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Eastern and Southern Africa

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An overview of various approaches to gender training in Eastern and Southern Africa, focused on the last two decades, is presented in this chapter. The review is based on secondary materials as well as personal experiences in the field. It starts with an introduction which defines the conceptual framework guiding the assessment of gains made in the region towards creating a gender-equitable society. The second part examines the contribution made by various initiatives at international, regional, national and grassroots levels towards changing gender insensitive institutional practice and empowering the disadvantaged. The third part describes the trainer-trainee relationship, which (based on accounts from different training initiatives) appears to influence outcomes of gender training. The fourth part examines positive and negative instructional practice and participants' experiences that are perceived to influence gender training outcomes. Part five provides a case study of a regional gender training initiative, while the final part focuses on gender training outcomes that have been achieved and recommends changes to improve the impact of gender training.

In attempt to be inclusive, the term gender training is used here in a comprehensive sense: it refers to gender studies, gender analysis, gender-focused research and gender training. This arises from the lack of a universally accepted definition and distinction between gender studies and gender training (Kasente 1996). The impact of various efforts is examined using available literature and field experiences. Changes that have been observed and documented as a result of research programme/project evaluation serve as performance indicators for gender training efforts.

The conceptual framework

Indicators to be used in trying to assess the performance of gender training in Eastern and Southern Africa have been taken from an analysis of the impact of the early women in development movement (Goetz 1995). In this approach, gender training outcomes are considered in terms of the institutional machineries that have sprung up and the research results, both positive and negative, as well as any other evidence of change that has been generated by gender training. Research is found to have highlighted women's participation in production and provided a challenge both to the definition of work and to the method of data collection used for generating official statistics. Evaluations of development projects designed by international

agencies to increase production and incomes have revealed many cases of discrimination against women.

In attempting to examine specific regional examples that can provide evidence of gender training impact, it has become clear that relevant information concerning a number of factors is required, namely: the regional government and community efforts that form the support system to gender training; factors concerning the trainers and trainees; and practice in the implementation of gender training. A conceptual model of gender training outcomes was developed, adapted from an educational model (Carasco, Munene, Kasente and Odada 1996) in which gender training outcomes depend on factors external and internal to gender training implementation. The external factors include the level of support from international, regional and national institutions, including the national government, and the relationship with the immediate community concerned, be it institutional or grassroots. Internal factors refer to immediate trainers' experiences such as their quality, the curriculum, facilities and materials used and trainers' values and perceptions, as well as the conditions and perceptions of trainees. Training practice looks at the quantity and quality of training and the evaluation and assessment of the various training experiences. The factors briefly described above combine to form the gender training process that results in the outcomes that are verifiable on the ground.

Regional experiences

Gender training experiences in Eastern and Southern African are described here under headings related to the conceptual model outlined above, namely: the support system, training culture, trainers' experiences, trainees' conditions and training readiness, training experience, instructional practice and gender training outcomes.

The support system

For gender training to be implemented, a number of inputs are expected from formal institutions in each country. These include clear social policies in terms of gender policy, financial support, and training programmes to build the capacity of gender trainers. Inputs are expected to come from sources external to the gender training programme itself. In general, most of the external support in this region comes from funding agencies and NGOs, with minimal support from government budgets. The following examples, which illustrate this trend, come from three different gender training programmes at different levels.

- The Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) is an inter-governmental organization with headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania, and representative offices in eight countries. It offers the largest gender training programme in the region, mostly to high ranking government officials on a cost recovery basis. Although member states contribute subventions, ESAMI generates most of its revenue through fees paid by participants, staff consultancies and donor support. The charges for participants comprise approximately US\$ 3,000 for a three week course; most of the participants are sponsored by donor agencies.
- The Women Studies Department at Makerere University, Uganda, is the only institute in the region to offer gender studies at degree level. It receives basic structural support from government but most other requirements for research, transport and documentation facilities are supported by donor agencies such as SAREC and the British Council. One course provided by this department is outlined in the detailed case study provided towards the end of the chapter.
- FEMNET, a local gender training programme based in Kenya, is funded by

several donor agencies such as UNICEF, OXFAM, UNDP and UNIFEM, and through staff consultancies as in the case of ESAMI.

In almost all initiatives that were examined, there is too much dependence on donor funding to support gender training institutions as well as sponsoring of participants. Dependency on donor agency support for gender training cannot be sustained. Indeed, there is already evidence of 'donor fatigue', in which donors have become bored with a particular activity and are planning to fund new initiatives. Some governments and local communities tend to look at gender training as a foreign imposition, probably because they do not feel ownership of the process. However, a number of regional centres are aiming to build local capacities within government ministries, research institutions and NGOs. Although these emerging institutions are also funded by donor agencies, there is hope that a critical mass of gender trainers and gender trained individuals will be produced so that gender focused initiatives will cease to be viewed with suspicion and will become part of the planning and implementation process.

