

EQUALS

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

Issue 8, September 2004

LATIN AMERICA IN NUMBERS

96% of girls in Latin America are enrolled at primary school (and 97% of boys)

99% of girls aged 15-24 in Chile have literacy skills (and 98.7% of boys aged 15-24)

5.5% of total seats in the Honduras parliament are held by women

25% of girls in Guatemala go to secondary school (the figure for boys is only slightly higher at 27 per cent)

First statistic: UNDP Human Development Report 2004

Other statistics: UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003-4. Net enrolment ratios have been used.

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PLUS Talking with Teachers, News & more...



Credit: Commonwealth Secretariat

MINISTERS COMMIT TO CENTRALISE EDUCATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS

Commonwealth Education Ministers have confirmed a heightened role for education and teacher retention in the fight against HIV/AIDS and adopted a protocol regulating teacher migration. This is partly to protect education systems from collapse in the face of the pandemic. In a statement released following a conference at Stoke Rochford, UK on 2 September, attended by education ministers and senior officials from 26 countries and territories and organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat with support from the UK's National Union of Teachers, ministers underlined the need for a clear role for education within all national, regional and global strategies to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS. The statement pledged a rigorous, coordinated response to the pandemic, which is threatening the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for education, most urgently the goal seeking gender equality in education worldwide by 2005.

Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Winston Cox said, "The impact of HIV/AIDS on our most vulnerable members is threatening the efforts of many of them to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for education and it is timely that we address this issue and look for ways to deal with the problem". The education systems in small states are particularly vulnerable to the loss of skilled human resources. Ministers acknowledged the need for mechanisms to help teachers and students who are affected by HIV/AIDS. They reaffirmed the need 'to include compulsory age-appropriate HIV/AIDS education in the curriculum of every education system within the Commonwealth, including teacher education'. Ministers said they would ensure that all future education sector plans and policies take full account of the impact of the epidemic.

The Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol seeks to address the international recruitment of teachers. Developed in response to commitments made at the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Edinburgh in October 2003, the Protocol sets out the rights and responsibilities of countries which recruit and supply teachers. Training teachers is expensive and their emigration to countries that pay higher wages directly affects countries' capacity to achieve the education MDGs. Many parents have concerns about sending their daughters to school unless there are enough teachers (and in some countries enough female teachers) to protect and support them. Fewer teachers mean a smaller number of children overall are able to attend school.



Credit: Commonwealth Secretariat

Left to right, Danny Faure, Education Minister for the Seychelles and Winston Cox, Commonwealth Deputy Secretary General.

The Statement on HIV/AIDS and Education and the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol are available to download at www.thecommonwealth.org.

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

This issue of *Equals* looks at Latin America, a region in which many countries have successfully achieved gender parity in educational access in time for next year's Millennium Goal deadline. Eighteen of the 28 Latin American countries with available data have a Gender Parity Index of 0.99 or higher which means equal numbers of girls and boys in the age range in school. This is a considerable achievement but it does not mean that work on gender and education in Latin America is complete.

But these achievements are only half the story. Gender parity in access to education is a big step forward, but it does not by any means signify that gender equality in education has been achieved. As 'Viewpoint' on pp.4-5, and 'Literacy in Mexico' on pp.3-4 highlight, that having equal numbers of boys and girls sitting on classroom benches does not ensure all children will receive an education of equal quality or relevance. The articles show how girls find it more difficult to attend school regularly and stay on until their education is complete. Girls encounter gender inequalities in the classroom such as having to assist teachers in domestic tasks. They face gender stereotypes in textbooks and in the careers that are open to them.

Statistics on income do not sufficiently capture the unevenness of education progress. Our 'Scorecard for Latin America' (p.9) ranks countries' gender and education achievements. Nicaragua and Guatemala score less than half the totals of Brazil and Mexico. These huge disparities are similar to those found in Asia. Latin America now has some of the world's largest economies, longest life expectancies and highest education indicators – but also some of the smallest, shortest and lowest. Argentina is 34th in the UNDP's Human Development Index; Haiti is 153rd.

Latin America's successes, especially in the realms of gender and education, need to be met with a reprioritisation, rather than a lack of concern by the global community. For instance, in countries where gender parity at primary level has been achieved attention needs to be paid to girls' attendance and retention. Adult women who have 'missed out' on the revolution in educational access need to find how they can acquire literacy skills in later life as Celita Eccher's article on p.9 makes clear.

We hope you enjoy the range of articles in this issue, which include regular features such as book and conference reviews and 'Talking with Teachers'. Feedback on any articles or issues raised is most welcome.

Chlöe
Chlöe Challender

Elaine
Elaine Unterhalter

Sheila
Sheila Aikman

WHEN GIRLS DISAPPEAR FROM BOOKS: A CHALLENGE FOR MEXICO'S READING POLICY

By Katya Butrón

Historically, Mexico has not been a readers' country. However, the government has pledged that by 2006 Mexico will have implemented a new programme to radically transform literacy. UNESCO estimated that 93% of men and 89% of women in Mexico were literate in 2000. However many studies report that functional illiteracy is a serious problem. Since the 1980s, the Mexican government has implemented policies related to libraries and reading. Most have been addressed to students in primary and secondary schools.

