



the active
learning centre

Annual Review

August 2001 – September 2002

*The Active Learning Centre works for people's
rights through education and training.*

Rights and poverty reduction

One in three people in the world lives in poverty. The Millennium Development Goals set out ambitious targets for rich and poor countries alike to work together to tackle poverty. How are human rights relevant to helping people break free from poverty? Human rights treaties and conventions set out the fundamental freedoms and rights that are to be enjoyed by all people. When people are able to claim these rights they are empowered to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights addresses the issues of people's rights to land and to work for remuneration to provide an existence worthy of human dignity. It speaks of everyone's rights to a standard of living adequate for health and well being but it also talks about the rights of everyone to take part in government either directly or through freely chosen representatives.

Discrimination is often a direct cause of poverty, and social exclusion both a cause and an effect of material deprivation. Women who are denied rights to education, treated unfavourably in the workplace simply because of their sex or whose health is at risk because women's health needs are ignored are much more likely to be poor. Working for human rights means addressing the barriers that discriminate against the disabled, women, and those from ethnic or religious groups who are most at risk of poverty. It entails addressing social and economic rights that set standards for human survival and dignity but also the political and civil rights that can enable people to become active citizens and decision makers, participating in their own development.

Working for rights is the theme that underpins all Active Learning Centre's work.



Implementing CEDAW

CEDAW – the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women - sets standards for eliminating discrimination against women. In conjunction with the British Council, Active Learning organised an international networking event with 30 representatives from 17 different countries to discuss their different experiences of implementing the Convention. Throughout the event, Scottish and British examples were used as a starting point for examining and evaluating different approaches. Workshop sessions were held on legislation and policies; equality standards at work; the reporting procedure for CEDAW and the campaign for equality in the Scottish Parliament.

In addition there were visits to a number of different agencies in Scotland with experience of women’s rights and equality including: Glasgow City Council’s equality department; the trade union, Unison; the Equal Opportunities Commission and Parkhead Citizens Advice Bureau. A booklet based on the



information delegates brought to the event has been written by Active Learning Centre staff and will soon be available on the British Council’s website: www.britishcouncil.org



Rights and democracy in Zambia

When people know about their rights and understand the democratic process they are empowered to ask questions of their elected representatives and demand that governments are accountable for their actions.



Rights and democracy is the title of our European Union funded project that aims to raise awareness of the rights of women and children and the democratic process in 6 provinces in Zambia. This is a large cascade project with a target audience of 7,500 people. The Active Learning Centre has trained a team of 22 trainers who in turn have trained 120 men and women in techniques for community education.

In the coming months these people will begin their programme, reaching out to people in rural communities and offering them the opportunity to engage in discussions and workshop activities.

As well as the rights of women and children, the syllabus for these events will include discussion of rights under the Zambian constitution and the newly completed Poverty Reduction Strategy for Zambia.

This project also marks a first for Active Learning Centre students. Under a scheme offered by Glasgow Caledonian University, some of our Zambian students will present their work to gain an accreditation in community education. Students will present portfolios of their training work and this will be examined along with a report by an assessor of their practical skills.



Rights advice and information in China

Economic change within China has been rapid and although large inequalities remain, economic growth has pulled many millions out of poverty. However, the process of change and privatisation has not always favoured women. Reports from the All China Women's Federation show that labour laws covering rates of pay, health and safety and maternity rights are not always implemented. Rights in marriage, on divorce or separation and the issue of domestic violence are also important to Chinese women. But how can women seek information about their rights and assistance to seek redress? The Active Learning Centre in collaboration with the All China Women's Federation and the British Council ran a four day workshop for legal and lay legal workers to discuss ways of ensuring women's access to legal rights and information.



Equality issues and rights in Croatia and Turkey

Research shows that in the post-war period and transition to a market economy, women in Croatia have also fared badly. In September Active Learning Centre staff conducted the first of a series of two workshops for Croatian women to talk about the European equality standards and to look at how women can campaign for implementation of rights. Leaflets and a training manual to help disseminate information will be the final outcome of this European Union funded project.

One third of women in Turkey is illiterate and only 4 per cent of parliamentary representatives are female: two indicators of deep inequalities between men and

women. A new civil code gives greater equality to women but a needs assessment conducted by the Active Learning Centre during June identified lack of implementation as a key problem, particularly in the GAP region where control over women is exerted by violence, traditional clan beliefs and lack of access to education and work.