There is still subtle resistance to the rationale of gender training for equity and empowerment. Nevertheless, two examples of influential gender training initiatives can be given: the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and the course 'Gender Training for Development Practice', jointly run by Makerere University and the Institute of Development Studies, UK, which is described in more detail below. There is high demand for gender training in these two institutions and others because many institutions are slowly realizing that gender-sensitive practice is efficient.

Trainer-related factors

Reliance on external support, briefly described above, affects the outcomes of gender training. The conceptual framework looks at related dynamics which have considerable impact on gender training implementation. The first is the overall character of the training institution, also referred to as the training culture. This includes resources available, quality of trainers and the curriculum. Curricula vary greatly, ranging from a very formal academic curriculum like that of the Women's Studies Department at Makerere University to hurriedly assembled one-day gender workshops, sometimes without defined objectives.

Training planning is a skill which is in short supply in the region. In most workshops and seminars, course content is put together haphazardly, although this depends on the level of participants and expertise of the trainers. There was evidence of more systematic planning when the trainers were consultants hired by large NGOs and funding agencies, probably because consultants are better trained and need to maintain their reputation for future jobs. Less elaborate planning was found when training was done as part of routine work. With all these differences in training culture, there is also probably a difference in the impact of different training initiatives.

Perceptions of trainers

In fora where gender trainers in the region have gathered to examine their experiences, they have commented that the task of gender training is enjoyable, worthwhile and challenging. The greatest challenge is offered by institutional resistance. Ways in which gender concerns are marginalized have become more subtle and sophisticated, for example by placing gender officers (particularly vocal ones) in positions where they cannot influence high-level decisions. Several trainers have faced problems with digesting and applying the various, of ten foreign, gender frameworks on the market. This aspect has been explored in more detail in another article (Kasente 1996a). Most trainers talk of the job satisfaction that results when

they win the interest of apparently hostile participants as the most rewarding experiences of their careers.

Many trainers have tried to employ exotic tools such as overhead projectors and videos for visual displays, probably because most have been trained abroad where such equipment is in common use. The importance of the use of locally affordable materials in gender training is a recent concern, both to reduce cost and restrict frustration with common power cuts or to allow training in rural communities with no electricity (Kasente 1996b).

This is by no means an exhaustive presentation of the spectrum of trainers' experiences but is an attempt to share some common experiences.

Learning readiness of participants

One important aspect that is often overlooked is the participants' readiness for gender training. This has much to do with participants' condition prior to training. Participation in gender training is often not voluntary, especially in the case of government and NGO employees. Such employees may be forced to put aside what they consider to be more important work and are often coerced into attending gender training by their employer or because the funding agency has made it mandatory. Such training is also commonly residential, away from home and office. There is usually a good reason for insisting that officers in some positions need to be gender sensitized, but if the participants have not understood the need for such training themselves - which is quite often the case - they will not be receptive to the training. Many gender trainers admit they do not carry out a training needs assessment before they do the training. This is often a missed opportunity: a trainer could start a working relationship by talking to participants individually, where possible, and learning what would be beneficial to the individual. The practice of needs assessment is only common with consultants who are hired to develop tailor-made training programmes but it is often overlooked or seen as too expensive by government ministries.

Instructional practice

Gender training in the region takes many approaches, depending on which institution is doing it and the type of participants they are working with. The general trend is away from the WID approach, where emphasis was on incorporating women in the development process, and towards mainstreaming gender in policy and planning. Most trainers prefer to use models for gender analysis because they are said to reduce confrontation, especially with male participants. Participants are given case studies which present facts and statistics, and are helped to come to their own conclusions. This approach is commonly used in short workshops lasting a few days. However, a complaint voiced by several trainers is the problem of finding case studies that are appropriate and also have contexts relevant to different participants. Participants often complained that there was too much reliance on lectures and not enough on letting them discover for themselves.

Even when case studies were used, some participants complained of being limited by the guiding questions which pointed at areas of interest to the trainers rather than letting participants explore issues that they could identify themselves. However, there were also examples of highly participatory training approaches, particularly in the training of trainers initiatives (FEMNET, Makerere short course). Trainers using participatory approaches commented on the very thorough planning required before the course began and the need for large amounts and varieties of training materials, thus requiring very skilled trainers and being expensive. It appears, however, that the most common instructional approach is a structured one with each session ranging from one and a half to three hours. Gender studies courses are the most structured, lasting several months and including syllabi and

examinations (Makerere University 1990 and 1994). The gender studies course at Makerere employs lectures, questions and answer sessions, and field work.

