



the *active*
learning centre

Annual Review

September 2002 - August 2003

The Active Learning Centre is now ten years old



The Active Learning Centre

The Active Learning Centre (ALC) was founded in 1993 to tackle poverty and social exclusion by strengthening rights and democracy. We began by supporting the growth of civil society and the empowerment of women and poor communities. Since then we have offered social analysis, training and educational material development in over twenty five countries, working with:

- **Political parties** to develop issue based politics and the implementation of election procedures.
- **Civil organisations** to strengthen advocacy. We have trained well over two thousand community activists from hundreds of different groups.
- **Women** to take part in political decision making. We have trained political representatives in South Africa, Namibia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Mauritius, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, the Baltic States, Romania and Hungary.
- **Women within trade unions**, to develop strategies for organising in the informal sector and a range of educational material focusing on poor and disempowered groups in different economic sectors.
- **Community activists** to implement women and children's rights. We have focused on rights based approaches to poverty reduction.



Work with women

A key area of work has been gender policy analysis and the development and implementation of gender and equality policies and strategies. In this field we have worked with African governments and their departments such as the Ministry of Education in Ethiopia, the Gender Ministries of the Governments of Namibia and Sierra Leone, countries which have recently signed CEDAW such as Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan and in countries such as Hungary and Romania who aim to enter Europe. The Active Learning Centre's work in this area has been strengthened by help from international equality lawyers and a small business development consultant who has brought a private sector perspective. This year we have begun work in partnership with the British Council in two areas of the world where violations of rights are of international concern: China and the Kurdish region of Turkey.



China: trying to put a value on work



China: legal representation, advice and information



China: giving advice

In our role as consultants to this project we held a further workshop this year for Women's Federation members who are lay advisors, lay court members, judges and arbitration personnel. This led to interesting comparisons between equality and family law in China and the UK. For example, in the Chinese divorce system, mediation and court processes try to persuade a couple to stay together, an intervention which would be quite unacceptable here. In European workplaces equality policies are common, whereas Chinese employers would probably resist such interventions.



China : Workers' Rights

As China is drawn into the global market, state owned enterprises collapse and foreign ventures grow. One result is the migration of around 20 million workers to Guangdong, another is the collapse of social welfare provisions.

The Active Learning Centre is acting as consultant to this project which aims to improve the access of women workers, particularly migrant workers, to information about their employment rights. Activities this year include the development of radio programmes and advice services as well as training.



China: clothing for the world market



Turkey: entrepreneurship and organisational development



Turkey: developing business analysis

Women's organisations in the GAP region argue that any work on rights needs to be combined with improved access to income generating opportunities to empower women in the household. Current micro businesses produce poor returns due to limited local opportunities and the poor price paid for women's skills.

In the training participants brainstormed the key problems and were guided to think through solutions. Seven key barriers to success were identified which included lack of entrepreneurial traditions, contacts, funds and information as well as gender restrictions and the pressure of domestic responsibilities.



Turkey: women's rights in the GAP region

Women's groups and organisations have identified problems in implementing the law. There is a need for:

- Greater legal knowledge.
- Changed public attitudes.
- Community activists and workers who can offer advice.
- Test cases to set legal precedents.

The programme has addressed all of these areas. Participants have also been encouraged to work as trainers. In pairs they have practised designing and delivering training sessions around these needs with the participants acting as an audience to give feedback.



Turkey: a need for legal knowledge



Children in Southern Africa

The Active Learning Centre helped to evaluate this CTUC project which encouraged trade unionists in Southern Africa to secure ratification and implementation of ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour. Using the trade union network was an effective strategy but national shocks such as political unrest and famine increased the numbers of working children in both Malawi and Zimbabwe.

The evaluation showed that the causes of children working were poverty related and include loss of

jobs in economic restructuring, AIDS and low rewards for agricultural labour. Payment systems also play a role; bonus payments for extra daily output in the sugar industry encourage parents to involve their children. Children are working in construction, mining, domestic service and in bars and informal catering services. In towns children are engaged in drug trafficking, calling passengers onto buses, collecting scrap and in tourist areas in prostitution, fishing and selling fish. Politicians were also found to be enticing children to take part in political violence.