Two initial courses are planned to offer training in small business and on the issue of violence against women. This will be followed by a training of trainers to get women's NGOs to work together to promote women's rights.



Investing in girls' education

Girls who are educated are much less likely to be poor when they grow up, they have smaller and healthier families and they are also more likely to educate their own children. Research shows that investing in girls'



education is the single most important contribution that governments can make towards development and poverty reduction. In Ethiopia girls are much less likely to enrol for school than boys and much more likely to drop out before completion. In four regions of Ethiopia the gender gap is particularly large. Here Active Learning Centre in co-operation with the British Council and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education has been piloting courses for teachers, regional educational officials and community leaders to look at how policies in schools and action in the community can address the gender gap. In November courses were run in Gambella and Oromia to complement those of the previous year held in Benishangul and the Southern Nation Nationalities People's Region.



Civil society: advocacy and lobbying for rights

A vibrant, active civil society is a vital ingredient to securing human rights and effective government. Without a knowledgeable and questioning civil society, governments become complacent and accountability fades. In Ethiopia civil society is relatively new and underdeveloped. While there are some powerful international and national NGOs operating at national level, smaller organisations working in the regions find it difficult to access training that can build their capacity to contribute to an active civil society. Active Learning Centre in collaboration with the British Council and

Christian Relief and Development Association, the umbrella body for NGOs in Ethiopia, has mounted a two stage training of trainers project in advocacy and lobbying skills. Thirty NGOs from the regions and Addis Ababa have sent representatives. After each of the week long courses participants practise their training skills by mounting courses on lobbying and advocacy for their own members and other local NGOs. An evaluation is due to take place in 2003 to assess the impact on NGOs and their ability to raise their profile within the regions.



Women's representation in political and public life

Research conducted for the World Bank shows that women's empowerment and greater representation in decision making can lead to improved government as well as equality in family life. Greater power for women in decision making in the family leads to



resources devoted to family care for example, education and health and there is evidence that child immunisation rates rise directly in line with mothers' education. Studies also show that greater participation by women in public life leads to better, less corrupt government. In collaboration with the British Council, Active Learning Centre has been working with female Parliamentarians in Tanzania over a two-year period, providing skills training that will make them better representatives and a fighting force for women's equality within Tanzanian society. In May the Parliamentarians visited Scotland for a study tour which included meetings with Scottish Parliamentary representatives and a number of voluntary organisations. At the reception for the Tanzanians, Active Learning Centre was pleased to announce that its application to Computer Aid had been successful and that each representative would be given a computer to help her in her work.



Romania – political skills and education

Immediately before the 2000 elections in Romania, Active Learning Centre working with the British Council mounted two short courses for women candidates and their campaign managers. These successful courses have been followed by a longer term project. In this, Active Learning Centre is training a team of trainers drawn from all political parties active in Romania. These trainers will act as political education officers in their own parties, offering training on practical issues, such as campaigning and media skills but also techniques for building up women's influence within the parties. One of the interesting results of this course has been the willingness of the

course delegates to co-operate and work together to improve women's representation.





Poverty and anti-poverty strategies

Poverty reduction and the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals is the strategy pursued by the British Government's Department for International Development (DFID). In collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex University, the Edinburgh Resource Centre, University of Edinburgh, Active Learning Centre has produced guidance notes and training for DFID staff. The three day course has been designed by Active Learning Centre. It is taught through participative methods and uses discussion groups, case studies, problem solving, video and role play to tackle a number of important topics, including:

- The Millennium Development Goals and the policy framework
- Definitions of poverty and the multi-dimensional approach
- The sustainable livelihoods approach to assessing poverty
- Economic growth, globalisation and poverty reduction
- Poverty reduction strategies and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC)
- The role of programme aid and sector wide approaches in development assistance



- Monitoring, evaluation and learning strategies
- Advocating for the poverty reduction strategy

In addition there are options offered on conflict and poverty reduction, effective governance, rights based approaches to poverty reduction, and gender and women's empowerment.

In the last year the course has been delivered to staff working in DFID offices in Kampala, Barbados, Dar es Salaam, Beijing, Katmandu, Harare, Maputo, Zagreb, Lusaka, Pretoria, Abuja, Nairobi and to the two offices in the UK in East Kilbride and London.