But many campaigns ignored the issues of literacy outside of school. A study about cultural habits carried out in the 1990s shows that more than one fifth of the population did not have any books in their houses. In contrast more than 86% of those surveyed had at least one television.



Credits: SEP Textbooks.

Images from textbooks



as fulfilling are those of students, teachers or nurses, never scientific or professional roles.

The majority of protagonists in the stories are male. 66% of the stories in the free textbooks present a man or a boy as the main protagonist, while only 18% present a woman or girl as protagonist. The other 16% represent the stories where a boy and a girl share the main role.

In the poems or stories about animals there is an implicit assumption that boys or men are the main characters.

MAIN CHARACTERS IN FREE TEXTBOOKS

| GRADE | 1o. | 2o. | 3o. | 4o. | 5o. | 6o. | TOTAL | % |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-----|
| WOMEN | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 24 | 18 |
| BOTH SEXES | 8 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 21 | 16 |
| MEN | 9 | 14 | 12 | 13 | 20 | 22 | 90 | 66 |
| TOTAL | 20 | 25 | 18 | 17 | 26 | 29 | 135 | 100 |

Government Policies

1983 *The Public Libraries National Network* Provided librarian services across the country aiming to guarantee access to books to all the population.

1986 *Reading Corners* Provided library collections to federal primary schools.

1987 *The Law for Libraries* Regulated the installation, maintenance and service offered by public libraries.

1989 *To Read is to Grow Up* Promoted reading and writing. Sought to encourage lifelong learning.

1992 *The National Agreement for the Modernisation of the Basic Education* Primary school programmes to be decided by subject and not by area.

1992 *The Project for the Promotion of Reading in Primary Schools* 2 phases, for schools and students' parents.

1995 *National Programme for the strengthening of reading and writing in basic education.*

1999 *National Programme Reading Year: Reading to Be Better*

2000 *The Law of Reading and Books.* Integrated the National Council for Reading and Books.

2001 *Campaign for Mexican Libraries, Towards a Readers' Country and National Reading Programme* These campaigns aimed to increase the number of public libraries, to provide most of them with computers and to install more than 9000 'bibliotecas de aula' (classroom libraries) in public schools.

Government policies fail to consider differences in terms of class, gender and ethnicity. Reading programmes are planned for a very restricted sector of the population, with a certain level of education and good purchasing power. They are not the majority. Campaigns do not take into account the inequalities that exist with regard to indigenous groups, the unequal situation of women and the economic problems of the poor.

In 1992, as part of the National Agreement for the Modernisation of Basic Education, free school books were modified in line with the new curriculum. All content that reinforced inequitable roles of men and women was to be removed. But many of the free textbooks did not change. Analysing the text and images in these books shows that 65% of the figures are men or boys while 35% are women or girls. Most of the men pictured are historical personages or men engaged in intellectual or physical activities. The female figures usually undertake domestic work and childcare. The only intellectual roles women are depicted

If the government's goal for Mexico to become a country of readers, problems of gender inequality and representation need to be addressed. It is necessary for a discussion to take place in which different groups (academics, teachers, librarians, policy makers) assess the issues and contribute realistic solutions based on the needs of the different social groups that constitute our country.

Katya Butrón lives in Mexico City and works as a lecturer in the National School of Library Science. She is working in her PhD dissertation analysing Mexican children's responses to reading textbooks.

VIEWPOINT

RURAL GIRLS FAIL TO BENEFIT FROM PERU'S EDUCATION GROWTH

Patricia Ames

Peru has experienced rapid change in education, especially with regard to women. The last three generations have seen waves of educational opportunities that are without precedent in Peruvian history. Looking at the history of my own family, it still amazes me how things have changed so quickly: my grandmother did not finish her secondary education, but was still seen as sufficiently qualified to become a rural teacher. Almost all her sons went to university, but not all her daughters-in-law. All her granddaughters went to university, and I had the chance to pursue a postgraduate degree.

These stories reflect bigger trends. Less than one third of Peruvian children were enrolled at school in 1940, but at the end of the century there was almost universal enrollment in primary education and equal numbers of girls and boys in school. The enrollment of women in all levels of the education system has increased rapidly. The number of women in higher education increased nearly one hundred fold between 1960 and the end of 1980s! There are now professional women in almost all fields, including politics: congresswomen, ministers and one female Prime Minister.

However, there are still problems and challenges to face in order for true gender equality in education and society to become a reality. A more careful look at the picture depicted above will show, for example, that along with the rapid increase in enrollment, a rapid decrease of expenditure on education has occurred. Investment per student has decayed steadily over the last few decades due to a reduction in budgetary allocations for education. The quality of public education has been threatened. Those two thirds of children excluded from education in the forties do not exist anymore. But they now face another kind of exclusion... exclusion from a quality education.

My work has put me in contact with rural schools. Here 36% of women are illiterate. Many rural girls, although enrolled for some time at school, fail to progress. Enrolment does not by any means ensure the completion of primary education. I have seen girls dropping out because their mother is sick. The girls must be



Patricia Ames

responsible for the house and the animals. Others choose to spend more time on housework, which at least was relevant for their lives (instead of attending school which they found boring and devoid of real sense for them). Sometimes when a girl is not promoted a grade, her parents decide that school is not right for her. Teachers and schools often encourage such decisions. Violence is common in schools. Gender stereotypes are evident in the classroom, in textbooks, at lunchtime (when girls have to cook), in relationships with teachers (who ask their female students to carry out domestic services for them) and in relations with boys.