Apart from the formal gender studies, very little formal assessment of training has been undertaken and published, apart from participants' own evaluation of their experiences immediately after training. The most comprehensive assessment was undertaken by the Women Studies Department of Makerere University (see Akande 1995) which proposed changes to improve the impact of the course and bring it in line with the current discourse in gender and development.

Training outcomes

The question of whether gender studies and gender training efforts are meeting their objectives and whether there is a positive change in the lives of marginalized groups as a result is increasingly important. Gender studies and gender training are not an end in themselves but should change the lives of those who have been targeted. This requires a two-phased assessment: one to assess whether the training course is relevant and of sufficient quality, and the second to assess whether it has had an impact in reality. Assessment needs to be written into the proposal that establishes the training course so that conclusions can be reached about whether it has achieved its objectives.

Analysis of the efforts being made in the region reveals that the purpose of gender studies is generally more clearly stated than is the case for gender training. For example, the Women Studies program in Uganda expects to produce 15 Master of Arts (MA) graduates every 18 months. During their studies, these students master specific skills, measured by production of course work and presentation of a scientific dissertation based on original field work (Makerere University 1990). It is therefore possible to use the results as indicators to assess whether the objectives of the course have been achieved.

Gender training is, on the other hand, expected to have generalized and multiple results, making impact more difficult to quantify. Where gender training does not have sufficiently clear objectives, it becomes difficult to assure its value and to assess what has been achieved. It is however possible to verify, in quantitative terms, the numbers of individuals from particular sectors who have undergone courses, both gender studies and gender training. Trainers need to convince themselves and other interested people that the quality and effectiveness of training being provided is making an impact towards improving the wellbeing of marginalized women and men, particularly in rural areas. To respond to this challenge, it is necessary to examine the concrete criteria and tools which already exist. These can be used to assess the progress of those who have received training and to establish how far they have gone towards achieving gender awareness. This is based on the assumption that individuals who attain gender awareness will be able to put their learning into practice. The possibilities for direct assessment of added wellbeing among the target population as a result of gender training remain elusive.

The 12-15 gender studies students completing the course at Makerere University return to the sectors from which they originated. There are some indicators that the training they receive has had an impact: at least four of them already occupy high political office, either in parliament or in the constitution-making assembly, having braved campaign battles to be elected. Many others have been given larger assignments in their places of work and appear in the press making the case for gender parity. More systematic follow-up is required to learn how these graduates are putting their skills into practice so that more tangible indicators can be developed.

Despite difficulties in assessing the impact of gender training, the region has made a number of visible gains that would not have been possible without wide-spread gender sensitization at many levels. All the states in the region have

established institutions to coordinate gender concerns at national level and some even at lower levels. The extent to which such institutions serve the interests of women and men vary with the historical and political context of each state. The number of NGOs addressing specific gender interests has also grown throughout the region. There are a number of professional NGOs, such as Women Lawyers, Women Doctors and the Women Finance Credit Trust, which make an outstanding contribution towards sensitizing society on women's and men's rights as well as building capacities of local communities. Research agendas now explicitly require gender analysis: a very welcome development which is the result of gender awareness. If the number of people who have undergone gender training were a reliable indicator of gender-sensitive practice, the region would score very highly. It is to be hoped that some immeasurable impact has resulted from such exposure of many individuals at different levels.

Case study: Gender Training for Development Practice

The course 'Gender Training for Development Practice in Africa' is held at Makerere University, Kampala. The programme was developed because of the growing realization that gender-sensitive practice in development planning, intervention and research was needed but that often expertise in this area was lacking. While appropriate gender training is available, it often takes place in Europe which raises the costs and restricts the numbers able to attend. Furthermore, concepts and materials in courses abroad do not adequately reflect the particular nature of gender relations and development issues in the region.

This course was set up to respond to region-specific development conditions. It was jointly developed by the Women Studies Department of Makerere University and the Institute of Development Studies, UK. These two institutions have a history of cooperation in the field of gender and development, and a modest three-year Overseas Development Administration (ODA) grant facilitates the collaborative link between the two institutions. The content, focus and structure of the course were based on an in-depth needs assessment study conducted by members of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Makerere University, with funding from the Netherlands Government.

Objective

The course aims to contribute to the process of developing regional capacity for effective gender-sensitive development planning, project implementation and research, to enhance the process of ensuring women's greater and equitable participation in development decision making. The course is intended to equip participants with conceptual and practical tools for understanding gender differentiated effects of the development process and to design and implement gender-sensitive development policies.

