to the field of feminist adult education, as opposed to education and training in a generic sense.** Contemporary training for gender equality is grounded in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, and this is worth discussing here. In the Platform for Action, **education** relates to

the education and training of women (Critical Area of Concern B). A distinction is made between formal education on the one hand, and non-formal education and training for girls and women.¹¹ The PFA adopts the concept of ‘lifelong learning’ to include “knowledge and skills gained in formal education and training, as well as learning that occurs in informal ways, including volunteer activity, unremunerated work and traditional knowledge”.¹²

In contrast, **training** in the PFA is constructed as a method to achieve gender equality and gender mainstreaming across the twelve critical areas of

11 United Nations (1995) *Beijing Platform for Action: Education and Training of Women*. Available: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/educa.htm>

12 United Nations (1995) *Beijing Platform for Action: Education and Training of Women*. Available: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/educa.htm>

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.¹³ This demonstrates the breadth of definitions of training when put into practice in the field of gender equality, as illustrated by Figure 1.¹⁴

Broader, more gender-transformative understandings of training are echoed in the literature, where it is often referred to as ‘gender training’. The OPERA-QUING research project understands ‘gender training’ as “an avenue for transferring knowledge into practice” centred on questioning gender inequalities and being inclusive of other factors of inequality.¹⁵ The Institute for Development Studies describes it as

a “facilitated process of developing awareness and capacity on gender issues, to bring about personal or organisational change for gender equality.”¹⁶ Broadly speaking training is a process considered to be “participatory, interactive, and with the ultimate goal of transformation.”¹⁷ Yet as noted by the literature, the term is considered to encompass “primarily briefing, sometimes advocacy, occasionally learning (on knowledge, skills, or attitudes and values), but there is little rigour to the concept of gender training”.¹⁸ Such conceptualisations recall the UN Women Training Centre’s definition of training for gender equality, as noted above, as a “transformative process that aims to provide knowledge, techniques and tools to develop skills and changes in attitudes and behaviours.”¹⁹ This entails a situation in which learners and facilitators meet – either in a face-to-face or virtual environment – to share learning on content encompassing knowledge, skills and attitudes/values related to gender equality.

EIGE uses the term **Gender Equality Training**, which “provides participant(s) with the relevant knowledge, skills and values that allow them to contribute to the effective implementation of the gender-mainstreaming strategy in their field, organisation, institution or country. This requires adequate theoretical knowledge, practical skills and sometimes also a change in attitude and behaviour. Recognising

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- 13 Ferguson, L. (2015) *Training for Gender Equality: Twenty Years On*. Santo Domingo: UN Women Training Centre. Available: http://gtcop.unwomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=435%3Acapacitacion-para-la-igualdad-de-genero&catid=1%3Anoticias&Itemid=36&lang=en
 - 14 Ferguson, L. (2015) *Training for Gender Equality: Twenty Years On*. Santo Domingo: UN Women Training Centre. Available: http://gtcop.unwomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=435%3Acapacitacion-para-la-igualdad-de-genero&catid=1%3Anoticias&Itemid=36&lang=en
 - 15 Ferguson, L. and Forest, M. (2011) *OPERA Final Report: Advancing Gender+ Training in Theory and Practice*. QUING Quality in Gender+ Equality Policies Integrated Project, p. 2. Available: http://www.iwm.at/projects/quiring/www.quing.eu/files/results/final_opera_report.pdf
 - 16 Reeves, H. and Baden, S. (2000) *Gender and Development: Concepts and Definitions*. Brighton: BRIDGE Institute of Development Studies (IDS). Available: <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/sites/bridge.ids.ac.uk/files/reports/re55.pdf>
 - 17 Bustelo, M., Ferguson, L. and Forest, M. (2016) “Introduction”, in M. Bustelo, L. Ferguson and M. Forest (Eds.) *The Politics of Feminist Knowledge Transfer: Gender Training and Gender Expertise*. Abingdon and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 4.
 - 18 Ziffer, Alicia (2010) “Gender Training Community of Practice: Learning Through Dialogue.” Paper presented at the Fourth International Technology, Education and Development Conference (INTED), Valencia, Spain.
 - 19 UN Women Training Centre (2015) *About Us: UN Women Training Centre*. Available: <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/page/view.php?id=45>

that no political or organisational practice is gender neutral is a learning process.²⁰ In mapping gender training across the European Union, EIGE described 'gender training' as "an educational tool with the purpose of making policy-makers and other actors in the EU and Member States more aware of gender equality issues, build their gender competence and enable them to promote gender equality goals in their work at all levels."²¹