A law passed in 2001 aimed to improve rural girls' schooling but this still awaits confirmation. Peru, with its recent past effort to open and democratize education for all, faces a challenging future. We need to secure access to education for more marginal groups, to improve the quality of that education, and to work towards equity in all our schools, whilst building equality in our society.

Patricia Ames is a Researcher in the Faculty of Education at the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, in Lima, Peru and sits on the Advisory Committee of the Beyond Access project.

TALKING WITH TEACHERS SILENT ADOLESCENCE

SHOBHA BAJPAI TALKS TO MANOJ SINGH

Shobha Bajpai, a teacher at Uda Government Middle School, Uda village in Harda block in Madhya Pradesh, India talks to Manoj Singh about her views on the Millennium Development Goals and the issues surrounding gender equitable education. Here she addressed the subject of adolescence and how it affects students and teachers.

This whole subject of adolescence and the issues it raises can be quite difficult. People are uncomfortable with all these things: bodily changes; becoming adult; attraction; differences of opinion. People feel that to focus on these things is against our culture. Teenage relationships are especially alien to our culture, and parents regulate contact between girls and boys very closely. As parents are so worried about relationships, they are suspicious of, and discourage or forbid friendships between boys and girls. It is believed that good, moral girls don't think



Shobha Bajpai.

about these issues, much less talk about them. Girls who talk about them, or from whose behaviour one may get hints that they are thinking about them, are considered bad.

Parents' concern for their daughter's reputation is so great that they place many restrictions on her movement and behaviour. If anything happens that parents perceive likely to jeopardise her reputation, she risks the end of her schooling. If parents think that something has happened either at school, on the way to or from school, or that was in any way associated with school, the educational consequences are usually more extreme for girls than boys. Both will be punished, but whereas the boy may be moved to another school, the girl may experience new restrictions, be withdrawn from tuition, or even from school. Her marriage may even be swiftly arranged - although the legal age is 18.

This is the environment we work in. Parents don't want us to teach about these issues. We are obviously responsible to the parents, but we also know that we have to answer to them, as they can withdraw their daughters if they don't like what happens in school. These things are barely present in syllabus, there are very few topics in the books, and the course materials are very formal, focussing mostly on biological rather than psychological dimensions. These topics are not even taught in HSSC classes (Standards 11 and 12).

Often, girls' knowledge even of the menstrual cycle is poor. There are some organisations mandated to work with women and girls that are supposed to teach about these things, but even that is insufficient - they don't explain the menstrual cycle or gynaecological changes or problems clearly. In a single sex school it is possible to teach about the function of reproductive organs and even discuss some problems, and but in co-ed schools it's very difficult. Girls get embarrassed; boys also get embarrassed if we raise these topics in front of them. Even teachers try to teach all these topics briefly, as they also feel very

uncomfortable. We teachers can't dream of discussing such issues in our own families. I used to be hesitant teaching these topics. I am more confident now, but I have to be very careful and keep within well-defined limits.

Until Standard 5 or so girls and boys don't feel conscious of their differences, but by 6th and 7th class they become more self-conscious. Girls become more aware of their behaviour and how their character will be judged, and stop talking to and mixing with boys.

As teachers, we don't really get to hear about relationships. As the disgrace of such things is stressed from childhood, most of the students don't think deeply about attraction and romance. Some bring up the topic occasionally, but neither directly, nor deeply. It seems that they have the wrong idea about love: that it is only about attraction and romance. The media is very powerful - TV serials, films and magazines have helped to create these types of illusions. The media could help by addressing these issues in a mature way, but instead it compounds the problems facing teenagers.

Some students occasionally report romances, in a telltale way. Although these always seem to be baseless rumours, even rumours can have dire consequences, so we have to judge the situation and act accordingly.

Girls do talk to me about their experiences of 'eve-teasing' (being harassed). I explain to them how to deal with it, always remembering and stressing that the consequences will always be worse for girls. I investigate, and take action if I can identify and know the person involved. It makes me so angry, as the consequences can be so severe.

Parents don't want us to teach about these issues.

BREAKING WITH THE PAST: GENDER EQUALITY AND THE LANDLESS PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT, BRAZIL

By Tristan McCowan

Much work promoting gender equality in low and middle-income countries is currently being undertaken by NGOs and governmental or supranational agencies. Yet social movements represent another source of impetus, more unpredictable and dangerous, but with a greater potential for bringing deep and lasting change. The largest of these movements in Latin America is the Brazilian Movement of Landless Rural Workers (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, MST), founded in 1984 with the aim of bringing about agrarian reform and justice for the country's rural poor.

The MST grew out of scattered rural mobilisations and the activities of progressive Catholic groups that had worked with limited success for decades to bring some improvement in the lives of the rural population. Brazil has one of the most unequal land distributions in the world, with 1% of owners controlling approximately 50% of the land. The MST organises non-violent occupations of unused agricultural land in the vast estates, thereby pressuring the government to fulfil its constitutional obligations concerning agrarian reform. Cooperative communities known as *acampamentos* are then established. Education has a central role in these communities, both in a formal sense through their primary schools and adult literacy classes, and informally through the experience of being part of a movement based on principles of participatory democracy. The MST now has 1,800 primary schools educating 160,000



A young woman in an acampamento.

children, with 30,000 more involved in adult education, as well as pre-school education, FE courses in technical and agricultural areas, and HE courses in partnership with established universities.