Structure

The course is organized in three distinct phases over a period of six months. Participation in all three phases is essential for completion of the course. The first phase consists of a four-week residential course at Makerere University, in which analytical frameworks, tools and skills for gender-sensitive development policy and research are put into practice. During this part of the course, the participants develop a plan of research or action related to their professional work, which they implement during the second phase. The second phase lasts for three months, during which the participants' action or research plans are developed and implemented under the supervision of the course team. After completion of this

work, from which a research report or case study is produced, the participants return to Makerere University for a final two week 'training of trainers' course.

The cost of the course is US\$ 5,000 per participant, including hotel accommodation and food. Although this is relatively high, primarily due to its, being a residential course, it is much cheaper than taking a similar course abroad. The course needs to meet the dual challenge of being affordable and keeping its high quality. It also needs to recruit more male participants. Many applications from men are received but donors choose to support women.

Evaluation process

During the course, a range of evaluation methods are used to provide two-way feedback. A standard questionnaire is filled in by each participant at the beginning and end of the course to monitor their progress. A formal evaluation of the training programme is undertaken by the participants to establish whether the course was relevant to their needs and to identify which areas should be improved. The two evaluations at the end of the course so far have been positive. Participants identified that there was insufficient time for reading the background materials given to them and that there was a lack of gender balance among participants. Too much material was also covered too intensively. Participants recommended that the first phase of the course should be increased to six to eight weeks.

The evaluation of the course directors raised a number of issues. The capacity of the course team to direct and manage the course is of ten influenced by factors beyond their control, particularly relating to the release of funding support and which individuals the funding agencies choose to support. Management difficulties also arise from the lack of administrative support. Further, there was a limited number of regional trainers on the course because directors did not know how to locate them. The course suffered too from a shortage of good quality equipment, particularly overhead projectors and video recorders. Finally, a long-term strategy should be constructed to sustain the course beyond funding agency support.

Assessment of impact

Six months after the completion of the first full programme, a survey was conducted by the course facilitators of the Women Studies Department to assess the impact of the training on the work of the 12 sampled institutions that had sent participants to the course as well as the gains made by participants.

Institutions had received a number of benefits from sending participants to the course. Some institutions (8) had been able to create gender training for their staff while others (4) had been able to incorporate gender into the institution's work. A smaller number (2) had been able to save money for the organization by replacing external consultants. Other benefits had been the ability to undertake advocacy work (2); gender-focused project evaluation (1); gender-focused research (2); production of gender training materials (1); and implementation of gender planning (1).

Benefits to individual participants outweighed those to institutions. The 12 participants interviewed found they had benefited in the following ways: they had been hired as a gender expert (4) or trainer (4); they had become actively involved in the women's movement (3); they had gained in confidence (3) or had presented gender-based work in an international forum (3). Some also said they had become more analytical (2), had been promoted to a higher position (2), had been made a member of an important committee (2), had become more articulate as a presenter (1) or had acted as a resource to their workmates (1).

Limitations identified by participants

The following limitations related to the course were identified by participants: some

concepts were not well enough understood to be implemented; limited time was allowed to implement gender activities as set out in action plans; the skills acquired were not in themselves adequate to incorporate gender in project activities; there is still resistance to incorporating gender at institutional level; and lobbying skills were not improved.

Further limitations were identified at institutional level and interviews with the 12 institutional heads identified that small budgets were allocated to gender-related activities. There was also a non-supportive work environment and lack of institutional support to the gender-trained staff. No gender-focused indicators were available to guide monitoring and evaluation of the impact of gender-focused activities. The evaluation team found very little difference in institutional practice as a result of having a trained staff member, particularly in normally male-dominated institutions such as government departments. The two organizations that had changed in practice as a result of staff members receiving gender training were both women's organizations. Course participants also came face to face with power relations in their own organizations. The convictions and skills they gained from the course were not sufficient to change the *status quo*. From this experience, both the participants and the trainers have come to the conclusion that gender training alone will not necessarily bring about transformation in institutional practice. If this objective is to be achieved, strategies will need to be devised.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a few recommendations can be made. First, there is great need to document and coordinate the efforts going on in the region. The regional institutes which are making an effort to consolidate these efforts deserve to be supported so they develop capacity to communicate using modern technology like the World Wide Web, making them able to exchange experiences with other training centres worldwide. There is a need to strengthen assessment and evaluation of the gender training currently being undertaken so that the results can be used to improve the quality of training. Quality is a significant determinant of effective outcomes; this area needs much attention. Rather than just being concerned about the numbers who have undergone gender training, the focus should now be on the quality of training they received. All involved in gender training and gender studies need to take their task to its logical conclusion. Analysis of gender relations is not enough. Instead, gender training should be a medium towards good practice to ensure that marginalized groups of women and men are facilitated in gaining control over forces that interfere with their rights and aspirations.

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