This brief discussion highlights how general conceptualisations of training as purely technical or skills-based are not appropriate for training for gender equality. Rather, as set out in the Typology of Training for Gender Equality and discussed in more detail below, skills acquisition is merely one aspect of training for gender equality.²²

TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND FEMINIST ADULT EDUCATION: DIFFERENCES AND OVERLAPS

In practice, as argued throughout the paper, the line between education and training for gender equality is often blurred. Particularly in respect to gender equality, there are substantial overlaps. "Learning" and "unlearning" gender entails a combination of several socio-political-economic factors and arrangements – education, training and a range of informal learning processes – each of which engage different actors, in different contexts, with different narratives. Informal education, less organized and structured than either formal or non-formal education, may include learning activities that occur in the work place (for instance, internships), in the local community and in daily life,

on a self-directed, family-directed, or socially-directed basis."²³ Rather, "much of what we learn in life is neither deliberate nor intentional. This informal learning is inherent to all experiences of socialization."²⁴ For the purposes of this paper, the discussion of education will focus on education which is organised - whether formal, non-formal or informal.

In order to explore these issues more substantively, it is useful to turn to the field of feminist adult education, which questions the "basic gendered assumptions of adult education".²⁵ At its most basic level, "feminist adult education involves the infusion

20 EIGE (n.d.) *Gender Equality Training*. Available: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-equality-training>

21 EIGE (2012) *Mapping of gender training policies and practices in the European Union: Summary of findings*. Vilnius: European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Available: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Gender%20Training%20-%20Summary%20of%20findings.pdf>

22 Leghari, R. and Wretblad, E. (2016) *Typology on Training for Gender Equality*. Santo Domingo: UN Women Training Centre.

23 UNESCO (2015) *Rethinking Education: Towards A Global Common Good?* Paris: UNESCO, p. 7. Available: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002325/232555e.pdf>

24 Ibid.

25 Clover, D. (2015) "Feminist and gender theories in adult education", ELM European Lifelong Learning Magazine, 24 June 2015. Available: <http://www.elmmagazine.eu/articles/feminist-and-gender-theories-in-adult-education>

of feminist analyses into the content, process and methods of teaching, learning and educative-activism.” It reveals the “fundamental patriarchal nature and bias in the practices and theory of adult education and learning”²⁶, as discussed in more detail in the Pedagogies working paper. Feminist adult education is a more precise concept against which to

compare training for gender equality, and as such will guide the rest of the discussions in this paper. Figure 2 presents a review of some of the key differences and similarities between feminist adult education and training for gender equality in terms of how they have been applied in practice to date.

FIGURE 2: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FEMINIST ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN PRACTICE

	Differences		Similarities/Overlaps
	Feminist Adult Education	Training for Gender Equality	
Origins	Draws on activism of the social movement of feminist education.	Feminists working within and outside of institutions pushing for the implementation of the gender mainstreaming agenda	Both draw from feminist movements and understandings of learning, activism and gender-transformative change.
Pedagogical approach	Feminist pedagogical as intrinsic to practice.	Feminist pedagogies intrinsic to practice, but not always integrated substantively in interventions that have passed for gender training (see Pedagogies and Quality working papers).	Both are guided by feminist pedagogies that challenge patriarchal oppression, value participatory learning, validation of personal experience, encouragement of social understanding, activism and accountability, and the development of critical thinking and open-mindedness.
Timeframe	Usually long-term, over a semester, academic year or entire degree programme – time to build rapport between teachers and learners, and among learners.	Often employ shorter timeframes – from one-off courses to training programmes over the course of weeks or months - which may offer less space for long-term engagement with learners.	Both have the potential to take place over long-term periods and build strong rapport among learners, facilitators and groups of learners.
Incentives	Learners have usually chosen to study this area, tend to be critically engaged and generally supportive of feminist ideas.	Learners are often obligated to attend training for gender equality. This can generate resentment and resistances. Often learners are not sympathetic to the idea of gender equality and are resistant to changing attitudes and behaviours.	Using the latest methods in good practice in training for gender equality, increasingly trainers are able to harness individual and institutional resistances so that participants in training – as in feminist adult education – are more open to feminist ideas and the promotion of gender equality.