Credit: Julien Farruja



Children taking part in a MST education project.

In a movement aiming to break with the injustices of the past and create a new egalitarian society it would be hard to ignore the question of gender. Brazil as a whole does not display the gross oppression of women that can be seen in some societies: the constitution of 1988 made discrimination on the grounds of gender unlawful and guaranteed equal rights to both spouses. Evidence of the rising opportunities for women can be seen in university enrolment, where females now comprise 57% of the total. Yet women in practice do suffer from exclusion and injustice in a number of areas, including employment, the family and political life.

The MST attempts not to reproduce these inequalities in its own internal organisation. One of the movement's six overarching goals is to "combat all forms of social discrimination and seek the equal participation of women." There is a National Sector of Gender dealing with wider policy directions as well as numerous gender collectives at the local level. The movement has a powerful structure of internal democracy. Each community elects two representatives to make its views heard at the higher levels. One representative should be a woman.

By 2000, nine of the eighteen elected members of the national leadership were women, a considerable achievement in a country where less than 10% of the representatives in Congress and the Senate are female. Women have a significant role in MST education. They are the majority of teachers, and in leadership and administrative roles. The leading educational theorist in the movement, Roseli Caldart, is a female university professor.

Yet despite these significant gains, the MST is still far from creating a movement that is free from discrimination and exclusion on the basis of gender. The two main sources of tension are traditions and cultures and the dynamics of a revolutionary class-based movement. Rural workers in the movement, particularly the elderly ones, come from a culture in which women have a well-defined role in the household, one which does not include participation in public affairs or any form of community leadership. Some men are resistant to the changes, and women often conform to these expectations.

A female activist interviewed in Branford and Rocha's book said:

The MST wasn't nurtured in a goldfish bowl, separate from the rest of society. It is part of peasant culture and reflects the machismo in this culture. At first, men looked at us strangely when we spoke at meetings and stood for election. It was quite intimidating. We found it relatively easy to be elected to the health and education collectives,

as they are seen as suitable areas for women. It was much harder to get elected elsewhere.

Women play a key part in the *acampamentos*, but traditional gender roles are often reinstated once rights to the land have been won and a permanent community has been established. While by no means all members see themselves as part of a Marxist uprising, a significant part of the leadership does view the movement as a vehicle for class struggle, with inspiration from the Communist uprisings of the 20th century. They place class consciousness and the overthrowing of the bourgeois system as the primary aim: gender equality, according to this paradigm, is seen to grow naturally from the introduction of socialist society and not to require special attention. The tensions between class and gender are shown by the following rather defensive statement on the MST website:

The Gender Sector does not intend for the movement to prioritise the struggle for gender equality to the detriment of the class struggle.

There are also pragmatic reasons for the neglect of gender issues. The movement faces pressure from the government and is often under serious threat from landowners and their gunmen. Revolutionary movements throughout history have compromised their democratic aspirations in times of external threat, and the MST is no exception. Efforts to promote equality at times take a back seat to the more pressing concerns of carrying out a land occupation or ensuring immediate security in a community.

Given these obstacles, the movement perhaps deserves even greater credit for having achieved some definite advances in relation to gender equality. Education is a means of developing understanding and changing attitudes, creating the new culture that is essential for achieving true gender equality. Without this, formal requirements for female representation will be almost meaningless. In the time I have spent in MST communities since 2002, I have witnessed inspiring commitment amongst teachers to bring change through education. One teacher said:

Why should men's work be valued more? There's a great difference in the job market.... So we work with these issues in the camp, women and men being valued equally for going out to the fields. So in this way we break what the media has been giving us since the time of our ancestors.

Tristan McCowan is a PhD student at the Institute of Education and has worked at the Latin American Educational Policy Observatory in Brazil.

FEMINIST POPULAR EDUCATION. THE STORY OF REPEM IN LATIN AMERICA

Celita Eccher

Since 1981 REPEM (Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres – representing 140 NGOs across Latin America) and the International Council for Adult Education (based in Uruguay) have worked locally, regionally and globally to promote women's literacy in Latin America. By looking back at the recent history of these organisations' struggle to raise the profile of adult education, it is possible to identify some key factors for success in popular movements such as these. The overriding lessons from twenty years of action are firstly the importance of networks in allowing civil society movements to act simultaneously at the global and local level, and secondly the need to exert influence on two different "worlds", the adult education sphere and the world of feminism.

In the Latin American region, Paulo Freire and his theory of "liberating" education was a huge influence on the development of a popular movement for adult education in the 1960s and 70s. The 1980s saw the process of democratisation begin in many countries. New social movements sprung up, and critical thinking was nurtured by the values of modernity: emancipation, democracy, social justice and equality. From its inception, REPEM built on Freire's notion of educational action to strengthen women's popular movements. Many popular educators began to engage with feminism in the region – mainly through the Latin-American feminist meetings.