Anti-corruption and effective government

Poor governance leads to corruption which in turn leads to poverty – this was the opinion of the participants in the first of a series of workshops for community liaison and investigations officers working with Zambia's Anti-Corruption Commission. Research from a number of different countries shows that high rates of corruption act as a drag on economies and lower levels of household income. Corruption deters investment and decreases the resources available for public services. When a bribe is the only way to get medical treatment or an education for your children it is the poor who suffer: the rich can pay. Corruption is a tax on the poor.

This project aims to train the officers in community education techniques to enable them to work with members of the public and specific target audiences to combat corruption. Once again the technique of training for trainers is being used to maximise the impact of the project. Over the next nine months, three courses will be held and a series of training programmes carried out for school and university students, trade unionists, government officials at national and local levels, the police and those working in the justice system. At the end of the project a training manual will be produced to aid future training.



Sustainable livelihoods in Scotland

The sustainable livelihoods approach has been adopted by a number of development agencies to guide their work in understanding poverty, its causes and solutions. Assessment of assets and the need to build on the assets of the poor to ensure the sustainability of their livelihoods is a key component of the approach. Oxfam's Poverty Programme in the UK commissioned

Active Learning Centre to carry out research to determine whether the model is applicable in Scotland. This short piece of work produced some interesting conclusions about the use of the notion of assets and asset building in a developed world context. It was found to be valuable in pinpointing targets for advocacy and future anti-poverty work in Scotland.



Links with Glasgow and Glasgow Caledonian Universities

Active Learning Centre has increased its links with Glasgow University's Department for Adult and Continuing Education over the past year. Staff have contributed to teaching on the MPhil in Development Studies and the post graduate and under graduate courses in Adult Education at Glasgow University. A

member of staff from the Department is working with us on our Zambian and Croatian projects. In addition to the accreditation scheme mentioned in connection with our Zambia project, Active Learning Centre staff have taught on the MSc in Social Research at Glasgow Caledonian University.



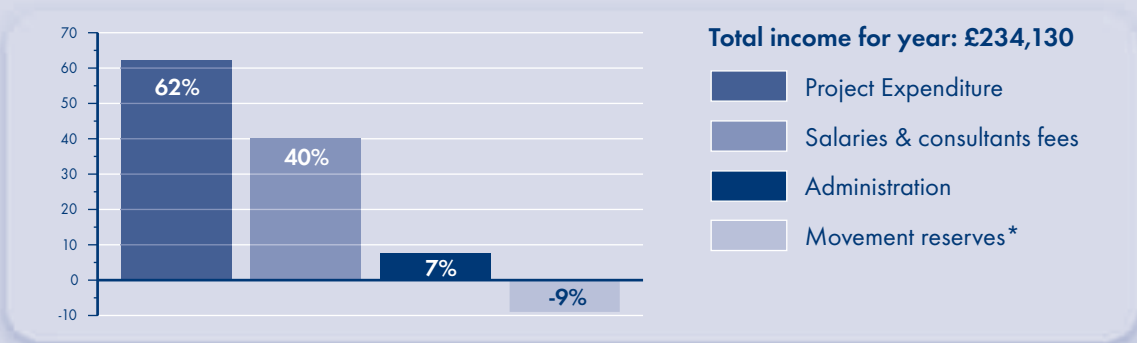
Looking forward to 2002 - 2003

- Poverty training for the Department for International Development will continue and in October and January a similar poverty training course will be organised for development agencies working in the Pacific Region.
- Equality issues in Croatia: the second part of this project will take place in November.
- Zambia's anti-corruption training project will enter its second and third phase in December 2002 and in February 2003.
- In Romania our political skills course will continue into 2003.
- In Ethiopia a further course for teachers, regional educational officials and community activists will be mounted while we await the outcome of an application for funding to turn this work from pilot to full project stage.
- A further stage of work is anticipated in China as the All China Women's Federation aims to mount a training for trainers course.



Finances and funding

The Active Learning Centre wishes to acknowledge the support of: The British Council, The Department for International Development, The European Union and Oxfam.



* Reserves: The Active Learning Centre holds money allocated for future project expenditure. The negative movement on reserves shown this year occurred because money received for projects in the financial year 2000/01 was spent in year 2001/2



Advisory Committee

Members of the Advisory Committee include: Baroness Helena Kennedy, Tony Worthington MP, Usha Brown, Lynette Jordan, Robert Turner and Janet Andrews.



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