26 Clover, D. (2015) "Feminist and gender theories in adult education", ELM European Lifelong Learning Magazine, 24 June 2015. Available: <http://www.elmmagazine.eu/articles/feminist-and-gender-theories-in-adult-education>

Location	Specific educational environment. Space to construct a “feminist classroom.” Learners supported by educational infrastructure.	Often the workplace of participants. This is not a ‘neutral space’ and brings with it certain dynamics and hierarchies. Training is not necessarily part of a broader learning journey on which participants are supported outside of the training scenario.	When gender mainstreaming is taken seriously by an institution, a supportive infrastructure can be developed for training participants to further develop their learning on gender equality.
Learning objectives	Academic approach to learning about gender. Theory, analysis and critical thinking an integral part of the learning process.	Often technical and specific, driven by needs of organisation. Trainers may have limited scope to revise these and bring in theory, analysis and critical thinking.	Training is increasingly going beyond the scope of skills training to encompass the forms of critical thinking promoted in educational settings – e.g. training to raise awareness, enhance knowledge, change attitudes, behaviours and practices, and spur social mobilisation. Similarly, education also can and does build skills. ²⁷
Political approach	Explicitly feminist and transformative.	May be difficult to openly declare feminist and gender-transformative nature of training. Often, trainers and training institutions must often be subversive and entrepreneurial in order to bring in feminist approaches and politics.	Feminist politics and practice are under threat in both adult education and training contexts. A commitment to feminist politics entails the need to continually justify a feminist project, regardless of the context.
Professionalisation and Accreditation	Educators rigorously trained and certified to internationally agreed standards.	Currently no agreed standards for training for gender equality or professionalisation/ certification of trainers (see Quality paper for more substantive discussion).	Moves are afoot, including by the Training Centre and other bodies/groups to define quality criteria and professional standards for trainers, often inspired by the extant criteria for professional feminist educators (see Quality Paper and Professional Development Programme for Gender Trainers) ²⁷ .
Accessibility	Education may only be available to those who are able to attend formal academic institutions, with the time, resources and academic background to do so.	Training is accessible even for those without formal academic qualifications, making it often highly accessible for a broad range of participants, although access issues remain.	Many forms of training and education – particularly non-formal and informal education – are accessible for wide groups of learners. Feminist educators and trainers are committed to increasing access.

27 <https://www.kit.nl/study/course/professional-development-programme-for-gender-trainers/>

While we may draw some distinctions between the spheres of education and training, in reality it is exceptionally difficult to try and separate the two spheres, given the substantial overlaps between them. This is particularly important in the field of gender equality, where a shared commitment to

feminist pedagogical principles and practices renders neat definitions and categorisation unhelpful. Rather, as set out below, it is more useful to think of a continuum of mutual learning between and through the two spheres of training for gender equality and feminist adult education.

TOWARDS A CONTINUUM OF MUTUAL LEARNING

Appreciating both the differences and similarities between feminist adult education and training for gender equality is a useful means of gaining conceptual clarity around what we wish training for gender equality to become. Ideally, such training should aspire to encompass more elements from feminist adult education. Given the substantial overlaps between these concepts, we encounter a continuum of learning that may lead us towards the kinds of gender-transformative change to which training for gender equality ultimately aspires. In order to explore this continuum in more detail, we analyse how lessons learned from the field of feminist adult education may be applied to the different levels of change to which training for gender equality aspires. This draws on the UN Women Training Centre's Typology:

1. **Awareness-raising and consciousness-building**, the level that “introduces participants’ to key issues concerning gender (in)equality and women’s empowerment.”²⁸ Here we may consider the importance of the pedagogies that underlie feminist adult education. Like critical pedagogies more broadly, feminist pedagogies focus on critical

thinking, awareness and social understanding. Specifically, “learning to question and challenge the explanations for why things are the way they are and what is ‘normal’ – perpetually seeking a deeper understanding of power and inequality from the intimate and personal to the more public realms of decision making”.²⁹ Drawing on the work of Freire here, it is useful to consider how this leads learners towards “developing critical consciousness —an explicit goal of feminist popular education [which...] along with hope and solidarity, sustains people’s active involvement and capacity to self-organize in response to injustice. Critical thinking skills, a commitment to equality and fairness, and a recognition of how power operates in everyday life are key features of this kind of political awareness.”³⁰ Applying feminist educational pedagogies which explicitly foster critical thinking would an essential means of raising awareness and building consciousness among participants in training for gender equality.