By the end of the 80s REPEM were building something near a feminist popular education. Both organisations sought to go beyond women's spaces to influence decision-making levels, and build alliances within governments. In 1990 REPEM launched a Campaign across Latin America called "Let's Work for a Human Non-Sexist Education", which promoted a large-scale continental mobilization to highlight that women and girls' rights to education and gender justice were being denied. The Campaign was sustained for 10 years, with practically no financial support from the organisations running it, an indication of the scant political will regarding gender equitable adult education. In 2000 the campaign incorporated other forms of discrimination in addition to gender.

As the popular movement progressed, it was necessary to simultaneously influence several different spaces. These included the UN space and its cycle of conferences and summits, and the space occupied by social movements, particularly the women's movement, the education movement, and the World Social Forum.

At CONFINTEA V, held in 1997 in Hamburg, feminists proved that it was possible to learn from different alliances with academics, women working in multilateral and bilateral organisations, women in politics and trade unions. 'The Agenda for the Future', agreed at CONFINTEA, was strongly influenced by the interconnections between education and women's empowerment. However, seven years and two reviews on from CONFINTEA, the unfortunate reality is that there is very little political will on the part of either governments or multilateral agencies to act on this agenda.

Since CONFINTEA, discussions that crystallised at the World Conference against Racism in Durban in 2001 have popularised the idea of intersectionality which highlights how gender links



Celita Eccher.

Credit: Elspeth Page/Rosa Crawford

with race, social class, ethnicity and sexual orientation in forms of exclusion.

By the end of the 80s REPEM and ICAE were building something near a feminist popular education.

The educational systems of the Twentieth century have not taken differences into account. They have not understood yet that difference is what makes us equal. A new debate concerns how to guarantee equality through recognition of differences, and how to encourage a more holistic approach to education systems based on diversity, guaranteeing the equality of all human beings.

OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN ADULT EDUCATION

- Lack of funding for adult education
- Scarcity of resources has direct impact on advocacy capacity and capacity for influence on global governance structures such as the WTO and the World Bank
- The need to work simultaneously on many fronts: a) in adult education, where, in general, men in power do not acknowledge the need to link adult education with gender justice; b) inside the women's movement where education is often not given priority
- The need for flexible, creative global networks that incorporate the diversity of actors in the adult education world.
- The need for capacity building so that alliances can be built
- The World Social Forum is a crucial space in which to exert influence on social movements' agendas. However, as yet adult education actors have not found the way to exert influence at the WSF.

Celita Eccher is Secretary General of the ICAE. This is an edited version of a paper presented at Beyond Access Seminar 4 on 29 June 2004. Full text available at www.girlseducation.org (Beyond Access link).

GOALS AND GENDER EQUALITY SCORES IN LATIN AMERICA

By Chloe Challender and Elaine Unterhalter

The scorecard methodology, developed by the Beyond Access project, is a way NGO coalitions, governments and IGOs can develop a shared understanding of accountability and approach the task of assessing progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal. Whilst there are a number of limitations to the scorecard methodology – not least that it over-simplifies complex historical processes and draws on sometimes out-of-date and far too aggregated data – it does provide the opportunity to compare countries' or districts' progress on gender equity in education, pinpoint which areas need resources and set out in what areas countries can learn from one another.

The scorecard is broader than existing measures. It looks at not only numbers of girls who attend and remain in primary school, but also whether those girls are able to translate that attendance and retention in to future schooling at a secondary level and healthy lives where they earn a reasonable income. The four measures which have been used in a weighted formula to develop the scorecard are: girls' attendance rate at primary school; girls' survival rate over 5 years of primary schooling; girls' secondary Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) and a country's gender development index (GDI)

| THE LATIN AMERICA 2000 SCORECARD | | |
|----------------------------------|---------|------|
| Country* | Score % | Rank |
| Brazil | 93.75 | 1 |
| Mexico | 93.75 | 1 |
| Guyana | 90.63 | 2 |
| Panama | 90.63 | 2 |
| Peru | 87.5 | 3 |
| Venezuela | 86.25 | 4 |
| Argentina | 84.38 | 5 |
| Bolivia | 81.25 | 6 |
| Paraguay | 80 | 7 |
| Costa Rica | 80 | 7 |
| Ecuador | 72.5 | 8 |
| Belize | 71.88 | 9 |
| Uruguay | 71.88 | 9 |
| Colombia | 70.53 | 10 |
| Nicaragua | 46.25 | 11 |
| Guatemala | 38.75 | 12 |

* Chile, Surinam, French Guiana, Honduras and El Salvador are missing from the table due to insufficient data being available to calculate their score.

The ranking highlights similar trends identified in the Africa scorecard (see Equals Issue 7). Countries with long and devastating histories of war (Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia) are at the bottom of the scorecard and those with histories of democracy are at or near the scorecard. Countries that, despite a history of war and periods of undemocratic government, have paid attention to reconstruction also come near the top (Brazil, Argentina). Another shared characteristic between the Latin American and African scorecards in those countries with strong women's movements are at the top (Brazil and Mexico).

Whilst the largest economy on the continent – Brazil – appears at the top of the scorecard, the pattern of economic might and high scores does not follow throughout the table. Venezuela and Argentina have large, oil-fuelled economies but score lower than countries with far smaller economies such as Guyana. Among the bottom 2 scorers, Nicaragua is classified by the World Bank as a low-income country, and yet Guatemala - a middle-income country – appears below it.