Southern Africa: the situation of working children



Progress in Zambia

In Zambia, The Active Learning Centre is working with NGOCC, the umbrella body for NGOs, to deliver training on rights and democracy to an audience of 7,500 in six of the most rural provinces. The project began three years ago training 28 members of NGOCC to form a core group of trainers. In turn, this group has trained another 120 community animators who have delivered training in the community. Half of the training events have now been carried out reaching well over 4,000 women and men. Planning meetings took place in June for the second half of the community events and the evaluation



Zambia: conducting interviews



Zambia: rights trainers

which will take place in 2004. The core group of trainers will be conducting interviews to find out about the extent and quality of training and, in particular, to learn what impact the new information and skills have had on those who have taken part. Twenty of the core group of trainers have registered for accreditation of their work with Glasgow Caledonian University. Under this scheme the trainers have to attend two training of trainers' courses, produce a portfolio of their training work which includes lesson planning, programmes and student feedback and have a practical appraisal of their training in the field.



Gender equity in schools

The Ethiopian Education Sector Development Programme targets achievement of universal primary education by the year 2015, in line with the Millennium Development Goals. As part of our continuing work with the Education Ministry, two workshops were held in the Somali and Benishangul Gumez regions in Ethiopia. Both have large gender

gaps in education. The workshops considered the research evidence in favour of girls' education, surveyed the opinions of local parents and developed campaign strategies with participants who included education officials, teachers and community activists, representatives from the Mosque and the Orthodox Church.



Ethiopia: strategies for girls education



Croatia

Two courses were held this year to train representatives of trade unions, local government personnel, NGOs, political parties and media representatives in international and European equality standards, good practice in implementing equal opportunities, lobbying and public information techniques.

Participants were encouraged to share this rights information with members of their organisations by organising meetings.

The trainers who conducted this work are currently undertaking research on women's rights in Croatia and hope to publish the results.



Croatia: implementing equal opportunities



Poverty training

In 2000 we embarked with others on the development of guidance notes and a training course around poverty reduction strategies for the Department for International Development (DFID). Since then we have delivered around one hundred courses in almost all of DFID's offices. This has involved extensive poverty policy analysis for each of the countries where the course has been delivered and included training participants in the social as well as economic dimensions of poverty.

Further consultancies have followed: sustainable livelihoods analysis for OXFAM, rights and poverty training with UNESCO and poverty workshops with the Pacific Forum and Asian Development Bank. Work in this area has been strengthened by input from

consultants with core skills in poverty policy analysis, anti-poverty strategy development, and professional experience in macroeconomic policy development.

Poverty : the three day course

The course is wide ranging offering sessions on:

- World poverty, progress on meeting targets, measurement, key causes of poverty, anti-poverty strategies, pro-poor growth.
- The relationships between poverty and gender, rights, governance and conflict.
- Aid delivery, monitoring and learning strategies.

DFID poverty courses have been held this year in Bangladesh, Nigeria, India, Nicaragua, London, East Kilbride and Ghana.



India: poverty training in Delhi



Pacific Forum Workshop

Participants came from a range of organisations: peace keeping, health, gender, rights, governance and included an HIV and rights specialist and regional programme managers. The workshop was designed around group work questions, cases and problem

solving exercises which worked well. Participants verified that these were 'real' issues in the Pacific but there was some resistance in this session to talking about poverty and to the idea that the Millennium Development Goals were relevant to the Pacific.



New Zealand Aid

A total of three courses were held, two for New Zealand Aid staff based in Wellington and a one day course for the NGO community in Auckland. The course had a Pacific focus to help participants think through the changes that strategic partnerships for poverty reduction will make to future working practice. The course for NGO representatives was

extremely well received, especially the presentation and discussion on rights based approaches. In addition we met with NGO members, consultants working in development and university staff teaching development studies in Wellington for discussions on rights based approaches to poverty reduction.



Anti-corruption

Tracking studies confirm that diversion of development funds undermines progress. We are currently working as consultants to the Anti-corruption Commission in Zambia, identifying key areas where training is needed and developing a training course and educational materials to support its work. Our work in Zambia confirms that a preventative strategy must include public education as well as training for a wide range of civil servants: police, customs officers and teachers as well as government representatives, students and trade unionists.



Zambia: training to combat corruption

Issues discussed at anti-corruption training

What does the law say – is it a case of corruption? Some people in the district receive much higher water bills than others and there are no receipts given for water bills.

A male teacher in the school propositioned a girl pupil and made her pregnant.

The drugs in the health centre are supposed to be free but staff charge for them.

The official in the passport office said that he could process the application quicker for a fee.

Sale information was never published regarding the recent privatisation. It transpired that the brother of a minister had become the new owner.