2. **Knowledge enhancement**, which is geared towards providing more in-depth information and understanding on gender equality and the power structures underlying inequalities.³¹ In this respect,

28 Leghari, R. and Wretblad, E. (2016) *Typology on Training for Gender Equality*. Santo Domingo: UN Women Training Centre.

29 Miller, V. and Veneklasen, L. (2012) *Feminist Popular Education & Movement-building*. JASS Just Associates Draft Discussion Paper, p.3. Available: <https://www.justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/feminist-popular-education-movement-building-miller-veneklasen.pdf>

30 Ibid.

31 Leghari, R. and Wretblad, E. (2016) *Typology on Training for Gender Equality*. Santo Domingo: UN Women Training Centre.

for instance, a great deal can be learned from feminist strands of the Popular Education approach in Latin American countries. This form of non-formal education draws on Freirean concepts of the struggles of oppressed groups and uses education “as a tool for social change”. It has been employed to generate feminist knowledge as it is grounded in “dialogue between different forms of knowledge”.³² Feminist popular educator Claudia Korol notes that when:

Feminist collectives and women’s spaces (involved in social movements or not), and sexual dissidents’ collectives begin to use Popular Education in their work, they challenge existing feminist knowledge based on new practices, ideas and experiences. This questions more than a century of feminist experience and legacy, while also building new knowledge out of these practices, as new generations or social groups that used to be estranged from feminist thinking are integrated into them.³³

Such experiences of “collective ‘walking together’” that are “creating a feminist current that is being identified as grassroots, community-based feminism”³⁴ offer valuable lessons for training for gender equality, given its ambition to draw together trainees in a democratic learning space that fosters the collective generation of knowledges, and action, from the bottom-up.

3. **Skills training**, which strengthens participants’ competences in this field by offering instruments, tools, techniques and strategies with which to apply their knowledge in practice.³⁵ Arguably, this is the level of change with which training, broadly speaking, is most closely associated. Nevertheless, the sphere of feminist adult education is also useful in this respect, as we know that education – like training – also serves

to enhance skills and capacities. Moreover, a broader conceptualisation of skills development, drawing on a more substantive notion of the remit of training, can allow for a critical, engaged approach to skills development which is grounded in power dynamics and feminist critique.

4. **Change in attitudes, behaviours, and practices**, which fosters lasting positive changes in the way participants think and act, as well as their long-term habits.³⁶ For instance, the NGO Promundo has collaborated with Brazil’s education system on *Program H* to engage young men and boys. The programme’s materials are “implemented as a component of government-mandated sexuality education in Brazil and are reaching millions of students.” Their implementation demonstrates how “group education can change the gendered cultures of schools, leading to attitude change related to homophobia and attitudes supportive of violence against and harassment of girls”.³⁷ Notions of ‘group education’ are useful here, as training for gender equality may need to engage a range of actors and institutions in order to promote change in attitudes, behaviours and practices. This involves an acknowledgement of the socially embedded nature of learning about gender, and the complexity of processes required to challenge – and ‘unlearn’ or ‘undo’ - gender.

5. **Mobilisation for social transformation**, which stimulates participants’ capacity to collaboratively put their knowledge, motivation and skills into practice, in order to change their work, communities and daily lives into more gender equitable spaces.³⁸ Stromquist notes that “adult education has a transformative action potential”, which is especially true for feminist education. She contends:

32 De Cicco, G. (2015) *Building feminist knowledge through popular education*. Association of Women in Development (AWID). Available: <http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/building-feminist-knowledge-through-popular-education>

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Leghari, R. and Wretblad, E. (2016) *Typology on Training for Gender Equality*. Santo Domingo: UN Women Training Centre.

36 Leghari, R. and Wretblad, E. (2016) *Typology on Training for Gender Equality*. Santo Domingo: UN Women Training Centre.

37 UNFPA and MenEngage (n.d.) *Engaging Men, Changing Gender Norms: Directions for Gender-Transformative Action*. Available: <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Advocacy%20Brief-%20Gender%20Norms-1.pdf>

38 Leghari, R. and Wretblad, E. (2016) *Typology on Training for Gender Equality*. Santo Domingo: UN Women Training Centre.