However, in contrast to the African scorecard, where countries with large regional inequalities had relatively low scores, in Latin America countries with large regional differences – Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela – score relatively highly. Countries with fewer regional inequalities (Ecuador, Costa Rica, Uruguay and Guatemala) have a lower rank. The question of aggregation is a problem for the methodology. The Beyond Access team, would like to see scorecards compiled within countries to see if they yield more nuanced insights.

Guyana's position at third in the table reflects a particularly high score considering its relatively low position on UNDP's Human Development Index. Eleven countries from the continent have higher positions in the index, but it would seem Guyana's sustained efforts in the sphere of education have pushed it high up on this particular table. Compulsory free education was introduced in Guyana in 1976 and primary school enrolment stands at 98% (99% of boys and 97% of girls are enrolled). Adult literacy stands at 99%. Despite some erosion of gains in education during the 1970s and 1980s due to budgetary constraints and the implementation of a structural adjustment programme, Guyana has maintained or exceeded the average total public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP since 1990.

See also:

Unterhalter, Elaine et al (2004) *Scaling Up Girls' Education: Towards a Scorecard on Girls' Education in Commonwealth countries in Africa*
<http://k1.ioe.ac.uk/schools/efps/GenderEducDev/Where%20are%20we%20scaling%20up%20from%20FINAL%20FINAL.pdf>

Unterhalter, Elaine et al (2004) *A Scorecard for Girls' Schooling in Asia*. Available shortly from www.girlseducation.org (Beyond Access link)

PARTNER REPORT: OXFAMGB IN THE PHILIPPINES

FLEEING FROM THE WAR

In a new series in which project partners will report on the work in gender and education around the world, **Alexandra Pura** looks at issues concerning gender and education in emergencies, drawing on OxfamGB's experience in the Southern Philippines

In 2000, The Armed Forces of the Philippines began an "all-out-war" against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Southern Philippines. The fighting led to hundreds of thousands of civilian residents being displaced. OxfamGB launched its humanitarian response immediately after fighting began, supplying emergency shelter, water and sanitation facilities and promoting basic education and public health to prevent the spread of diseases in the congested evacuation camps.

The conflict is affecting four regions: Western Mindanao, Southern Mindanao, Central Mindanao, and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). This area covers 4 cities, 89 municipalities and 502 villages, with a population of nearly 800,000 people.

Many of the evacuation camps that have been established are based in school buildings. In the largest, the Pagalungan Central Elementary School, Oxfam has worked in cooperation with the Department of Education, village leaders, specialist partners and affected families to hold emergency classes for displaced children. Oxfam has supported the training of volunteer teacher aides. The whole community has been involved in improving existing learning environments and creating new ones. Community members have helped teachers make learning materials and visual aids, assisted with the construction of classrooms, additional water pumps, arm chairs and even helped fund computers, books and televisions.

GENDER AND SCHOOLING IN MINDANAO

Mindanao has witnessed a reversal in trends concerning gender and schooling. In ARMM, 47% of girls now complete primary education compared to only 39% of boys. At secondary level, this gap widens dramatically: 72% of girls in secondary school complete years 1-4 there, compared to only 47% of boys. Historically it has been girls who are most at risk of dropping out of school (largely to work or to get married), over the last decade this trend has reversed countrywide. Recent Department for Education figures show that for 16 of 17 regions in the Philippines, more girls than boys complete both primary and secondary levels.

Girls are encouraged to complete a full education – especially secondary education - so that they have the necessary skills (such as English language) for jobs outside the community and outside the country as domestic helpers. A key factor behind boys' premature departure from schooling is recruitment into armed conflict. Boys are also often taken out of school to work do heavy labour in farms and fishing. Boys' obligations usually require them to actually leave school to work, while girls are usually able to combine extra commitments, such as domestic work, with schooling.

MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE

The gender gap against boys in schools is just one concern for agencies such as Oxfam. Responding to the needs of displaced children in the classroom is another. Oxfam supports teachers and school managers to broaden knowledge and skills in handling displaced students, helping children recover from the trauma of evacuation and catch up with regular classes.



Credit: Jim Holmes/Oxfam

Girls gather around teachers' aide Aiza Dimasising to have their books marked during lessons in a classroom at the Pagalungan evacuee centre.

Teachers spend time supporting children's emotional and psychological needs.

Children's comments bear out the huge improvements in their learning environments:

"We write and read stories. Our teacher tells us a story. There are many books now. Our teacher lets us read books like "Papel de Liha", "Mariang Makiling", and "Si Tipaklong at si Langgam." (A student from Bulit Elementary School).

"We play games inside the classroom...prefix puzzles, barter games, word bingo. We enjoy these games very much. We do not fall asleep during class hours anymore." (A student from Bulit Elementary School)

"We like the games because we are learning while we are having fun." (A student from Galakit Elementary School)

Oxfam is continuing to lobby stakeholders for children in conflict areas to have their specialised educational needs addressed. Daily lessons for all boys and girls, and children's safety should be a paramount concern. Teachers must be trained to deal with trauma. 'Catching up' classes or school-year extensions may be necessary to compensate for disruption and absenteeism. Continuing attention to teachers' professional and personal development in high-risk situations should be prioritised. "Zones of peace" are badly needed to protect civilians from the impact of wars and build a climate for gender equality.