Three training of trainers' courses were held this year. The first concentrated on the national strategy, the role and powers of the Commission and training for key departments of government. The second examined the image of the Commission and introduced the development of public information campaigns, the third worked towards a comprehensive training manual which will be published later this year.



Participation in politics

With the British Council and all of the main political parties in Ethiopia and Romania The Active Learning Centre has trained teams and supported them in the development and implementation of political education programmes for their members.

Romania

This year we held the second meeting of this training of trainers' programme in which campaign training



Romania: building political education

for future elections was the key subject. Changes in party structures and a greater acceptance of the role of training were reported by the trainers who have been carrying out training in their own parties. The feedback showed appreciation of the high quality and participative nature of the training. In total 9 parties mounted training events, reaching an audience of 331 women and 16 men.

Ethiopia

This is also a cascade training project where the programme covers both training and political skills. The chief aim of the initial training of trainers was to prepare training materials for the regional and local training programmes. During this training the trainers prepared themselves to run at least 160 local trainings reaching an audience of around 3,200 people across Ethiopia. Participants commented that they appreciated that all parties were treated equally and they had enjoyed learning by doing.



People

Ivana Bacik

Reid Professor of Criminal Law, practising barrister and member of the Bar.

Irina Barbalata

NGO founder, expertise on gender, enterprise development and labour market.

Dinah Bennett

Women's entrepreneurship and enterprise development.

Usha Brown

Anti-poverty researcher and campaigner.

Noreen Burrows

Dean of the Faculty of Law and Financial studies at University of Glasgow.

Modesta Zulu Chileshe

Educator and campaigner on rights and health.

Chris Edwards

Internationally experienced economist.

Brenda Graham

Administrator and business manager.

Lynette Jordan

Trainer of trainers and external examiner to The Active Learning Centre accreditation programme.

Maggie Kapihya

Rights and anti-corruption educator.

Irene Kitson

Member of the Institute of Directors, Employment tribunal member, Justice Edinburgh District Court.

Gil Long

Social policy analyst and co-director of The Active Learning Centre.

Jan MacLeod

Jan works against male violence against women and children.

Kate Phillips

Social development specialist and co-director of The Active Learning Centre.

Ricardo Sabates

Research interests in the management of health, education and water services.

Rachel Sabates-Wheeler

Development economist with experience in rural development.

Joseph Simekha

Rights and democracy campaigner and poverty researcher.

Esther Quinn

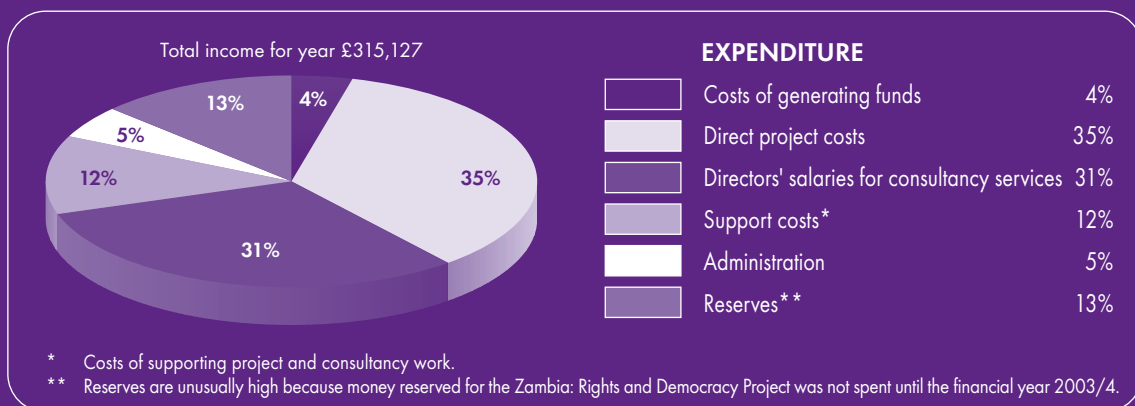
Trade union educator with extensive experience of working with women.



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The Active Learning Centre wishes to acknowledge the following sources of income:

The European Union, The British Council, The Department for International Development, The Commonwealth Trade Union Council and Christian Aid.



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The Active Learning Centre

The University of Glasgow, 11 Southpark Terrace, Glasgow G12 8LG

tel: 00 44 (0) 141 337 2777 / 330 8065 • fax: 00 44 141 (0) 337 2666

email: info@activelearningcentre.org • web: www.activelearningcentre.org