[The feminist movement] is profoundly dependent on the use of new knowledge to promote new mentalities. Education here plays a double role: to transmit knowledge about the debilitating and undesirable conditions or issues that have been ignored or that are so deeply rooted in society that they seem immutable, and to teach oppressed people to think in political terms - to become aware that certain demands must be made to those who occupy political positions.³⁹

This is an important lesson which training for gender equality can draw from feminist adult education to harness the transformative action potential of learning to evoke lasting social change.

While training for gender equality can be informed by feminist adult education, lessons learned from practice in training can also feed back into the field of education. These include, for example:

- Techniques for dealing with resistances to gender equality and change for gender equality
- Tools for exploring and addressing hierarchies and intersectional power dynamics in the classroom or training scenario
- Experience in ‘teaching the privileged’ about gender equality, for example when dealing with senior managers who are unwilling to acknowledge their responsibilities towards gender inequality (see UN Women Training Centre Webinar for more information)⁴⁰
- Spearheading the accessibility of feminist learning, beyond particular physical spaces or accredited courses towards greater inclusion of all forms of learners – e.g. those in the global south, illiterate learners, etc.

This promotes a continuum of mutual learning between the two fields, and engages a spirit of cooperation and the building of communities of practice across disciplines.

STATEMENT ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Distinctions between education and training are not clear-cut, and there are clear overlaps between the two. Training is clearly an educational process, and should thus be considered a part of education, while education is a more comprehensive, systemic, and institutionalised process. One key over-arching difference is that education takes a life-cycle approach - from child development to adult learning - whereas training particularly focuses on adult learning to develop knowledge and skills to advance performance and capabilities.

However, training for gender equality goes beyond technical understandings of training which focus on skills acquisition and development. Training for gender equality is a highly political and contested endeavour, grounded in feminist pedagogical principles and practices and a broader commitment to gender-transformative change. As set out explicitly in the Beijing Platform for Action, training is a tool or method employed for mainstreaming gender throughout all priority areas, while education for women and girls is a stand-alone priority area. As such,

39 Stromquist, N. P. (2016) *Feminist Organizations and Social Transformation in Latin America*. New York: Routledge.

40 Virtual Dialogue Webinar 2019 - Privilege, Power and Training for Gender Equality <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNeyiJctVqQ>

it is very important to distinguish between *training* – in a generic sense – and *training for gender equality*.

The Training Centre is aware that there are often substantive tensions between a demand for technical, easily applicable skills and easy answers (from commissioners and training participants) – on the one hand – and a desire for transformation of gendered power relations through contestation, struggle and critical consciousness building (from feminist trainers, practitioners and academics) on the other.

Nevertheless, in the current context, training provides flexible avenues to respond to needs in advancing gender equality and transforming gendered power relations.

Just as generic definitions of training are not adequate for training for gender equality, neither does the broad term ‘education’ capture the specific challenges of educational environments which deal with gender equality. The field of feminist adult education offers an opportunity for mutual learning and exchange, and training for gender equality can draw substantively from theory and practice in this sphere. As such, the discussions in this paper are framed by comparing training for gender equality feminist adult education in order to clarify understanding. While there are key differences between training for gender equality and feminist adult education, they share a common commitment to feminist pedagogical principles and practices. **As such, it is more helpful to conceptualise these two fields as co-constituting on a continuum of learning, as opposed to in opposition.**

For the UN Women Training Centre,

Training for Gender Equality is a transformative process that aims to provide knowledge, techniques and tools to develop skills and changes in attitudes and behaviours. It is a continuous and long-term process that requires political will and commitment of all parties in order to create an inclusive, aware and competent society to promote gender equality.⁴¹

This involves an approach to training that is both **embedded in feminist pedagogical principles and practices** and **explicitly inter-linked with feminist adult education**. As such, we need to harness the overlaps between the two in terms of their potential to contribute to awareness-raising and consciousness-building; knowledge enhancement; skills development; changes in attitudes, behaviours and practices; and mobilisation for social transformation in order to lead to learning and knowledge circulation that truly advances the cause of transformation for gender equality.

41 UN Women Training Centre (2015) *About Us: UN Women Training Centre*. Available: <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/page/view.php?id=45>

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DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND
THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A
GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED
TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.