Alexandra Pura is OxfamGB Programme Coordinator in the Philippines. Thanks to Lourdes De Vera, Programme Officer of UNICEF on education, for supplying data.

BOOK REVIEW

GAINING FROM GIRLS' EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Sylvia Chant with Nikki Craske, *Gender in Latin America* (2002)
New Jersey: Rutgers University Press ISBN: 1899365532 Pages: 308

Reviewed by Eva Grajeda

Gender in Latin America focuses on recent decades during which most of Latin America has witnessed major changes with regard to legislation, education, poverty, social movements, population, health, sexuality, families, households, employment and migration. The book concentrates in one layer of society: low-income *mestiza* (mixed race) women in urban areas. As a Latin American myself, I find the book insightful and believe that the authors have a very thorough understanding of gender issues in the region.

The neoliberal economic reforms of the 1980s were the beginning of decreased public service expenditure by many governments. As a consequence, the number of Latin Americans who lived below the poverty line increased. For instance, in Honduras in 1970 the percentage of households below the poverty line was 67% and by the 1990s it had increased to 75%. As a result, women needed to enter the labour force for extra household income. But they still remained the primary childcare providers with responsibility for household work. Thus, whilst collective social movements for democracy and women's rights flourished there was concern that women's burden of work increased.

One of the most significant changes highlighted by the book is the gender parity in education attained by many Latin American nations. This partly reflects an increase in public expenditure on education. For instance, the percentage of GDP spent on education from 1999-2001 for Paraguay was 4.7% (from 1.1% in 1990), Belize 6.2% (from 4.2% in 1990) and Mexico 5.1% (from 3.7% in 1990). Girls' enrolment is increasing at a faster rate than boys'. Girls are also staying at school longer. Some of the benefits from women's increased educational access stated in the book are the decline in fertility rates, later marriage and the increase in force labour participation.

The book notes that democratisation of the majority of Latin American countries over the last two decades has entailed changes to constitutions and civil codes in order to eliminate gender bias. The increase in women's participation in legislative affairs has been a result of the development of international women's movements, the existence of gender quotas in congresses, more widespread knowledge of women's rights and

a rethinking of women's status. Despite this progress, the percentage of women in legislatures is still low, and in most Latin American countries, women who become legislators are from the elite.

Education has played an important role on lowering birth rates despite continuing opposition to contraception and abortion. However the authors suggest that women's health provision has mainly focused on reproduction instead of general healthcare services.

The book outlines the powerful influence of the Catholic Church on gender and sexuality. The promotion of the Virgin Mary as both a mother and virgin causes conflict and guilt among fervent believers. According to the authors, many women perceive motherhood as their ultimate goal. Mother-son relationships cause men to perceive wives as partners who should be respected and bear children. But married men commonly use prostitutes and this is accepted by society.

Much of the book's discussion is focused on the freedoms and power of negotiation women have acquired through financial independence. Nowadays, Latin American households are diverse and many are female-headed. Many women are entering the labour market due to the lack of sufficient household income earned by men and the higher levels of women's education. Consequently, some men living with these circumstances are becoming violent and their self-esteem has deteriorated as a result of the lack of identity. The authors discuss masculinity and fatherhood as important topics for understanding the changes in family structure.

It is clear from the book that gender equality must involve more than just access to education and the authors encourage continuing research into many diverse forms of gender relations. The book is perfect for researchers, policy-makers, members of NGOs, scholars or anyone interested in gender in contemporary Latin America.

Eva Grajeda is a student on the MA in Education and International Development programme at the Institute of Education and works as an intern at Save the Children UK.

HOW TO ACT TO ASSIST THE MDG

Insights Education Issue 3 (September 2004) Brighton: id21, ed Sandra Baxter

Reviewed by Sharon Walker

After reading the September 2004 issue of Insights Education, I was left with a very positive sense of action! The issue, which focuses upon gender equality in education as expressed by the third Millennium Development Goal, presents in an easily digestible format the role that education has to play in the advancement of women's empowerment at a personal, community and national level.

The global scale of this is clearly communicated as the reader is taken on a tour encompassing three continents. The introduction

sets the tone of the whole issue in which the writers avoid jargon and instead concentrate their energies upon sharing with us the realities of their individual projects and research findings.

The reader is engaged throughout as each article focuses upon a different barrier to achieving gender equality in education. Sonal Shukla and Nischint Hora discuss the need for free school food programmes in India and the work of the NGO Vacha in promoting the rights of pre-adolescent girls. Florence Kanyike, Dorothy Akankwasa and Christine Karungi outline the push for

the acceptance and use of modern sanitary pads in schools in Uganda. Rebecca Winthrop tackles issues surrounding the need for the continued introduction of home-based or community schools in response to the social restrictions on the mobility of girls in Afghanistan.

Each article provides clear, coherent discussion and also outlines steps for future action. The reader is left with a sense of the possibility for realisable change. Margaret Kikampikaho's article on projects for building community participation in the education of girls in Uganda, and Patricia Ames' article which discusses the need for gender sensitive training for teachers in rural Peru give concrete suggestions on action.

The issue contains addresses and useful websites which place at a readers' fingertips the first step towards action. I applaud the inspirational nature of the issue which although written against the background of the daunting prospect of achieving gender equality in education on a world-wide scale as shown by Chloe Challenger leaves the reader with a sense of hope and of ever-continuing action.

Sharon Walker is a student on the Education, Gender and International Development MA course at the Institute of Education.

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Sandra Baxter
Education Editor - id21, Institute of Development Studies,
University of Sussex, BRIGHTON BN1 9RE, UK

NEWS

Kenyan government sacks teachers involved in sexual abuse

In August, the Kenyan government sacked 110 teachers and disciplined 447 for sexually abusing their pupils. Making the announcement on 10th August, Kenya's Assistant Minister of Education Beth Mugo said teachers implicated in sexual misconduct with pupils would not be tolerated: "We have thousands of unemployed qualified teachers out there. We shall not spare any of those who shamelessly prey on their pupils". Mrs. Mugo said 57 cases involving school children were reported this year alone. FAWE-Kenya, which champions girls' rights to education, says Kenya's legislation does still not provide sufficient punitive measures against errant teachers.

DfID to launch Girls' Education Strategy Paper in January 2005

The UK's Department for International Development will launch a strategy paper at the start of 2005 analysing the factors constraining girls' access to education and preventing the achievement of the MDG. The paper will highlight which strategies work best in improving girls' access to education, as well as assessing financing and institutional capacity to implement reforms. DfID's commitments to girls' education in 2005 and beyond will be set out in the hope that a step change in global progress can be set in motion.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 2-3 October 2004 | World Bank Autumn Meetings | To be held in Washington. |
| 4-5 October 2004 | First Asia Pacific Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS Best Practice Conference, Islamabad | For further information contact: Raza Hussnain/Nighat Rizvi, Conference Secretariat, AMAL Human Development Network, Islamabad, Pakistan (mails@amal-hdn.org) |
| 25-29 October 2004 | 12th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, Cuba | Theme: 'Education and Social Justice' Website: http://12wcces.cujae.edu.cu/default.asp |
| 20 November 2004 | International Child Rights Day | Coordinated by Unicef. |
| End November 2004 | High Level group meeting and launch of Education For All Monitoring Report 2004, Brazil | See www.unesco.org for further details. |
| End November 2004 | 2nd UNGEI advisory committee meeting, Brazil | See www.unicef.org for further details. |
| 31 Nov-3 December 2004 | Global Campaign for Education World Assembly and Forum, Johannesburg | See www.campaignforeducation.org for further details. |
| 1 December 2004 | World AIDS Day | |
| 30 January -1 February 2005 | Beyond Access seminar 5: Partnerships for Gender Equality in Education. Dhaka, Bangladesh | For further details contact Chloe Challenger (c.challender@ioe.ac.uk) |

LETTERS PAGE

It was my pleasure to receive a copy of Equals newsletter. I am looking forward to your next issue. Since the newsletter covers all issues concerning gender, I think it should exist as a platform for us men, as well as women, to put our views regarding gender issues.

Yours in community development

Ozee Phiri
Executive director, MEDSA (Men for Development in South Africa)

Thank you very much for sending Issue 7 of Equals newsletter, which I really welcomed. No doubt the newsletter will be of a great help for all Adult Educators, particularly we in Africa who are involved in a terrible fight against all sort of discrimination. The struggle for equality in education, where gender discrimination is still very much in evidence, is particularly difficult. I wish a long life to your newsletter.

Lamine KANE
Association pour la Formation et l'Alphabétisation des Adultes (ANAF), Senegal

I read Equals newsletter and found it very interesting and helpful to know more about the struggle for education equality and the difficulties that girls face concerning education.

Joyce Chemutai, Nairobi, Kenya

Thank you for sending Equals, which I find very useful. The French version is also excellent.

Amie Joof-Cole
FAMEDEV-Inter-African Network For Women, Media, Gender and Development
Dakar, Senegal

THE ALEXANDER AWARD

A new annual award has been established to recognise the work of a woman or group of women who has made a significant contribution to encouraging the scientific, technological or mathematical education of girls or women in situations of scarce resources.

The Alexander Award is administered as one of the Awards of the Commonwealth Association for Science Technology and Mathematics Educators (please see www.CASTME.org for details) and it is also supported by the Association for Science Education. CASTME awards are open to Commonwealth countries, but the Alexander Award is open to entries from all countries.

Please consult the CASTME website on how to apply or to recommend somebody whose work you respect. All applications must be in English. The amount of money is small, being the interest on personal donations given in honour of members of the Alexander family who worked in science education and the education of girls and women in many Commonwealth countries over many decades. But the CASTME/ASE support means that the Alexander Award is prestigious, and the money goes directly to the woman or women winners themselves.

For further details please see www.castme.org or contact:

Mary Harris, 15 Treadgold Street, London W11 4BL

Contact Details

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

Please contact us with any comments or enquiries:

Chloe Challender,
Beyond Access: Gender,
Education and Development,
School of Educational Foundations and Policy Studies,
Institute of Education,
20 Bedford Way,
London WC1 0AL

Tel: 0044 207 612 6394

Fax: 0044 207 612 6366

Email: c.challender@ioe.ac.uk

Website: www.ioe.ac.uk/efps/beyondaccess

WRITE NOW!

DO you have a particular view that you want to raise in *Equals* or a comment to make about the newsletter in general? Contact the Editor:

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

The views expressed in this newsletter are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the project, their partners or sponsors.